

A detail from Michelangelo's 'Prometheus Bound' showing Prometheus on the left and Hermes on the right. Prometheus is bound to a rock, wearing a purple robe. Hermes is standing, wearing a green robe and a winged helmet, gesturing towards Prometheus. A winged cherub is visible at the top, holding a red cloth. The background is a light, cloudy sky.

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JACOPO LIGOZZI

*A MASTERPIECE COMMISSIONED BY  
FRANCESCO I DE' MEDICI REDISCOVERED*







Jacopo Ligozzi, *Ignorance*

JEAN-LUC BARONI

JACOPO LIGOZZI

*AN ALLEGORY OF VIRTUE*

*Love defending Virtue against  
Ignorance and Prejudice*

commissioned by

FRANCESCO I DE' MEDICI

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MARTIN HIRSCHBOECK

# JACOPO LIGOZZI

Verona circa 1547-1627 Florence

## *The Allegory of Virtue, Love Defending Virtue against Ignorance and Prejudice*

commissioned by

## FRANCESCO I DE' MEDICI

Oil on canvas

345 x 228 cm (135 1/2 x 89 1/2 in.)

### PROVENANCE

Commissioned by Francesco I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, circa 1580-85, for the Casino di San Marco in Florence; Conte Capitano Agnolo Galli Tassi, Florence, documented in his collection in 1765; thence by descent until bequeathed by Agnolo Galli Tassi to the Ospedale di Santa Maria Nuova in 1863; sale of the bequest, 1865; Private Collection, Germany.

### LITERATURE

*Il Trionfo delle Bell'Arti*, exhibition catalogue, Florence 1767, p. 14; subsequently mentioned as lost by: Gamba 1922, p. 13; Stechow 1967, p. 193; Conigliello 1992, p. 23; Graf/Mildenberger 2001, p. 118; Matile 2003, p. 171-173.

### EXHIBITED

Florence, Convent of the SS. Annunziata, 1767, exhibited under the auspices of the Accademia di San Luca, as a loan from Conte Capitano Agnolo Galli Tassi: *Un Quadro grande rappresentante il Genio della Virtù, che la difende dall'Errore, e dall'Ignoranza, di Giacomo Ligozzi.*

### RELATED PRINTS

Andrea Andreani (1558-1620), chiaroscuro woodcut dated 1585 and dedicated to Francesco I de' Medici (the design reversed and with compositional differences)<sup>1</sup>;  
Anonymous artist, engraving, probably last quarter of the 16th century (in reverse after a lost drawing of an alternative design)<sup>2</sup>; Ludolf Büsinck (1599-1669), chiaroscuro woodcut, dated 1647 (copy in reverse after Andreani's woodcut and therefore in the same direction as the painting)<sup>3</sup>; Maria Katharina Prestel (1747-1794), etching, aquatint and woodcut in colours, dated 1777 (same composition and direction as the engraving by the anonymous artist mentioned above)<sup>4</sup>, after a lost drawing by Ligozzi formerly in the Paul de Praun collection in Nuremberg.



## JACOPO LIGOZZI “ECCELENTE PITTORE ”

*“Avea recato a Firenze una franchezza di pennello,  
un comporre macchinoso, un gusto d’ornare  
e un non so che di grazioso e di lieto  
che non era frequente in Firenze”<sup>5</sup>*

Jacopo Ligozzi was one of the most original artistic personalities of late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century Florence. He was of an anxious disposition and, tormented by a piety typical of the Counter-Reformation period, he was obsessed with sin and death. In his numerous drawings and paintings he unites the minute study of nature with the bizarre and the extravagant. Whilst his art is representative of the stylistic developments of International Mannerism, and of the scientific, religious and cultural preoccupations of the period, Ligozzi remains an idiosyncratic and fascinatingly individual artist.

Born in Verona about 1547, Jacopo Ligozzi was brought up within a family of artists and craftsmen, amongst whom there were painters, miniaturists and silk embroiderers earning a living by selling their luxurious workmanship to the courts of Italy and the Hapsburg Empire. In 1577 he moved to Florence, where he entered into the service of the Medici Dukes, for whom he was to work as designer, scientific draftsman and painter for the rest of his life<sup>6</sup>. Having been appointed court painter in 1580 at the latest<sup>7</sup>, in 1582 he was admitted to the Accademia del Disegno<sup>8</sup>. Until 1587 he kept his studio in the Casino di San Marco, refuge and alchemical laboratory of Duke Francesco I de’ Medici, and after that, for a short period, in the Uffizi.

Alongside designs for draperies, furniture and glassware, Ligozzi produced numerous studies after nature, in watercolour and tempera, of

plants, fishes, birds and mammals<sup>9</sup>. These were commissioned by Francesco I de’ Medici who, himself obsessed with science and alchemy, kept up a lively communication with famous scholars including Ulisse Aldrovandi, another admirer of Ligozzi’s work in this field. Aldrovandi, who had some of his zoological and botanic treatises illustrated with woodcuts copied from Ligozzi’s drawings, wrote from Bologna on a number of occasions asking Francesco I to send studies by his “*eccelesse pittore*” for his museum of natural history<sup>10</sup>. Another aspect of Ligozzi’s output was the depiction of religious and profane allegories in highly detailed drawings, often highlighted with gold paint. Mostly describing human passions and vices, these visionary works are realistic and sometimes gruesome and inspired in many cases by his knowledge of Northern European art<sup>11</sup>.

Ligozzi’s first years as a painter are documented by only two altarpieces dating from the 1560s<sup>12</sup>, and executed in the region of the artist’s native Verona. There is a twenty year hiatus in his recorded activity as a painter, followed by a small number of pictures, executed between 1584 and 1587 as part of the decorations for the Tribuna, the Duke’s new *Wunderkammer* in the Uffizi. In 1590-92, Ligozzi executed his first major public commission: the two large-scale historical paintings made for the Salone dei Cinquecento in the Palazzo Vecchio. In the aftermath of this work, Ligozzi seems to have become a little distanced from the court, perhaps due to the strained relationship with his new

patron Ferdinando I. Henceforth he only worked sporadically for the Medici and concentrated instead on commissions for devotional paintings and altarpieces. The *St. Jerome Supported by an Angel* in San Giovannino degli Scolopi and

the frescoes depicting scenes from the life of St. Francis in the cloister of the Church of Ognissanti are amongst his most successful works in this genre.

## THE PAINTING AND ITS RELATED PRINTS

This painting is dominated by the life-sized figure of *Virtue*, standing defenceless like a Martyr against a rock-face, looking up to the sky for help and surrounded by a winged putto and two mythical creatures. While the putto swoops down from the sky, pulling a length of red material, an old, sinister woman with bat's wings and owl feathers around her head, grabs for *Virtue's* left arm and the figure of a woman with donkey's ears, lying languidly on the ground, pulls at her garment. The scene takes place on a mountainous ledge overgrown with ivy and flowers with the low horizon at the right edge emphasising the altitude of the scene.

This allegorical picture by Jacopo Ligozzi was exhibited in 1767 in the Convent of SS. Annunziata in Florence, and listed in the accompanying catalogue as the property of Count Agnolo Galli Tassi described as: "*Un Quadro grande rappresentante il Genio della Virtù, che la difende dall'Errore, e dall'Ignoranza, di Giacomo Ligozzi*"<sup>13</sup>. All the elements mentioned in the description fit the present painting, including the large scale and the number of figures.

The importance, and indeed popularity, of the composition are documented by four extant prints related to the design, three of which have previously been linked to this picture by modern scholars, by reference to this 1767 description, but the picture itself was believed to be lost<sup>14</sup>.

The earliest of the four prints would seem to be the woodcut by Andrea Andreani (1558/59-

1620)<sup>15</sup> which is dedicated to Francesco I de' Medici: *Francesco / Medici Sereniss.o Magno / Ethrurie Duci / Andreas Andreanus / fecit accidavit / Jacobus / Ligotius / Veronens. Invenit / ac / Pinxit* and bears the legend: *In / Firenze / 1585 / Lettere Vocale / figurate –A. Amore. E. Errore. / I. Ignoranza. O. Opinione / V. Virtù*<sup>16</sup>. The identification of the respective figures is left to the viewer as there are no letters beside the figures to match the



1. Andrea Andreani after Ligozzi, chiaroscuro woodcut, 1585, Zurich, Graphische Sammlung der ETH.

descriptions (fig.1)<sup>17</sup>. A second print, of inferior quality and in reverse after Andreani's woodcut, was executed in 1647 by Ludolf Büsinck (1599-1669), and is known in a single impression in Kassel<sup>18</sup>. A third print, an engraving by an anonymous 16<sup>th</sup> century artist, is known from one example in the British Museum (fig.2)<sup>19</sup>. Stylistically, the latter would seem to have been executed by an Italian artist around the last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>20</sup> and is inscribed below the image with a Latin epigram and the name of the inventor of the composition: "*Jacopo Ligozzi Magni Ducis Etruriae pictor pinxit*"<sup>21</sup>. A fourth print, in the same direction and showing the same composition as that of the engraving by the anonymous Italian artist in the British Museum, is a colour aquatint made by Maria Katharina Prestel (1747- 1794) (fig.3)<sup>22</sup>. According to the inscription on the aquatint, it was executed in 1777<sup>23</sup>, after a drawing by Ligozzi then in the collection of Paul



2. Anonymous after Ligozzi, engraving, late 16<sup>th</sup> century, London, British Museum.

de Praun in Nuremberg, which probably served as the model for the British Museum print too, as can be deduced by the fact that both prints show exactly the same composition.

Although the woodcut by Andreani, the two copies after the de Praun drawing and the painting illustrate the same subject, they show a number of differences in detail. The most striking one is the male allegorical figure, who recurs in all four prints, but does not appear in the painting. Another is the absence of *Cupid's* blindfold and quiver in the painting, whereas all the prints show him blindfolded, and in the Prestel aquatint he holds a quiver too, thus making his identification as *Cupid* clearer than in the painting. Only in Andreani's woodcut is *Virtue* shown pointing towards three objects lying at her feet: a sceptre, a sword and scales. In Andreani's woodcut, the old woman has bat wings on her head, whereas these are depicted on the figure's back in both



3. Katharina Prestel after Ligozzi, colour aquatint, Frankfurt, Städelsches Kunstinstitut.

the other prints and in the painting, and in the latter, the same figure has owl's feathers on her head, which are missing in the printed versions. In Prestel's aquatint and in the British Museum engraving, the figures are resting on a bank of clouds; in Andreani's woodcut, the scene is set against a backdrop of bare, jagged rocks, whereas in the painting, Ligozzi has indulged his vivid interest in the natural world, and transformed the barren crags into a luxuriant mountainous landscape, enriched with a spring, a tree stump and a myriad species of flowers.

In considering the chronological order in which the lost De Praun drawing (used for the Prestel and British Museum prints), the present painting and Andreani's dated woodcut might have been executed, the figure of *Virtue* is revealing. *Virtue* is represented in an almost identical pose in all three works, except that in Andreani's woodcut, her raised leg no longer rests on the thigh of the female winged figure. In the woodcut, the winged figure has been moved further to the right to make space for the attributes lying on the ground. As a result, there is a gap between the two figures and *Virtue's* leg, having lost the support of the old woman's thigh, appears unnaturally and pointlessly raised. This would indicate that Andreani's woodcut was executed

at a later stage than the painting and the de Praun drawing used for the other prints. The composition of the painting is the most direct of the three and, even regardless of the scale, the most monumental, having a pyramidal design. With its powerful figures and richly textured background it epitomises Ligozzi's flamboyant style and may represent the original conception of the composition. The Prestel print recording the lost De Praun drawing gains, with the addition of the male figure, a more circular design and an emblematic tone which is emphasised by the now more abstract background of clouds. This emblematic or didactic quality is accentuated in Andreani's woodcut by the addition of the attributes of power and although the rocky land-based background has returned, it is without the distractions of flowers and foliage and the intended message is spelt out in a key.

Whilst the precise order in which these works were executed must remain an issue of conjecture, the subtle intertwining of differences and similarities between the various designs, reinforces the view that the three principal works - this rediscovered painting, the lost drawing and the Andreani woodcut - all belong to a particular and specific period in Ligozzi's career.

## DATING THE PAINTING

In Ligozzi's *Allegory of Virtue*, the composition, the conception of the figures and the colours of the picture are all still firmly rooted in the tradition of Mannerist painting of the Cinquecento. The figure of *Virtue*, with her serpentine line, is a paradigmatic example of this while her idealised features and those of the figure lying beneath her, as well as the accurately painted folds of the drapery, recall the style of the decorations by Vasari and his circle in the Palazzo Vecchio (which Ligozzi was of course very familiar with).

The cool hues and smooth handling of paint combined with a preference for pale skin tones and soft transitions from light to dark reflect the experience of the Florentine *Bella Maniera* as it was epitomised above all by Bronzino and Alessandro Allori. This is also true of the flickering iridescence in the greenish-yellow garment of the winged figure on the right.

Alongside these Florentine elements, the influence of Venice is also still clearly visible, showing continuity with Ligozzi's artistic training in Verona.

Characteristic of Venice are the generously spaced composition, the metallic tonality of the reds and purples which clash against the grey-blue impasto of the sky, as well as the vivid and bold use of paint in the highlights. These aspects of the artist's style are reminiscent of the paintings of Paolo Veronese, Paolo Farinati and Felice Brusasorci.

Stylistically this painting is comparable to several works by Ligozzi dating from the 1580s. For example the two small panels of *St. Jerome* (Casa Vasari, Arezzo) (fig.4) and *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac* (Uffizi, Florence) executed between 1584 and 1587, when the artist joined the work on the decorations for the Tribuna in the Uffizi<sup>24</sup>. In these two pictures, which are among the earliest known works by Ligozzi<sup>25</sup>, the painting of the landscapes is noticeably similar to the present work, particularly in the rendering of the rock formation and the foliage and in the detailed depiction of the lily seen next to St.

Jerome's cross. Another picture, showing *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* (private collection, London) (fig.5), dated by Conigliello to the mid-1580s<sup>26</sup>, also compares well with the present painting. The facial type of the angel in the London painting and the figure of *Virtue* in this picture are very similar, as are the treatment of the flowing drapery, the free brushstrokes of the landscape and the highlights.

In addition, the figure of *Cupid* in the present painting recurs in the same pose in the upper right corner of a drawing in the Louvre (fig. 6) dated by Lucilla Conigliello to around 1587<sup>27</sup>. This drawing is the pricked cartoon for the painting of the *Martyrdom of St. Catherine* in the Palazzo Durazzo Pallavicini in Genoa<sup>28</sup>.

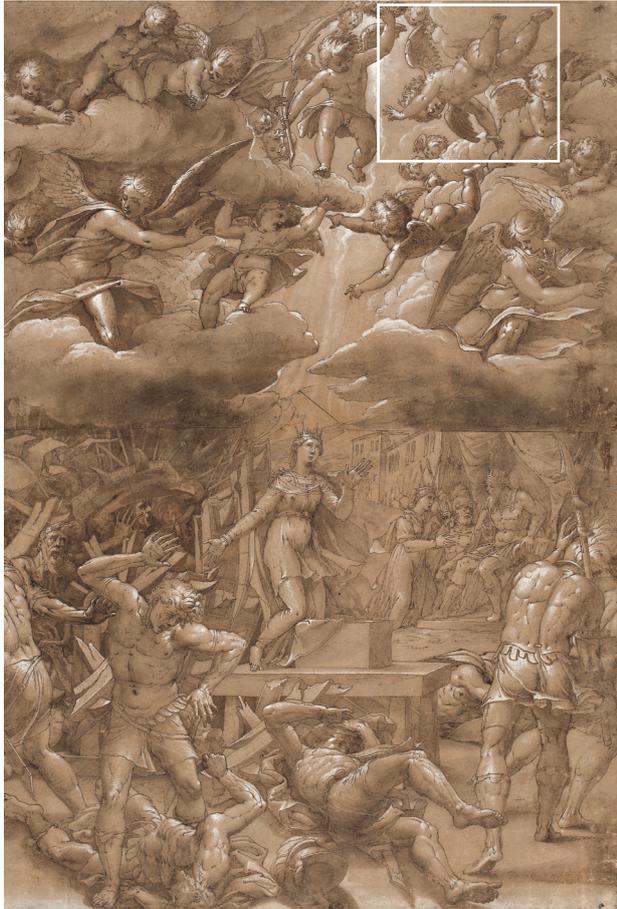
The date of 1585 inscribed on Andreani's woodcut after Ligozzi, as well as the stylistic similarities between this picture and others executed in the 1580s suggest that a similar dating is entirely appropriate.



4. Jacopo Ligozzi, *St. Jerome in the Wilderness*, 1584-1587, Arezzo, Casa Vasari.



5. Jacopo Ligozzi, *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane*, ca. 1585, London, Private Collection.



6. Jacopo Ligozzi, *Martyrdom of St. Catherine*, drawing, circa 1587, Paris, Louvre.



Jacopo Ligozzi, *The Allegory of Virtue, Love Defending Virtue against Ignorance and Prejudice*.

As such, this picture is one of Ligozzi's earliest paintings from the Florentine period. The extraordinary subject, the freedom of execution, its sheer scale and the successful combination of Venetian and Florentine influences, as well as

its prestigious Medicean provenance make this picture a central work in Jacopo Ligozzi's oeuvre and, indeed, of Florentine art in this last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.

## PROVENANCE: FRANCESCO I DE' MEDICI AND THE GALLI TASSI FAMILY

The dedication to Francesco I de' Medici on Andreani's woodcut is a clear indication of the importance of this composition to the Duke. Following his death in 1587, an inventory of the Casino di San Marco, where the Grand Duke maintained his alchemical laboratory, was drawn up. The inventory process was carried out systematically, one room at a time, but the descriptions are generally brief, and in most cases neither the dimensions of the pictures nor the

artists' names are mentioned. There is, however, an entry which must refer to the present painting: "*Nel ricettino terreno che riesce nel'orto: Uno quadro grande in tela d'una Virtu con dua figure sotto ornamento di noce semplice*"<sup>29</sup>. The fact that only two figures are mentioned in the inventory besides *Virtue* is probably due to the cursory character of the inventory itself and to the small scale of the *putto* in relation to the main protagonists of the *Allegory*.

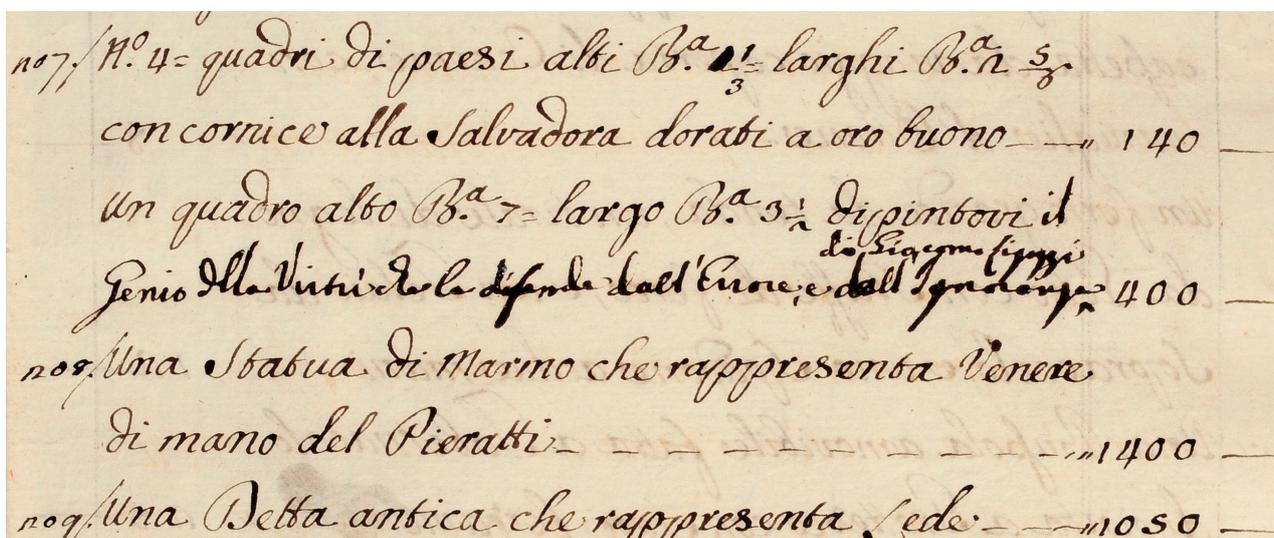
This picture is mentioned again in the inventory of the Casino di San Marco which was drawn up on the death of Francesco's illegitimate son, Don Antonio de' Medici in 1621. The painting is described as "*Un quadro grande in tela con una donna nuda rappresentante la virtù col vitio et tempo, cornice di noce, alto b. cinque incirca*"<sup>30</sup>. The listing of such a large picture in the inventory of the Casino is of particular note given that the Ducal collection displayed in the Casino seems otherwise to have consisted solely of small and medium sized pictures<sup>31</sup> and certainly no other such *Allegory* has come to light to fit this description until the reappearance of the present painting.

With the inheritance of the Casino by Cardinal Carlo de' Medici, Ferdinand I's fifth son, the trail of the picture is lost. The Cardinal undertook the redecoration of the Casino with frescoes by Anastagio Fontebuoni, Fabrizio Boschi and Matteo Rosselli, and replaced the collection with art of his own choosing<sup>32</sup>. Two centuries later, in 1767, the painting reappears in the exhibition held by the Academy of Saint Luke in the church of SS. Annunziata, in Florence. Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Academy of Saint Luke had organised exhibitions in the Convent of SS. Annunziata

at irregular intervals but always opening on the feast day of Saint Luke. The works exhibited were selected from amongst the collections of Florentine aristocrats, many of whom, being art lovers and scholars, were members of the Academy<sup>33</sup>. The 1767 exhibition, inaugurated by the Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo of Lorraine included more than 800 works of art displayed in various rooms and in the cloister of the convent<sup>34</sup>. Count Agnolo Galli Tassi contributed twelve works: besides the present picture by Ligozzi there were sculptures by Donatello and Giambologna, as well as paintings by Jacopo da Empoli, Santi di Tito and Giovanni da San Giovanni.

The significance of the works lent by the Count, as well as his title, are an indication of the importance of the Galli Tassi, who counted several family members amongst the Senators of the Grand Duke, and whose splendid *palazzo* in the via Pandolfini<sup>35</sup>, family chapel in the church of SS. Annunziata<sup>36</sup>, and family archive<sup>37</sup> still exist.

The archive contains several inventories of the contents of the palace, amongst which, a particularly exhaustive inventory written on the occasion of Conte Capitano Galli Tassi's death in



8. Galli Tassi Inventory 1765, detail, Florence, Archivio di Stato.

1765<sup>38</sup>. Ligozzi's *Allegory of Virtue* is described as hanging in the Sala, together with other paintings and sculptures: "*Un quadro alto B.a 7 = largo B.a 3 ? dipintovi / il Genio della Virtù che la difende dall'Errore, e dall'Ignoranza di Giacomo Ligozzi*"<sup>39</sup>.

The measurements correspond to 4,08 x 2,04 m (1 braccio fiorentino = 58,3 cm), about 63 cm higher and 24 cm less wide than the actual picture. The inaccuracy of these measurements is again quite typical of the imprecise nature of such descriptions and suggests that the picture may have been hung high up making accurate measuring impossible. The author of the inventory also had difficulty with the painting's description. The neat handwriting, in which the inventory is recorded, ends for this item with the word "*dipintovi*" and the gap which follows has been filled in another, looser hand with the missing description (fig. 8). It would appear that a more informed person – possibly the young Count himself subsequently completed the title and it is worth pointing out that the title in the inventory is identical to the one in the exhibition catalogue of 1767, perhaps equally supplied by him<sup>40</sup>.

The purchase of Ligozzi's painting by the Galli Tassi family does not appear to be documented. It is not mentioned in the older inventories, nor have the account books, as yet, shed any light on its acquisition. Family history would in any case argue against the Galli Tassi being responsible for the commission for the Galli, as they were originally known, had only arrived in Florence from the provincial village of Grignano near Prato in 1574 and were then of relatively humble status. Through a series of successful commercial activities and advantageous marriages, the family did however advance rapidly in society and by 1623, had established themselves in the palazzo on the Via Pandolfini<sup>41</sup>. Nevertheless, it seems highly improbable that they would have

commissioned or purchased so prestigious a picture as Ligozzi's *Allegory* as early as circa 1585. Moreover, the fact that this picture is listed for the first time in the 1765 Galli Tassi inventory, suggests that it probably entered the collection at some point during the 18<sup>th</sup> century rather than any earlier. With his death, the descendent Agnolo Galli Tassi, bequeathed the entire family estate to the Ospedale di Santa Maria Nuova. On this occasion, all the belongings were inventoried and auctioned in the following years. The entry for this picture in the 1863 inventory reads: "*Quadro dipinto su tela, alto M. 3.50 largo M. 2.40 rappresentante un Soggetto allegorico, allusivo alla Virtù. Pittura attribuita alla Scuola del Ligozzi, con sua Cornice dorata*"<sup>42</sup>. Although the identification of the subject and the attribution of the picture appear more tentative, the dimensions, this time given in metres, are almost identical to those of the present picture<sup>43</sup>. The painting was auctioned on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1865 but the name of the purchaser is unrecorded<sup>44</sup>.

The overall correspondence of this picture with the descriptions in the Casino di San Marco inventories of 1587 and 1621, the dedication to Francesco I de' Medici of Andreani's woodcut, the large format - quite exceptional for a non-religious painting - the unusual allegorical subject, as well as Ligozzi's close relations with the Grand Duke and the presence of his studio in the Casino itself, are equally persuasive evidence that the painting was commissioned by Francesco I de' Medici. The picture may have left the Medici collection by way of inheritance or, more probably, it remained in the estate until the extinction of the Medici dynasty in 1737. Subsequently, it could have been purchased by Count Galli Tassi when the House of Lorraine came into power, and a sizeable part of the Medici art treasures was dispersed<sup>45</sup>.

## THE ICONOGRAPHY OF JACOPO LIGOZZI'S *ALLEGORY OF VIRTUE* AND ITS MEANING IN THE MEDICEAN CONTEXT

Ligozzi's patron, Francesco I de' Medici, celebrated his enthusiasm for science, medicine and alchemy in the decorations of his Studiolo in Palazzo Vecchio. Here, his activities in these fields are glorified by the fresco painted in the vault and representing Prometheus and the Four Elements, which was intended to suggest a link between the Duke himself and Nature's elemental forces. In one of the 34 panels attached to the walls and the cupboard doors of the small room designed as a study and *Wunderkammer*, we see Francesco I himself. He is depicted as a scientist at work in a laboratory, surrounded by elaborate instruments, ruling over an entire staff of assistants, and watched over by a scholar (fig.9)<sup>46</sup>. In his actual laboratory, which had been established in the Casino di San Marco in 1576, Francesco worked with quartzes



9. Jacopo Stradano, *Francesco I de' Medici in His Laboratory*, oil on panel, 1570, Florence, Palazzo Vecchio.

and semi-precious stones, possessed by the dream of obtaining gold. The garden of the Casino was planted with exotic flowers and medicinal herbs and was the basis of many of his experiments and of his correspondence with scientists and botanists from all over Europe<sup>47</sup>.

Jacopo Ligozzi was not only well acquainted with this world but, as a scientific draftsman and painter with a studio in the Casino, was actually part of it himself. His studies of nature played an important role in the classification of rare plants and animals as well as in the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge about them. The famous Bolognese scholar Ulisse Aldrovandi praised Ligozzi as one of the most talented scientific draftsmen of his time. In his natural history museum (*Theatrum naturae*) Aldrovandi kept several of Ligozzi's drawings which had been given to him by Francesco I de' Medici and, supposedly, by Ligozzi himself<sup>48</sup>. Aldrovandi was also interested in abnormalities, and genetically caused defects in plants and animals. He was, for instance, much intrigued by a hen with a snake like tail, which he claimed had been seen in the garden of Francesco I's palace in Florence<sup>49</sup>. At that time, the interest in so-called monsters, bizarre rarities and spectral mythical creatures was particularly widespread at the courts of Europe. In the Florence of Francesco I's time, this is perfectly illustrated by the weird architectural ornaments designed by Bernardo Buontalenti which adorn the Casino di San Marco and parts of the Uffizi, as well as the bizarre water systems of Pratolino, especially the *Appennino* by Giambologna<sup>50</sup>.

No other painting by Ligozzi reflects the mysterious, eccentric world of the "*Principe dello Studiolo*" better than the *Allegory of Virtue*. In this picture, Ligozzi reveals himself to be a most original inventor of allegorical figures who, like an alchemist in his laboratory, merges the



10. Jacopo Ligozzi, *The Allegory of Virtue, Love Defending Virtue against Ignorance and Prejudice*, detail.



11. Jacopo Ligozzi, *Globe Thistle (Echinops Sphaerocephalon)*, watercolour and gouache, Florence, Uffizi.

natural with the fantastic. His most impressive achievement is the saturnine winged figure to *Virtue's* right, whose haggard breast and ugly features - the hooked nose and the jutting lower jaw - testify to a brutal observational skill. The exotic, pearl-embroidered headdress, the bat-like wings on the shoulders and the feathers above the ears - identified as the tail feathers of an owl - are all extremely naturalistic. Yet these minutely observed details belong to a demonic chimera in a shimmering garment, an unreal figure impersonating an abstract term. The same fascinating contrast can be found in the other mythical creatures: the purple-clad, reclining woman with her highly realistic donkeys ears and the putto with his ruffled wings. Ligozzi used the background of the painting as

an arena in which to display his outstanding abilities as a painter of plants. The rock, which is barren in the woodcut, is here overgrown with a multitude of different flowers and plants, each of which can be precisely identified. Besides familiar plants like the lilies and roses in the right lower corner of the picture, or the various species of tulips, rarer plants appear too: The sorrel growing in purple clumps in the left centre of the picture and the red turban lilies further to the left (fig.10), discernable by their rolled sepals, are two examples, as is the globe thistle seen in silhouette, which Ligozzi also represented in one of his meticulously painted watercolours (fig.11). Many of the plants which are familiar to us today were, at the time, considered exotic; their possession was a sign of privilege. This is

the case for tulips, for instance, which had only begun to spread from Constantinople to Italy and the rest of Europe in around the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>51</sup>. Thus, Ligozzi's picture takes us directly into that age of botanic euphoria and into the gardens of Francesco I and his court botanist Giuseppe Casabona, who was entrusted with the procurement and acclimatisation of hitherto unknown plants for the Casino garden<sup>52</sup>. There might even be a connection between the flowers depicted and the place in which the picture appears to have hung, the "*ricettino che riesce nel'orto*", the anteroom leading to the Casino garden. Perhaps the painted flowers were meant to put people in the mood for the garden and, in the cold season, to bring to mind the plants cultivated in it.

Andreani's woodcut, with its inscription following the vowel pattern "*A E I O U*", provides a good basis for the identification of the allegorical figures represented in the painting (see fig.1). As a winged and blindfolded putto, *Amore* is easily recognized as the god of Love. *Virtù* can likewise be identified without difficulties, being depicted as a graceful young woman, whose uncovered breasts stand for the purity and innocence associated with virtuousness. *Errore*, according to the gender of the word in Italian, can only be a masculine figure, so that the only candidate for *Errore* in the woodcut is the naked figure wearing a blindfold who grabs *Virtue's* arm, an identification supported by the iconologist Cesare Ripa who likewise describes the personification of Error as a blindfolded male figure<sup>53</sup>. This figure does not appear in Ligozzi's painting.

Due to the complexity of the iconography, it is not entirely clear which of the two women represents *Ignoranza* and which *Opinione*. Ripa characterises Ignorance as a blind woman with an ugly face and a bat and a poppy as her attributes. She is essentially a night creature, and as such opposed to light, which is the sphere

of Sapienza<sup>54</sup>. It would seem that the sinister, repulsive figure, with bat-like wings growing on her head, stepping into the woodcut from the left, best fits that description. Her left hand raised to her eyes and forehead can be interpreted as a gesture expressing her blindness. The corresponding figure in the Prestel print sports the wings of an owl on her shoulder blades. In the painting these wings have a shape recalling those of a bat, whilst four large owl feathers decorate the temples of the woman's head. In either case, these figures can clearly be associated with the night. Additionally, in the painting, the woman wears an exotic, embroidered headdress and a garment made of an extravagant fabric of iridescent yellows and greens, which tallies with the "*pomposo vestito*" Ripa also calls for<sup>55</sup>.

However, no instance has yet come to light, in which Ignorance is given wings. Instead Ripa associates her with a donkey, symbol of stupidity<sup>56</sup>, and thus relates her to two other allegories, *Vulgo*, or *Ignobilità*<sup>57</sup> and *Arroganza*<sup>58</sup>, which have donkeys ears. This would seem to suggest that *Ignorance* could equally well be represented by the other female figure in the picture, shown with donkeys ears, lying on the ground.

Apart from the wings, Ripa's description of *Prejudice*, has little in common with either of Ligozzi's depictions of a winged figure<sup>59</sup>. Ligozzi, who conceived his Allegory of Virtue some ten years earlier than the first edition of Ripa's *Iconologia*, was probably familiar with the most prominent sources used by Ripa. It is quite possible that he gave *Prejudice* asses ears simply because *Prejudice* is a consequence of ignorance or stupidity<sup>60</sup>. The confusing interchangeability between *Prejudice* and *Ignorance* is understandable, as Ripa writes: "(...) *l'opinioni (...) scorrendo subito per tutto il mondo, et portando spesso volte i panni dell'ignoranza*"<sup>61</sup>. This sentence underlines how closely the conceptions

of the two allegories are linked. Ripa's *Iconologia* can only provide indications regarding Ligozzi's representation and as there was no iconographic canon in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century for the allegorical figures considered here, it may be presumed that Ligozzi exercised a relatively high degree of creative freedom.

The three Latin verses printed at the bottom of the anonymous contemporary engraving in the British Museum may offer some enlightenment. In these lines *Ignorance* is described as a corpulent woman resting on the ground with donkeys ears ("*Pinguis humi recubans trahit Ignorantia contra / Cui stolidum tribuit bestia bruta caput*") whereas *Prejudice* is characterised as a gaunt, inconstant and unsettled figure ("*Debilis, inconstans, levis, urget Opinio dextrum / Ad latus, et toto corpora macra, sequi*"), which clearly only applies to the winged old woman, though no wings are mentioned.

That this interpretation might be the one Ligozzi had in mind is indicated by the fact that it echoes exactly the clockwise listing of these figures according to the legend on Andreani's woodcut. In fact, if we ignore the presence of *Error* as the first figure on the right in both prints, interestingly, the only figure not mentioned in these verses and significantly absent in the painting.

Ligozzi has used none of the attributes listed by Ripa as belonging to *Virtue*, such as wings, a laurel wreath, the sun or a spear. Instead she stands unadorned and all the more like a Martyr Saint, breasts unveiled, eyes turned upwards, entreatingly glancing towards the light coming from above and promising salvation<sup>62</sup>. This impression is reinforced by the putto in the painting, hovering above her, his arm stretched out as if he was going to deliver the palm or crown of martyrdom. The most notable characteristic of the figure of *Virtue* in this painting is, however, the curiously ambiguous position of her legs. Only in the woodcut is she connected to the

ground as, with one foot, she kicks off from *opinion's* thigh. In the painting, she has already lost the ground under her feet, and the aquatint shows her floating above the clouds together with her opponents, leaving the rock far below. It is apparently *Cupid* who pulls her upwards holding a panel of fabric slung under her left arm. This is very clear in the anonymous contemporary engraving and the print by Prestel. In the painting this reddish piece of fabric is wrapped around *Virtue's* left arm. At the same time the female figure with asses ears, lying on the ground, pulls *Virtue's* garment down. In the woodcut, however, the action of the figures seems to be less clear. Here, *Virtue* reaches out, pointing to the various objects which have been added to the composition, scattered on the ground: the sceptre, sword and scales, all of which can be interpreted as the symbols of a ruler. Obviously they allude to a sovereign's virtue and, in conjunction with the dedication and inscriptions on the woodcut, to Francesco's authority<sup>63</sup>, which is threatened by a succession of potentially destructive forces – love, error, false rumours and ignorance.

To Francesco I, the subject had a particular importance, because his reign had, from the beginning, been overshadowed by a series of unhappy events and conflicts, which damaged his reputation and contributed to the popular image of him as a melancholic tyrant. Following the death of his father, Francesco had arranged for his stepmother, the deceased's second wife, to be locked in a convent. In 1575, on discovering the Pucci conspiracy, an anti-Medici plot, he executed some of the conspirators and expropriated their property even though the plotters had called off the operation. Few Florentine aristocrats forgave him for this vicious reprisal. Not long afterwards, his sister Isabella was strangled by her husband, Paolo Giordano degli Orsini, the Duke of Bracciano, for allegedly having committed adultery and shortly after

that, Francesco's brother Pietro murdered his wife Eleonora for the same reason<sup>64</sup>. Francesco's obsession with alchemy too led to much criticism, being perceived as the cause of his neglect of political duties. A further, significant cause of his unpopularity was his attachment to the Venetian Bianca Cappello, which proved to be particularly damaging.

In 1565, for purely political motives, Francesco had married Joanna of Austria, sister to the Emperor Maximilian II, but he continued his relationship with Bianca even after his marriage. This infidelity provoked considerable ill-feeling, it nourished the animosity felt by his brother, the Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici and led to conflicts with the house of Habsburg. After Joanna's death in 1578, Francesco married Bianca Cappello. She was despised by many Florentine people who questioned her morals and her expensive tastes, denounced her as a whore and considered her responsible for the city's misfortunes<sup>65</sup>. The problems came to a head when Francesco's only male offspring from his marriage to Joanna of Austria, Filippo, died in 1582 and Francesco began a long campaign against a cumbersome legal process to legitimize the son he had had with Bianca before their marriage. Thus, it was a reign under pressure from negative public opinion, overshadowed by the invectives of his brother, Cardinal Ferdinando (who aspired to the position of Grand Duke) and by the tensions with the house of Habsburg, towards whom he had, moreover, slid into a position of political dependency owing to his negligent style of governance<sup>66</sup>.

In considering Francesco's relations with the Hapsburgs, the woodcut is again of relevance, with the vowel pattern which forms part of the inscription meriting particular attention. In late medieval theological literature, the five vowels were linked with conceptions of virtue and associated with harmonic progressions that were

interpreted spiritually. Friedrich III of Habsburg (1440-1493) made them into a coded personal logo, which he used to decorate his residence and his personal objects. As no one knew what they signified, countless puns on Habsburgian mottos, following the sequence of the vowels, were handed around<sup>67</sup>. They were mainly invented by the courtiers in Vienna and, in most cases, celebrated the pursuit of world power by the house of Habsburg, though they could also be scurrilous. A collection of these mottos was first published in 1584<sup>68</sup>. One of the best known interpretations of the "A E I O U" pattern was: "*Austriae est imperare orbi universo*"<sup>69</sup>. With this in mind, it is possible to imagine that the vowel pattern in the woodcut dedicated to Francesco is a polemic allusion to this Habsburgian motto<sup>70</sup> with the negative forces attempting to undermine the sovereign's virtue and dispossess him of his reign, being denounced as the work of the Habsburgs.

Interestingly, all these references are of no importance in the painting. The inscriptions, the sovereign's regalia and the figure of *Error* are absent. It would seem clear that the woodcut is a version of the composition charged with political import. It was destined - the medium fitting the purpose - for a larger public, whereas the painting was surely created for a private context, with its enigmatic and poetic qualities being deliberately emphasised. The subject is less narrowly defined and more open to an observer's individual interpretation. What comes to mind is the traditional story of the battle between virtue and vice, between good and evil, between truth and deceit.

The epigram that accompanies the anonymous engraving, describes the image in that tradition:

*Effigiem, mortalis homo, speculari, caducus  
quam misere, cernes, exagitetur homo.  
Caecus eum pharetratus eum, volucerq[ue]*

*Cupido Magna vi sursum raptat utraq[ue] manu.*

*Pinguis humi recubans trahit Ignorantia contra  
Cui stolidum tribuit bestia bruta caput.*

*Debilis, Inconstans, levis, urget Opinio dextrum  
Ad latus, et toto corpore macra, sequi.*

*Perpetuos Ratio miratur et obstupet hostes, vix  
homine[m] retinet vixq[ue] quieta manet.*

*Quid miserabilius: rationem respicit ille, sicq[ue]  
tot in partes se dolet illa rapi* <sup>71</sup>.

Virtue is interpreted as signifying the mortal *uomo virtuoso*, who finds himself exposed to the torments of *Love*, *Ignorance*, and *Prejudice*. He is connected with *ratio*, the intellect, which gives him only a limited respite within himself or in his dealings within the world before the struggle resumes again and he is tossed by adverse forces, also called “eternal enemies” (“perpetuos hostes”). *Ignorance* is identified as the female figure lying on the ground with donkey’s ears whilst *Prejudice*, as mentioned before, is characterised as gaunt and instable (“levis”) which means that she can only be the female winged figure. The idea of the tormented *uomo virtuoso* pulled in various directions is rhetorically underlined by the choice of contradictory pairs of words: *sursum raptat - trahit contra* and *pinguis Ignorantia - Opinio macra*.

In these verses the image is given a moralising undertone which stresses the futility of human existence. This idea fits well with the spirit of the counter-reformation and the concept of original sin, omnipresent in large parts of Europe at that time. As noted before, their author does not mention *Error*, in other words he lists only those figures that Ligozzi represented in the painting. Whilst he may have written his verses in view of the painting, the fact that he explicitly refers to *Cupid*, who in the painting is not given the attributes to be identified as such, seems to contradict that idea. Even if the style of the

engraving and its text would imply that they were created in the context of Ligozzi’s painting, this does not necessarily imply that the text relates directly to the ideas or the programme devised by either the artist or his patron. These verses sound more like a learned commentary of the kind frequently composed in the late *Cinquecento* to illuminate any work of art. This idea is also supported by the classical form of the text, conceived as an epigram with six distichons. In particular, works of ambiguous content appear to have provoked such texts, another example being Giambologna’s group of two entwined figures *The Rape of the Sabines*, which had been commissioned by Francesco I de’ Medici without a specific theme in mind but which led to a flood of learned commentaries, mostly in the form of sonnets.

The fact that the putto is given no attributes in the painting suggests that here it was indeed Ligozzi’s intention to create a deliberate ambiguity, which leads directly to the discrepancy in the title under which the picture was displayed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: “*Il genio della virtù che la difende contro l’errore e l’ignoranza*”. It is of little importance for the basic understanding of the picture, whether it is *Ignorance* and *Error* represented, or *Ignorance* and *Prejudice*. More relevant is the question which role the putto plays.

One might indeed follow the 1767 description and conclude that Ligozzi did not mean to represent *Love* vexing *Virtue*, but rather that he is her genius, who pulls the material of her garment to rescue her from the two ghostly creatures<sup>72</sup>.

Perhaps this ambivalence contains an allusion to the significance of the redeeming power of love. Or maybe the strange figure of *Cupid* was merely meant to raise the question, in how far love is salutary or injurious; or, to put it differently, in how far love and virtue are conflicting values. Regardless of which interpretation one tends towards, this *Allegory of Virtue* is relevant to the

story of Francesco de' Medici and Bianca Cappello, whose love was sincere but in strong conflict with their social duties and who consequently found themselves showered with slander and facing challenges to their moral and political credibility.

Whilst the allegory has been given a political turn in the woodcut, which can be associated with the specific pressures besetting the ruler at that time, Ligozzi's painting focuses on the essential conflicts in human nature by showing man torn between virtuous and corrupting forces. The subtle variations within the known versions of this allegory are indicative of the central position held by Ligozzi in Francesco's court. This imposing painting is a fascinating illustration of the complex and intellectually demanding world of Francesco I de' Medici and Ligozzi's bizarre and fertile inventions are vivid expressions of his artistic genius.



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## NOTES

1. See Stechow 1967, p. 193; Conigliello 1992, p. 23; Graf/Mildenberger 2001, p. 118; Matile 2003, p. 171-173.
2. British Museum, inv.-no. 1874.0808.1621.
3. Hallo 1931, p. 11; Stechow 1967, p. 193-196, fig. 1.
4. See Stechow 1967, p. 193; Conigliello 1992, p. 23; Graf/Mildenberger 2001, p. 118; Matile 2003, p. 171-173.
5. *"He has brought the freedom of the paint brush to Florence, a complex lay-out of the composition, an appreciation for the ornamental, and something graceful and cheerful, that was not usual in Florence"*, cf. Lanzi 1795-96, tome 1, p. 230.
6. Conigliello 1992, p. 19.
7. Ligozzi's remuneration can be traced since 1580, cf. ASF, MP 616, ins. 20, c. 377; Barocchi/Bertelà
8. Conigliello 1992, p. 194.
9. A group of more about 100 splendid studies of animals and plants by Ligozzi are preserved in the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe in the Uffizi, see Giglioli 1924; Bacci/Forlani 1961; Tongiorgi Tomasi 1993.
10. Bacci/Forlani 1961, p. 11-14; Conigliello 1992, p. 23; Tongiorgi Tomasi/Hirschauer 2002, p. 38-51.
11. Voss 1920, tome 2, p. 422. note 1; Shaw 1956; Konečný 2007.
12. Conigliello 1992, p.19 and note 37; p. 129, fig. 1.
13. *"A large picture showing the 'genius' of Virtue defending her against Error and Ignorance, by Giacomo Ligozzi"*, cf. Exhibition catalogue Florence 1767, p. 14.
14. Cf. Gamba 1922, p. 13; Stechow 1967, p. 193; Conigliello 1992, p. 23; Graf/Mildenberger 2001, p. 118; Matile 2003, p. 171-173.
15. On Andreani's person cf. Graf/Mildenberger 2001, p. 188; Matile 2003, p.164-168.
16. Bartsch, vol. 12, n. 9, I/II; Graf/Mildenberger 2001, p. 118; Matile 2003, p. 171.
17. On the identification of the figures and the discussion of the allegorical subject, see pp.10ff.
18. On Büsinck's print see Hallo 1931, p. 11; Stechow 1967, p. 193-196, fig. 1.
19. British Museum, inv.-no. 1874.0808.1621. With thanks to Maria Elena De Luca for bringing this print to our attention.
20. See the respective entry in the online database of the British Museum, [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search\\_the\\_collection\\_database/search\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectid=3230057&partid=1&searchText=LIGOZZI&fromADBC=ad&toADBC=ad&numpages=10&orig=%2fresearch%2fsearch\\_the\\_collection\\_database.aspx&currentPage=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=3230057&partid=1&searchText=LIGOZZI&fromADBC=ad&toADBC=ad&numpages=10&orig=%2fresearch%2fsearch_the_collection_database.aspx&currentPage=1)
21. For the epigram see p. 17.
22. Exhibition catalogue, Nuremberg 1994, p. 25-34; 316-317. Katharina Prestel and her husband Theophile made forty eight aquatints after De Praun's drawings which were printed in Frankfurt in 1782. For further information about the artist couple Prestel see Kiermeir-Debre/Vogel 2008.
23. The inscription reads: *"N.o 30. La Vertue entre l'Amour, l'Erreur, l'Opinion, et l'Ignorance. Gravé d'après*

*le Dessin de Jacques Ligozzi de même Grandeur. E. Museo Prauniano. Norimbergae. par Marie Catherine Prestel. 1777*”.

24. Cf. Conigliello 1992, p. 24.
25. Only two paintings from Ligozzi’s early works, accomplished before he moved to Florence, have been preserved and are now in the surroundings of Trento. These are the *Virgin Mary with Saints*, signed and dated 1566, in the church of Sant’ Antonio in Bivedo, and the altar panels in San Silvestro in Vigo Lomaso of 1567, which he signed together with his father. Both works are conventional and rather heavy-handed and have little in common with Ligozzi’s later works, cf. Conigliello 1992, fig. 1. A further, unsigned work, *The Worshipping of the Kings* in SS. Trinita in Verona, can be attributed to Ligozzi on the grounds of stylistic similarities. Unfortunately, this painting is severely damaged, cf. *ibid.*, p. 20, fig. 2.
26. Conigliello 1997.
27. Conigliello 2005, p. 68, no. 5.
28. The picture is mis-catalogued as “*attributed to*” the Genoese mannerist Andrea Semino (1526-1594) and is dated about 1560 in the catalogue of the Palazzo Durazzo Pallavicini in Genoa, cf. *Il Palazzo* 1995, p. 297.
29. “*In an anteroom on the ground floor, which leads to the garden: A large canvas of Virtue with two figures beneath her, in a simple walnut frame*”, cf. ASF, GM 136, c. 151.
30. “*A large canvas painting with a naked woman representing Virtue together with Vice and Time, walnut frame, about five braccia high*”, cf. ASF, GM 399, c. 85 r. A contemporary copy of the inventory is published in: Covoni 1892, p. 199-246. The corresponding entry there reads: “*un quadro di tela che rappresenta la Virtù, il Vizio e il Tempo, alto B.a 5 con cornice di noce*”, *ibid.*, p. 210. Apparently the figure with asses ears lying on the ground is identified as Vice, while the old winged woman on the right has been confused with *Time*.
31. Cf. the inventory of the Casino di San Marco published in Covoni 1892, p. 199-246.
32. Covoni 1892, p. 17.
33. The Academy exhibitions are not to be confused with the festivities of Saint Luke and the SS. Annunziata that were celebrated with ephemeral *apparati* designed by the artists of the Academy. These festivities had taken place since the Academy’s foundation, cf. Borroni Salvadori 1974, p. 3.
34. Borroni Salvadori 1974, p. 49.
35. On the Palazzo Galli Tassi in Via Pandolfini see Ginori Lisci 1972, vol. 2, p. 559-564.
36. 36 Fourth chapel on the right seen from the entrance, with the arms of the Galli Tassi (red cock, crossed by a chain on a light background), above the altar a *Crucifixion* by Giovanni Stradano.
37. The archives are kept in the *Archivio di Stato* in Florence.
38. The reference here is to Conte Capitano Agnolo Galli Tassi (Florence 1676-1765). He had a son, called like him Agnolo (Baldassare) Galli Tassi, who was also a Count and died in 1770, which explains why in the catalogue of the Academy exhibition in 1767 the Conte Agnolo (Baldassare) Galli Tassi is mentioned as proprietor of Ligozzi’s *Allegory of Virtue*. On the family history of the Galli Tassi see ASF, GT 45 b.
39. “*A picture, 7 braccia in height, 3,5 braccia in breadth, which shows the genius of Virtue, defending her against Error and Ignorance, by Jacopo Ligozzi*”, cf. ASF, GT 37, ins. 2.
40. It might also be conceivable that the subject of the picture had not been properly identified until its exhibition in the SS. Annunziata, when it was labelled as it was by the Academicians and that the entry in the inventory was made only at that moment.

41. Ginori Lisci 1972, vol. 2, p. 560.
42. ASF, EGT 16, no. 1.
43. The discrepancy in size is probably due to the slight trimming of the picture. This is particularly evident along the bottom edge, where the right sole of the reclining figure is missing.
44. ASF, EGT, without numbering.
45. On the sale of works of art from the Medici collections, see ASF, GM 16 (Inventario di roba da vendersi, 1738); Borroni Salvadori 1984.
46. The panel, signed and dated 1570, was executed by Giovanni Stradano (1523-1605). The Fonderia and the alchemist laboratory in the Casino di San Marco were not occupied by Francesco until 1576 (cf. Berti 1967, p. 94), and can therefore not be the rooms shown in the picture. However, the Medici had several laboratories at their disposal, initially located in the Palazzo Vecchio, later in the Boboli Garden and finally in the Casino di San Marco and the Uffizi, cf. Feinberg 2002, p. 57. On the Studiolo, see Liebenwein 1977; Schaefer 1979; Allegri/Cecchi 1980, p. 323-350; Feinberg 2002.
47. Francesco also kept a botanic garden (*Giardino dei Semplici*) in Pisa, the creation of which his father Cosimo had commissioned, as well as a further garden of this type in Florence, cf. Tongiorgi Tomasi 1995, p. 13-14; Tongiorgi Tomasi/Hirschauer 2002, p. 30 ff.
48. Bacci/Forlani 1961, pp. 8-11. On the basis of his collection, Aldrovandi wrote a scientific encyclopaedia, from which only two treatises were published during his lifetime (*Ornithologiae libri XII*, 1599-1603; *De animalibus insectis libri septem*, 1602), numerous other books were published posthumously until 1667.
49. Aldrovandi/Ambrosinus 1642, p. 387-388: "(...) *Gallus ille monstrosus, cauda quodammodo serpentina (...). Hic vivus ante aliquos annos in aula Serenissimi Magni Hetruriae Ducis Francisci Medicei conspiciebatur, aspectus ita horrifici ut intuentibus metum incuteret (...). Cauda erat carnosa, & subcaerulea pilis nuda, oblique, instar serpentis, in extremitate tamen floccus erat.*"
50. *The Appennino* is an anthropomorphic mountain monster modelled in brick and stone with encrusted tufo and dripstone, inside of which there is a grotto. In 1586, Jacopo Ligozzi contributed to the decoration of this grotto with representations of Tuscan seaside towns and fishermen on the Tuscan littoral, cf. Conigliello 1992, p. 23. During his visit to Florence in 1577, Aldrovandi had already expressed enthusiasm for the fountains then existing in Pratolino (cf. Barocchi 2001, p. 64), likewise in 1586 on the occasion of another stay in Florence (cf. Conigliello 1992, p. 23, note 64).
51. Cf. Tongiorgi Tomasi 1993, *Tulipa Gesneriana*, 1908 Orn.
52. Tongiorgi Tomasi 1995, p. 17; Tongiorgi Tomasi/Hirschauer 2002, p. 30-38.
53. Ripa 1603, p. 133.
54. "(...) *si fa senza occhi, perchè l'ignoranza è uno stupore, & una cecità di mente nella quale l'huomo fonda un'opinione di se stesso, & crede essere quello che non è (...). Si dipinge presso a lei il Pipistrello, overo Nottola, perché, come dice Pierio Valeriano lib. 25 alla luce simiglia la sapienza & alle tenebre, dalle quali non esce mai la Nottola, ignoranza. Si fa poi brutta di faccia, perché quanto nella natura humana il bello della sapienza riluce, tanto il brutto dell'ignoranza appare sozzo, & dispiacevole. Il pomposo vestito è trofeo dell'ignoranza (...)*", cf. Ripa 1603, p. 221-222. Mantegna had already associated Ignorance with nocturnal darkness in the 1490s in his "*Allegory of the Decline of Humanity Dominated by Ignorance*" (also known as representation of *Virtus Combusta*), cf. Faietti 2009.

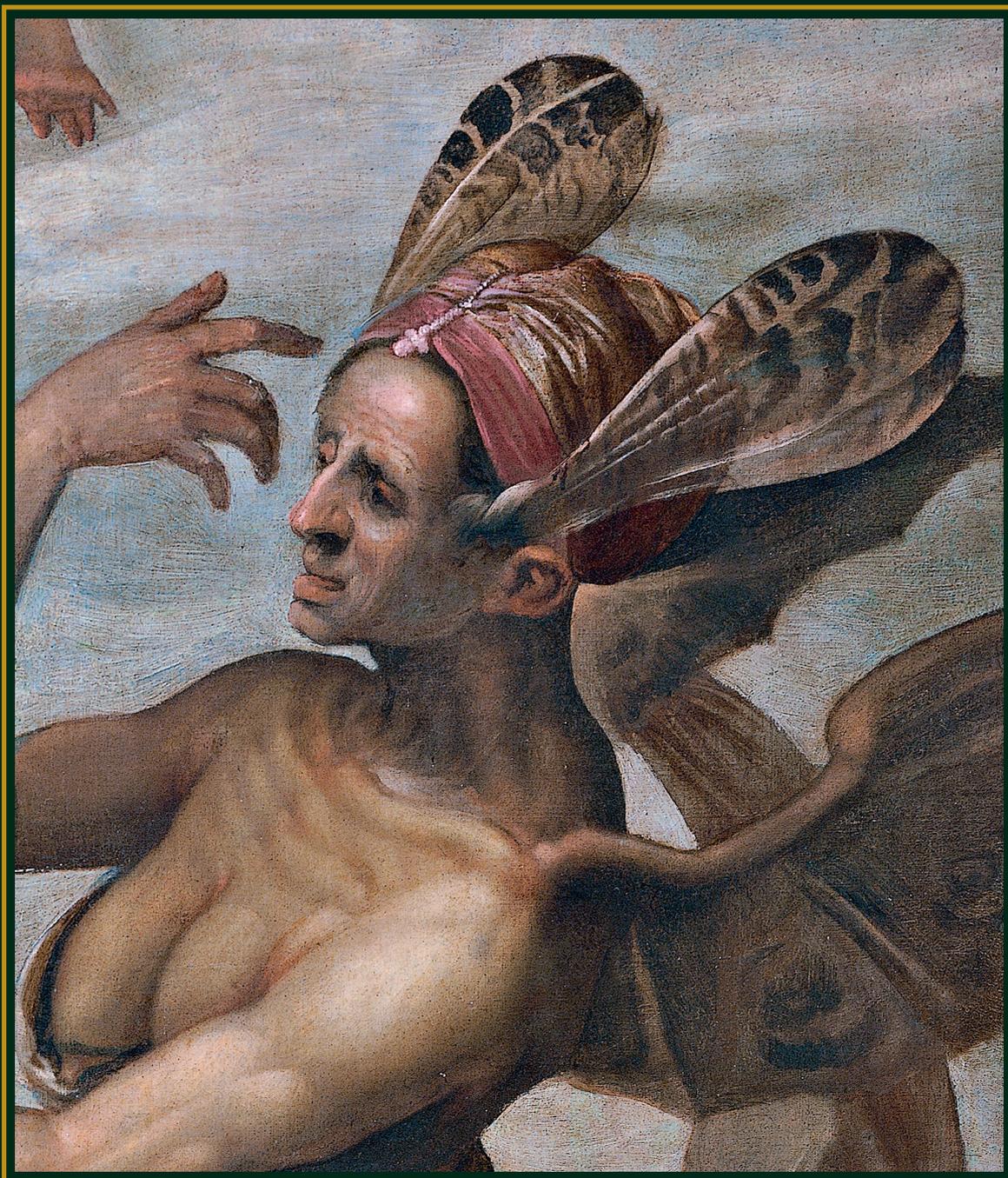
55. Cf. note 58.
56. Ripa describes, subsequent to the above paraphrased elucidations, four additional iconographical types of *Ignoranza*, amongst them a blindfolded naked boy with a stick seated on a donkey, and a figure with the head of a donkey looking to the ground, cf. Ripa 1603, p. 222.
57. “*L’orecchie d’asino denotano Ignoranza essendo che i sacerdoti dell’Egitto dicono (come narra Pierio Valeriano nel lib. XII. de i suoi Geroglifici) che questo animale è privo d’intelligentia, e di ragione (...)*”, cf. Ripa/Castellini 1645, p. 655.
58. “*(...) con ragione si dipinge [Arroganza, note of the author] con l’orecchie dell’asino, nascendo questo vizio dall’ignoranza, e dalla stoltidezza (...)*”, cf. Ripa 1603, p. 27.
59. Ripa 1603, p. 370: “*Donna honestamente ornata, di faccia non molto bella, ne molto brutta, ma si mostri audace, & presta ad appigliarsi acciò, che se le rappresenta, & per questo deve tener l’ali nelle mani, & alle spalle, come disse Hippocrate. (...) L’ali (...) mostrano la velocità, con che si prendono & lasciano l’opinioni (...)*.”
60. Cf. on this reflection Stechow 1967, p. 194. The use of donkeys ears with regard to *Opinio* can be traced back to the legend of Midas, in which king Midas grew donkeys ears in consequence of his unjust decision in a musical contest between Pan and Apollo, cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 11,150-179. Inspired by this myth, the *Defamation of Apelles* shows a king with donkey’s ears as well. This ancient painting, documented in an ekphrasis by Lucian, was mentioned by Alberti in his treatise on painting as an important example of historical painting, and was adapted by Mantegna, Botticelli, Raphael, Federico Zuccari and other artists, see e.g. recently exhibition catalogue Florence 2009, p. 96 f.
61. “*Prejudice spreads quickly throughout the world and often wears the garments of ignorance*” Ripa 1603, p. 370.
62. A certain similarity with the personification of Truth, often shown naked and looking up to the sky, is also perceptible.
63. Jacopo Ligozzi represented these symbols also in his large painting *The Nomination of Cosimo I as Grand Duke of Tuscany* in the Sala dei 500, dated 1591, where they clearly allude to the *buongoverno* of the Duke.
64. Supposedly, the murders were approved of by Francesco I, cf. Diaz 1987, p. 233.
65. Arditi/Cantagalli 1970, p. 177-179; Lapini/Corazzini 1900, p. 197.
66. Cf. Cleugh 2002, p. 373; Diaz 1987, p. 232.
67. Cf. Dornseiff 1922, p. 51; Lhotsky 1952, p. 171; Stechow 1967, p. 195.
68. Johannes Rasch, *Vaticiniorum liber primus*, Vienna 1584, cf. Lhotsky, p. 160, note 33.
69. The equivalent in German, fitting to the vowel pattern, is: “*Alles Erdreich ist Oesterreich Untertan*” (“*All the world is subjected to Austria*”), cf. Stechow 1967, p. 195.
70. Cf. on this reflection: Stechow 1967, p. 195.
71. Jacopo Ligozzi court painter for the Grand Duke of Tuscany painted/ Observe, O mortal man, this image and see how man, / so miserably fragile, is tormented. / The winged Cupid, blindfolded and bearing a quiver, / With great force pulls him up with both hands. / On his right, lying on the fertile ground, Ignorance, to whom the artist / attributes the head of a brute beast, attracts him. / On his left, Prejudice, weak, inconstant,

fragile, / and lean in all her body, presses him to follow her. / Reason observes the eternal enemies and is surprised, / she struggles to hold back the man, and to remain calm. / What is more miserable: he sees what is reasonable, / And so suffers from being torn in many directions.

72. One could imagine that the putto in the role of Virtue's genius lends her his wings to rise her above vice, in accordance with Ripa, who describes Virtue as a winged figure: *"L'ali dimostrano, che è proprio della virtù l'alzarsi à volo sopra il commune uso de gli huomini volgari, per gustare quei dilette, che solamente provano gli huomini più virtuosi, i quali, come disse Virgilio, sono alzati fino alle stelle dall'ardente virtù."* (The wings demonstrate that it is the quality of Virtue to be raised on wings above the common state of mind to taste those pleasures which only the most virtuous men feel, they, who as Virgil describes, are raised as high as the stars by ardent virtue).

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*Prejudice*

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