

Pietro (Berrettini) da Cortona

Cortona 1597 – 1669 Rome

Heroicae virtutis imagines quas Eques Petrus Berrettinus Cortonensis pinxit Florentiæ in ædibus Sereniss. Magni Ducis Hetruriæ in tribus cameris Iovis, Martis, et Veneris. Curâ, & sumptibus Ioannis Iacobi de Rubeis, cum Priuilegio Summi Pontificis concessio Anno MDCXCI. die 22. Octobris.

Rome, 'Apud Dominicum de Rubeis eiusdem Ioannis Iacobi Hæredem ad Templum S. Mariæ de Pace... Superiorum Permissu', [1691]

FOLIO (495 × 405 mm), complete suite of letterpress title-page (with above text) and twenty-six unnumbered engravings, organised in three parts, each print lettered with part-title *Eques Petrus Berrettinus Corton. pinx. florentiæ in Ædibus Sereniss. Magni Ducis Hetruriæ in camera Iovis* [– *Martis*, – *Veneris*], with the publication line of Giovanni Giacomo de' Rossi, and with the printmaker's name.

CONTENTS (1) *In Camera Iovis*: ten prints, of which eight *mezzi fogli imperiali* (platemarks 190/200 × 335/355 mm) reproducing the lunettes and two *fogli imperiali* additionally lettered *Virtutem Iuppiter Prudens æque ac Iustus Praemijs extollit... 1686* and *Matura aetas Virtute et fortuna deducit Iovis decoranda sistitur* (joined in this copy, as intended, to make a folding plate 725 × 660 mm) of the plafond. (2) *In camera Martis*: five prints, of which three *fogli imperiali* (platemarks 420 × 700 mm, 400 × 640 mm, 660 × 370 mm) and two *fogli imperiali* each with an extension printed from a separate matrice attached to one side (460 × 785 mm, 385 × 810 mm). (3) *In camera Veneris*: eleven prints, of which eight *mezzi fogli imperiali* (platemarks 215/250 × 310/400 mm) reproducing lunettes, one *foglio imperiale* additionally lettered *Adolescentiam Pallas a Venere auellit | Radix amara Virtutis, fructus Suavis* (415 × 645 mm) of the plafond, and two *fogli imperiali* (415 × 410/475 mm) of stucco details.

PAPER watermark Paschal lamb within a circle, with letters (above) A (below) N.

Short tear (without loss) in fold of one plate, another tear in a margin repaired, some edges lightly stained, otherwise well-preserved impressions mostly retaining broad margins.

BINDING vellum backed boards, by Bernard Middleton.

A SET OF ENGRAVINGS reproducing decoration painted in 1641–1647 by Pietro da Cortona in three rooms on the north side of the *piano nobile* of the Pitti Palace in Florence, dedicated respectively to the deities Jupiter, Mars, and Venus. Formerly presence chambers in the residence of the grand-dukes, the three rooms – and two others, dedicated

to Apollo and Saturn, left unfinished by Pietro and completed in 1659–1665 by his pupil Cirro Ferri – today house the main part of the Galleria Palatina. The programme, devised by Francesco Rondinelli, shows the ideal ruler at successive stages of his life (each stage governed by a different planet).¹



Ceiling in the Sala di Giove, Pitti Palace, decorated by Pietro da Cortona. Engraving with etching by Jacques Bondeau (platemark 660 × 725 mm)

¹ Malcolm Campbell, *Pietro da Cortona at the Pitti Palace: a study of the Planetary Rooms and related projects* (Princeton 1977), p.171 and *passim*.



Portion of a fresco in the Stanza di Marte, Pitti Palace, decorated by Pietro da Cortona. Engraving by Jacques Blondeau (platemark 385 × 815 mm)

The plates were engraved over a period of fifteen or more years by ten northern printmakers, all working intermittently in Rome for the print publisher Giovanni Giacomo de' Rossi (d. 1691). On the evidence of his dated stocklists, the 'Sala di Venere' was engraved first. Eight plates reproduce its lunettes (scenes from Roman history considered typical of virtuous continence: Scipio, Massinissa and Sophonisba, Antiochus and Stratonice, Alexander and Sisigambis, Antiochus and the Priestess of Diana, Crispus and Faustina, Augustus and Cleopatra, Cyrus and Panthea), another plate illustrates the vault, and two reproduce portions of its decorative stucco work. Cornelis Bloemaert (*fl.* Rome 1633–1692), François Spierre (*fl.* Rome 1666–1678),² and Lambert de Visscher (*fl.* Rome after 1666)³ each engraved two prints of this series; Barend de Bailliu (*fl.* Rome 1674–1679), Albertus Clouwet (*fl.* Rome 1664–1677), Jean-Baptiste Girardin,⁴ Charles de La Haye,⁵ and Coenrads Lauwers produced one each. All eleven matrices are cited in the earliest known De' Rossi stocklist, issued in 1677.⁶

Engraved next was the 'Sala di Giove', illustrated by eight plates of lunettes (Vulcan resting, Apollo resting, Diana resting, Minerva and Cecrops, Discord and Fury, Mercury, Dioscuri, Bellerophon and Pegasus) and a folding plate of the plafond (composed of two sheets). In 1677, only six plates of lunettes, two engraved by Bloemaert, and one each by Pierre Simon (*fl.* Rome 1668–1674),⁷ and Charles de La Haye, were available.⁸ The two remaining lunettes (Discord and Fury, Dioscuri) and the ceiling were engraved in 1686 by Jacques Blondeau (Hansje Blondel; *fl.* Rome 1679–*circa* 1698).⁹

² Monica Turrio Baldassarri, 'Pierre de Cortone dans les gravures françaises du XVII^e siècle' in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 126 (1995), p.45 nos. 58–59, dating Spierre's two prints 'vers 1664'.

³ F.W.H. Hollstein, *Hollstein's Dutch & Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts ca. 1450–1700* (Roosendaal 1992), XL, p.222 nos. 4–5. An earlier state of 'Antiochus and Stratonice' (before lettering ...*in camera Veneris*) is known.

⁴ Baldassarri, *op. cit.*, p.46 no. 60.

⁵ Bibliothèque Nationale, *Inventaire du Fonds Français: Graveurs du XVII^e siècle* (Paris 1973), VI, pp.128–129 no. 5.

⁶ *Indice delle stampe intagliate in rame... esistenti nella Stamperia di Gio. Giacomo de Rossi* (Rome 1677), p.38: 'Camera... da Venere... impressi in foglio grande imperiale... in 8. mezzi fogli imperiali, & uno intiero, che formanno un libro per trauerso [line break, perhaps indicating that the following were available separately:] Ornamenti si stucco d'Architettura di sotto in sù della medesima Camera: intaglio al bulino di Carlo della Chaise, e Bernardo Baleu, in 2 fogli imperiali per trauerso'.

⁷ Baldassarri, *op. cit.*, p.45 no. 57.

⁸ *Indice delle stampe, op. cit.* (1677), p.38: 'Altra camera del medesimo palazzo con gli Dei Vulcano, Diana, Pallade, Apolline, Mercurio, e Perseo... intagliate al bulino da Cornelio Bloemart, & altri libro di 6. mezzi fogli imperiali per trauerso'.

⁹ *Aggiunta all'indice delle stampe intagliate in rame... esistenti nella stamperia di Gio. Giacomo de Rossi... Dall'anno 1677. per tutto l'anno 1686* (Rome 1686), p.16. The print of the ceiling incorporates the date 1686 in its publication line. For Blondeau's residency in Rome, see G.J. Hoogewerff,



**Fresco in the Sala di Venere, Pitti Palace, decorated by Pietro da Cortona.
Engraving by Lambert Visscher (platemark 415 × 640 mm)**

Last to appear were five large prints by Blondeau of decorations in the 'Camera di Marte', one of which (depicting the Medicean insignia held aloft by *putti*) carries an undated dedication to Cardinal Francesco Maria de' Medici subscribed by De' Rossi. These plates were completed by 1689, when for the first time all twenty-six prints were advertised for sale.¹⁰

The prints of the 'Sala di Venere' and 'Sala di Giove' had been issued from *circa* 1677 to 1689 without titles or other preliminary matter, protected by the blanket papal privilege held by Giovanni Giacomo de' Rossi (declared on each print in the publication line, *cū Priuil. S. Pont.*). A privilege specific to the *Heroicae virtutis imagines* was obtained by his

Nederlandsche Kunstenaars te Rome (1600–1725) uittreksels uit de parochiale archieven (The Hague 1942), p.55.

¹⁰ *Indice delle stampe intagliate in rame... esistenti nella stamperia di Gio. Giacomo de Rossi* (Rome 1689), p.63.

heir, Domenico de' Rossi, on 22 October 1691, for a reissue of the prints accompanied by a printed title in that year. A copy of this so-called 'first edition' is offered here.

After 1691, prospective purchasers had the option of acquiring the prints room-by-room, or the entire work at a slight discount. In the stocklist published by Lorenzo Filippo de' Rossi in 1735, three years before the firm's collection of copper plates was sold to the Vatican, the 'Sala di Giove' suite was priced *scudo 1 ba[jocchi] 80*, 'Marte' priced *scudo 1 ba[jocchi] 50*, and 'Venere' priced *scudi 2 ba[jocchi] 80*, and 'Le tre Camere predette formano un libro di 26. fogli, e mezzi fogli imperiali, in tutto *scudi 5 ba[jocchi] 50*'.¹¹ Those who purchased the complete work sometimes were given a printed title (various settings are known, none reprint the phrase 'cum Priuilegio Summi Pontificis concessio Anno MDCXCI. die 22. Octobris' which appears only in our edition).¹²

REFERENCES *Katalog der Ornamentstichsammlung, Berlin* (1939), no. 4094 (uncertain issue, without printed title); Hester M Black, *A short title catalogue of the emblem books and related works in the Stirling Maxwell collection of Glasgow University Library (1499–1917)*, edited and revised by David Weston (Aldershot 1988), p.10 no. 209 (SM 2001)

¹¹ Anna Grelle Iusco, *Indice delle Stampe de' Rossi: Contributo alla storia di una Stamperia romana* (Rome 1996), pp.40, 264–267, 454–455. The same prices had applied since 1705 (*Indice delle stampe intagliate in rame a bulino, e in acqua forte esistenti nella stamperia di Domenico de' Rossi*, Rome 1705, pp.54–55).

¹² British Library, *Catalogue of Seventeenth century Italian Books* (London 1986), p.97, shelfmark 558*g.17.(3). Other prints in this album (since rebound) were published in 1704.