

Jeremy Warren



Ferdinando Tacca

The Monument to Ferdinando I, Grand Duke of Tuscany

Jeremy Warren

Ferdinando Tacca

The Monument to Ferdinando I, Grand Duke of Tuscany

TRINITY FINE ART

October 2018



FERDINANDO TACCA

(Florence, 1619-1686)

Monument to Ferdinando I, Grand Duke of Tuscany

After the monument in Livorno by Giovanni Bandini (Florence, 1539/40-1599) and Pietro Tacca (1577-1640)

Florence, c. 1638-46

Height 73.7 cm (29 in), height of pedestal 33.4 cm (13¹/₆ in)

Provenance

1761, Florence, Palazzo Pitti;

1766, London, *Catalogue of a Genuine and Curious Collection of Italian, Dutch, and Flemish Pictures, brought from Abroad, by Mr. Greenwood, likewise some Capital Groupes of Bronzes, Antique Marble Busto's, &c.*, Prestage, 1 February 1766, lot 44; Probably bought by William Murray, first Earl of Mansfield (1705-93); By descent at Scone Palace;

2007, London, *Scone Palace and Blairquhan. The Selected Contents of two great Scottish Houses*, Christie's, 24 May 2007, lot 225;

2008, Tomasso Brothers;

2010, Trinity Fine Art;

Private Collection, Rome.

Literature

Scultura, Tomasso Brothers Fine Art, New York 2008, no. 18 (entry by Anthea Brook)

Anthea Brook, *Pietro Tacca a Livorno. Il Monumento a Ferdinando de' Medici*, Livorno 2008, pp. 42-44, figs. 51-56

Anthea Brook, 'From Borgo Pinti to Doccia: the afterlife of Pietro Tacca's Moors for Livorno' in Elizabeth McGrath and Jean Michel Massing, eds., *The Slave in European Art*, London 2012, pp. 165-91, pp. 174-75.

This beautiful ensemble is a small-scale reduction of the monument to Ferdinando I, Grand Duke of Tuscany (1549-1609) which, since the late nineteenth century, has been sited on the Piazza Micheli in Livorno. This monument, famous for its over-life size bronze figures of the *Quattro Mori* or Four Moors by Pietro Tacca, has been described as 'arguably one of the most politically and socially charged public monuments in early modern Europe'¹ The Trinity reduction broadly reproduces the monument in its original state. The figure of Ferdinando I, dressed in armour, stands atop the pedestal in a nonchalant pose, his left hand placed on his hip and his right holding a commander's baton. He treads upon a panoply of arms symbolic of victory over Turkish forces, consisting of a turban, a quiver of arrows and bow (one end of the bow lost, the other loose), a sword and a baton. At the base

of the pedestal are four chained half-naked figures of Africans or 'Moors', one of whom looks up towards the Grand Duke. Three of the figures depict individuals with North African or Arab features, the fourth is a sub-Saharan African. The pedestal and base are made from ebonised pear wood, into the sides of which are set eight red variegated jasper panels framed in gilt-bronze. Also in gilt-bronze are the trophy of Turkish arms, the mask-like volutes to which the Moors chains attach, and the seats upon which they are placed.



THE MONUMENT TO FERDINANDO I

¹ Steven F. Ostrow, 'Pietro Tacca and his *Quattro Mori*: The Beauty and Identity of the Slaves', *Artibus et Historiae*, 71 (2015), pp. 145-80, p. 145.

² For the Livorno Monument, see most recently Jessica Mack-Andrick, *Pietro Tacca. Hofbildhauer der Medici (1577-1640)*, Weimar 2005, pp. 101-66 and Anthea Brook, *Pietro Tacca a Livorno. Il Monumento a Ferdinando de' Medici*, Livorno 2008.

³ For recent discussion, Jeremy Warren, *The Wallace Collection. Catalogue of Italian Sculpture*, 2 vols., London 2016, nos. 115-16.

⁴ 'il ritratto più realistico, più inaspettato e avveniristico, e più commovente mai realizzato dell'artista'. Eike Schmidt, 'La ritrattistica nella scultura fiorentina tra Michelangelo e Pietro Tacca' in *Pietro Tacca: Carrara, la Toscana, le Grandi Corti Europee*, Carrara 2007, pp. 40-53, p. 51.

The monument to Ferdinando I in Livorno has, since its completion in the early decades of the seventeenth century, been one of the most-admired of all Medici monuments, largely because of the impact of Pietro Tacca's extraordinarily powerful over life-size bronze figures of four African captives, the *Quattro Mori* or Four Moors.² Pietro Tacca was one of the closest and most trusted collaborators of Giambologna (1529-1608), the heir to Giambologna's workshop in the Borgo Pinti and his successor as court sculptor to the Medici court in Florence. As Giambologna's right-hand man, much of Tacca's time and energy went into the reproduction of his master's models or the realisation of his projects, especially towards the end of his life, as Giambologna became too old to work himself. Even after Giambologna's death, the Borgo Pinti workshop under Tacca continued to work largely in a Giambolognesque idiom. A good example are the five large groups by Pietro Tacca depicting Deeds of Hercules, which originated in a commission for a gift for King

James I of England and which seem to have been only cast in bronze after Pietro's death, by his son Ferdinando.³ The brilliant and realistic *Quattro Mori* on the other hand may be regarded as Pietro Tacca's most original figurative compositions, arguably his greatest sculptural works. Realistic, dignified and immensely moving portraits of four slaves deprived of their liberty, they have rightly been described as 'the most realistic, most unexpected and forward-looking, and most moving portraits that Pietro Tacca ever made.'⁴ Unquestionably, the Moors demonstrate Tacca's own genius as a portraitist and sculptor.

The history of the creation of the Livorno monument to Ferdinando I was long and complex. It was conceived in the 1590s as one of a series of statues of Medici Grand Dukes for public spaces in Tuscan cities, intended to help cement local loyalty to the city's overlords. The other monuments are in Arezzo (*Ferdinando I*, by Giambologna and Pietro Francavilla, 1594) and in Pisa (*Ferdinando I*, Giambologna and Francavilla, 1594; *Cosimo I*,

by Francavilla, 1596).

The first record of the Livorno project dates to 1595, when Ferdinando sought a sculptor to make his statue, settling on Giovanni Bandini who, although elderly by this date, was still actively working. Bandini, who

construction of the base by Pietro Tacca and the installation of the statue had to wait until 1617, some years after Ferdinando's death in 1609. It was probably Ferdinando who originally had the idea of adorning the base of the monument with sculptures



enjoyed a very high reputation in his lifetime as a portrait sculptor,⁵ managed before his death in 1599 to complete the statue, but not the base; in 1601 the statue was transported from Carrara to Livorno where it was temporarily stored. The

of prisoners. A similar idea was at the same time conceived for the base of the equestrian monument of King Henry IV of France, then being designed in the workshop of the aged Giambologna, with much input from Pietro Tacca.

Fig. 1: Giovanni Bandini and Pietro Tacca, *Monument to Ferdinando I de' Medici*, Livorno

⁵ See Jeremy Warren, 'A Grand Master in Miniature. Giovanni Bandini's bust of Jean de Valette', *The Burlington Magazine*, CLX (March 2018), pp. 196-205, esp. pp. 202-03.



In 1607 Tacca visited Livorno with his colleague Cosimo Cappelli, with permission to make wax casts of limbs, faces and other parts from the galley slaves housed in the city's *Bagno dei Forzati*, a giant holding centre for the thousands of captives who had streamed into Livorno. Tacca's biographer Filippo Baldinucci gave a vivid account of the exercise, writing that Tacca 'was able to make use of those slaves whose bodies had the finest musculature and were the most suitable for casting from to make a most perfect body, and thus he took many, many casts of the most beautiful body parts. Among the slaves was a Turkish moor known by the nickname Morgiano, wonderfully tall and perfect in every aspect of his anatomy. He was of great help to Tacca in creating the beautiful figure, with his face modelled from nature, that we can see today.'⁶ Charmingly, Baldinucci added that 'I who write this, when I was a child aged ten, I saw this Morgiano and got to know and talk with him with some pleasure; even though I was so small, I could recognise him through comparison of his image with the beautiful original.'⁷ Another chronicler explained that Morgiano had come from Algeria, adding that the model for the oldest of the four Moors on the monument had been 'a robust old man from Salé called Ali.'⁸ The Moors were cast and installed in two pairs, the first in 1623,

the second probably in 1625. The trophy of Ottoman spoils under the feet of the Grand Duke had been cast by 1633,⁹ but was only put in place in 1638, when the young Ferdinando Tacca was sent by his father to Livorno, to oversee its installation; thus the monument was completed by the young sculptor who, a few years later, would make his own small version of this masterpiece. Although the monument in Livorno is spectacular enough, it should in fact have been even grander. When admiring the spectacular marine fountains by Pietro Tacca that today adorn Piazza Santissima Annunziata in Florence, few people are aware that they were made to accompany the Livorno monument. After their completion in 1633 and before they could be sent to Livorno, they were diverted to another project in Florence, so never left the city. Had the fountains been installed in Livorno, they might nevertheless have distracted from the monument as we see it today, with the magnificent figures of the Four Moors dominant. When compared with the other set of slaves to have been made within Giambologna's circle at this time, the bronze prisoners for the monument of Henri IV designed by Pietro Francavilla and cast by Francesco Bordoni (Musée du Louvre, Paris), they seem, as Anthea Brook noted, like the work of different generations. Those made for the

⁶ 'quivi ebbe facoltà di valersi di quanti schiavi vi avesse riconosciuti de' muscoli più leggiadri, e più accomodati all'imitazione per formarne un perfettissimo corpo, e molti e molti ne formò nelle più belle parti. Uno di costoro fu uno schiavo moro turco, che chiamavasi per soprannome Morgiano, che per grandezza di persona, e per fattezze d'ogni sua parte era bellissimo, e fu di grande aiuto al Tacca per condurne la bella figura, colla sua naturale effigie, che oggi vediamo.' Filippo Saverio Baldinucci, *Notizie dei Professori del Disegno da Cimabue in qua...*, ed. F. Ranalli, 5 vols., Florence 1846, IV, p. 86.

⁷ 'ed io che tali cose scrivo, in tempo di mia puerizia, in età di dieci anni, il vidi, e conobbi, e parlai con esso non senza gusto, benchè in si poc'età, nel ravvisar che io faceva a confronto del ritratto il bello originale.' *ibid.*

⁸ 'Un robusto Vecchio Salettino detto Ali'. Brook (note 2), p. 15, citing the 18th-century chronicle of Livorno by Mariano Santelli. Salé is a port near Rabat in Morocco; it was from there that many of the most feared corsairs in the Mediterranean originated.

⁹ Simonetta Lo Vullo Bianchi, 'Note e documenti su Pietro e Ferdinando Tacca', *Rivista d'Arte*, 13 (1931), pp. 133-213, pp. 210-11, docs. XI-XII.

Paris monument are decorous and elegant, looking back to Giambologna's earlier work. Pietro Tacca's masterpieces on the other hand look forward to the bold grandeur of Bernini's Baroque, although their intense realism is very different to anything Bernini himself made. There is a similar disjunction within the Livorno monument itself, between the cool formality of Bandini's marble statue of Ferdinando and the astonishing figures of the Moors, twisting and turning restlessly on their tiny seats. Although the Livorno monument today remains very largely unchanged from its original form, it has undergone some restoration, firstly in the late nineteenth century, when it was moved some twenty metres from its original position, and again after damage in the bombardment of Livorno towards the end of the Second World War. The biggest change to the monument occurred however in 1799, the loss of the bronze trophy of arms on the base below Ferdinando's feet, which occurred during the short-lived French occupation of Livorno in that year.



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LIVORNO MONUMENT TO FERDINANDO I

Perhaps more than any of the other monuments commissioned during his reign as Grand Duke, Ferdinando I had a personal stake in the Livorno monument, sited in a prominent position just outside the city gates of Livorno and visible to any ship arriving at the port. The positioning of the monument emphasised the importance of the role of Grand Duke Ferdinando I in the life of Livorno, both as the effective founder of the city and as Grand Master of the Cavalieri di Santo Stefano, or Knights of Saint Stephen.

A Florentine possession since 1421, Livorno remained a small and insignificant port until the sixteenth century, during which period it was gradually developed to become the major port for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. The process was begun by Ferdinando's father Cosimo I, who built the *Fortezza Vecchia*, declared Livorno a free port and granted special privileges to Jews to encourage them to settle in the town. Although Grand Duke Francesco I (reigned 1574-87) continued this work, it is his brother Ferdinando I who is regarded as the true founder of modern Livorno, which he called the 'the key to my domains' (*la chiave dei miei stati*). Ferdinando visited frequently, often personally overseeing the

massive programme of works to strengthen the fortifications, expand the port and create a modern planned centre, which was declared a city in 1606. Ferdinando invited merchants and craftsmen to settle in Livorno, encouraging religious minorities, political refugees and even criminals, providing they were prepared to contribute to the life of his new city. Thus, in the first decade of the new century the population of Livorno grew exponentially, from just 530 inhabitants in 1591 to 3,118 by 1601 and, by the time of Ferdinando's death in 1609, more than 6,000. Under his rule Livorno had become one of the most important Mediterranean ports, a signal of Tuscany's wish to be seen as a leading state within Italy and beyond.

It was therefore fundamental for Ferdinando I that his monument should be placed in a highly visible location within the city that was, to all intents and purposes, his creation. A further potent reason for this siting - at the end of the Via Ferdinanda facing the port and the open sea - was the monument's symbolic celebration of the Order of Saint Stephen, another initiative in which the Grand Duke played a fundamental role.





THE ORDER OF SAINT STEPHEN

In the monument in Livorno, Ferdinando is shown wearing a breastplate embellished with the eight-pointed Cross of the Order of Saint Stephen, as does his father Cosimo I, in the statue commissioned by Ferdinando for Pisa, sited in the Piazza dei Cavalieri in Pisa, before the former headquarters of the Order.

The sixteenth century was marked by almost constant conflict between the European powers and the Ottoman Empire which, in the course of the century, had developed an aggressive expansionist policy which came to threaten Christian Europe at multiple points, both on land and sea. The Mediterranean was a focal point for the conflict through the so-called corsair wars, in which Ottomans and Christians attempted to strangle each other's trade through maritime warfare, both sides using heavily armed galleys as well as smaller fast sailing vessels. The

Ottoman corsairs were mainly recruited from the North African Maghreb region, where many of their ships were also based. Increasingly the corsairs did not only attack shipping, but also launched assaults by sea and by land on towns and cities along the Mediterranean coast. Between 1543-1566 the Ottoman attacks reached a crescendo, to which the Christian states, already preoccupied with their own conflicts with one another, were unable at first to respond. From the 1560s the balance began gradually to shift, with the successful defence of Malta in 1565 followed by the decisive Christian victory at the battle of Lepanto in 1571. The founding in 1562 by Cosimo I de' Medici of the Cavalieri di Santo Stefano, or Knights of Saint Stephen, was a further decisive step in redressing the balance against the Ottoman threat.

This order of chivalry was composed of members of the

great aristocratic families of Tuscany and was closely modelled on the two most prestigious Christian knightly orders, the Knights of St John (Order of Saint John of Jerusalem) based in Malta, and the Habsburg Order of the Golden Fleece. Its headquarters was established in Pisa, but the fleet of galleys and other ships was based at Livorno. The main purpose of the Order of Saint Stephen was to help control the Barbary corsairs, whose galleys plagued the Mediterranean. More than any of the Medici Grand Dukes, Ferdinando personally associated himself with the Order, vigorously promoting and developing it as an important tool in the fight against the Turk, as well as a means of enhancing the prestige of Tuscany, as a major European Christian power on the frontline in the Mediterranean wars. It was during his reign that the Order enjoyed its most brilliant period under the leadership of Admiral Jacopo Inghirami (1565-1624), including its two greatest military successes, the capture of the Ottoman stronghold of Preveza in northwestern Greece in 1605, and the siege and capture in 1607 of the Tunisian coastal city of Bona, the principal naval base for the Barbary corsairs.





SLAVES IN LIVORNO

The four bronze slaves at the foot of the Livorno monument were also intended as tangible symbols of the impact of the Order of Saint Stephen and the presence of its fleet in Livorno. They would certainly have been understood as such. For both Christian and Muslim opponents in the galley wars in the Mediterranean, the taking of slaves was an essential weapon in their warfare. Enslaving 'infidels' belonging to the other religion reduced the enemy's numbers, whilst also providing oarsmen for the galleys that formed the backbone of each side's fleets. Much was also made by each side of its successes in liberating enslaved co-religionists. Huge numbers of people were trafficked in this manner, many of them through Livorno, which became one of the principal slaving centres in Christendom. By the early seventeenth century, Livorno was the most important

Italian centre in the war between Christians and Muslims, in part because of the number of slaves passing through the port. In the course of 1605, the year of the victory at Preveza, the Order's galleys transported some 2,000 slaves to Livorno. However, the Order achieved its greatest single capture of slaves in September 1607, when some 1,500 people were seized during its successful assault on the city of Bona. 1607 was, as we have seen, the year in which Pietro Tacca was in Livorno studying the anatomy of slaves housed in the vast residential building commissioned by Ferdinando, known as the *Bagno dei Forzati*. By the early seventeenth century, Livorno had the highest population of Muslim slaves of any city on the peninsula, reaching a high point of around 20% of the population. Slaves were required to be marked, to wear an iron ring around their

ankle and to wear a special dress, but otherwise were allowed a quite extensive degree of liberty, even being allowed to practise trades or set up small shops. A good sense of the varied daily lives of the slaves at Livorno can be gained from the set of engravings of *Slaves and Sailors* by Cornelis de Wael (1592-1667), a Flemish painter resident in Italy. Published in 1645 and 1647, the engravings were based on scenes within the port of Livorno.¹⁰

North African and other Muslim slaves would therefore have been an everyday sight in the city at this time, as we learn

from an evocative passage in John Evelyn's diary, recording his visit to Livorno in October 1644:

'Here is in Ligorne, and especially this Piazza, such a concourse of Slaves, consisting of Turkes, Mores and other Nations, as the number and confusion is prodigious; some buying, others selling; some drinking, others playing, some working, others sleeping, fighting, singing, weeping and a thousand other postures and passions; yet all of them naked, and miserably Chayn'd, with a Canvas only to hide their shame.'

¹⁰ Alison Stoesser, *Van Dyck's hosts in Genoa: Lucas and Cornelis de Wael's lives, business activities and works*, 2 vols., Turnhout 2018, nos. B10-1-12.





THE LIVORNO MONUMENT AND ITS LEGACY



Livorno, known to British Grand Tourists as Leghorn, was the gateway to Florence for John Evelyn and many more visitors. Stefano della Bella's etchings show the monument standing proudly, amidst all the hurly-burly of the daily life of a busy sea port. Placed in such a prominent position, the Livorno monument was very well known to travellers, quickly gaining many admirers. John Evelyn's is one of the earliest descriptions: 'Just before the sea is an ample Piazza for the

Market, where are erected those incomparable Statues, with the fowre slaves of Copper much exceeding the life for proportion; & in the judgment of most Artists one of the best peeces of modern Worke that was ever don.' Four years later in 1648, another English traveller John Raymond wrote that the Moors were 'so lively represented, that if the Statuary could have fram'd a voice as well as those bodies, he might have conquered nature.' Almost invariably commentators

Fig. 2: Stefano Della Bella, *Monument to Ferdinando I de' Medici in Livorno*, etching (detail)

¹¹ For a summary of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century comments on the monument, see Ostrow (note 1), pp. 163-65.

¹² Edward Wright, *Some Observations made in Travelling through France, Italy, &c. in the Years 1720, 1721, and 1722*, London 1730, p. 374.

focused on the Moors, in comparison to which the statue of Ferdinando was generally found wanting by those writers who bothered to mention it.¹¹ For Edward Wright in 1730, for example, the ‘old Slave is most

monument features often in views of the harbour of Livorno, amongst the most vivid two of Stefano della Bella’s etchings of 1654-55 depicting the busy port. The monument also features prominently in one of



Fig. 3: Baldassarre Franceschini, called Volterrano, *Fasti Medicei* (detail with the monument to Ferdinando I), fresco, Villa La Petraia, Castello (Florence)

excellent, and all the Slaves are (I think) better than the principal figure.¹²

The Moors were therefore from the start the element of the monument that really elicited admiration. As early as 1623, the German sculptor Georg Petel made a drawing of one of the slaves (suffering the indignity of being arrested on suspicion of being a spy!). The

the frescoes painted between 1636 and 1646 by Baldassare Franceschini, Il Volterrano, for the cycle *Fasti Medicei* in the Medicean Villa La Petraia near Florence. The fresco has considerable variations in the figure of Ferdinando, who in it is shown striding forwards. The most influential derivations were however those made by Giovan Battista Foggini (1652-





1725) who, after the death of Ferdinando Tacca in 1686, took over the sculpture workshops founded by Giambologna and maintained by his successors. Among the models in the Borgo Pinti workshops in 1687 were 'four plaster models of colossuses representing the four bronze slaves which are in the port of Livorno, two about to fall apart, placed on wooden bases'.¹³ Baldinucci, when he visited the workshops after they had been taken over by Foggini, saw more models of the Moors, which he described as 'some models of clay and plaster casts'.¹⁴ The

derivative models developed by Foggini respect Tacca's inventions in the figures' poses, but alter their facial appearance considerably, so that the group of four in his hands became more ethnically diverse, allowing them to serve as allegories of the four Continents. Even into recent times the set of four gesso casts after Foggini's models in the museum in Livorno is, quite wrongly, described as Tacca's original models.¹⁵ Numerous other casts of Foggini's models are known, in bronze and in porcelain produced at the Doccia factory.¹⁶

¹³ 'Quattro Gessi di Colossi rappresentanti gli quattro Schiavi di Bronzo che sono nel Porto di Livorno, due de' quali minacciano rovina, posano sopra a Base di Legno.' Klaus Lankheit, *Florentinische Barockplastik. Die Kunst am Hofe der letzten Medici 1670-1743*, Munich 1962, p. 269, doc. 258.

¹⁴ 'alcuni modelli di loto e getti di gesso'. Baldinucci (note 6), p. 86.

¹⁵ *Pietro Tacca: Carrara, la Toscana, le Grandi Corti Europee* (note 4), no. 1.

¹⁶ For discussion of the figures and their adaptation, see Brook (note 2), pp. 45-49.



FERDINANDO TACCA

Much progress has been made in recent decades in understanding better the artistic personality of Ferdinando Tacca, a remarkable figure who worked not only as a sculptor but also as an innovative theatre designer, architect and engineer. After training and working as an assistant to his father Pietro, Ferdinando took over the workshop and the position of court sculptor and architect for the Medici Grand Dukes on Pietro's death in 1640. His first task was to complete important commissions left by his father, in 1640-42 the completion and installation of the equestrian monument to King Philip IV of Spain in Madrid, then between 1642-49 the bronze statues of Ferdinando I and Cosimo II for the Medici Chapel in San Lorenzo.

A decline in commissions from the Medici during the 1640s led him to seek work elsewhere, notably in 1647-50 the bronze furnishings for the chapel in the Ducal Palace in Massa, of which two large signed figures of standing angels survive in the Wallace Collection.¹⁷ His greatest surviving work in bronze is the antependium bronze relief

with the *Martyrdom of St Stephen*, in the Church of Santo Stefano al Ponte, Florence, made in the early 1650s.¹⁸ The distinctive and somewhat theatrical figure groups in the relief were the starting point for consideration of Ferdinando as a maker of small bronzes, leading to the now widely accepted attribution to him of a series of two-figure bronze statuettes, remarkable for their pictorial and theatrical qualities.¹⁹ Ferdinando began increasingly to focus on his work as court architect and designer of festive ephemera and theatre stages, and is today recognised as an important figure in the history of the baroque theatre. In 1654 he became the principal designer of festivities and religious rites to the Medici court, whilst two years later he received the commission to design, build and direct the first Medici theatre, the famous Teatro della Pergola. It is assumed that, with his increasing involvement in theatrical work, he was able to devote less time to bronze sculpture, so that most of his surviving work in bronze is therefore likely to date from the decade of the 1640s.

¹⁷ Warren (note 3), nos. 118-119.

¹⁸ Anthea Brook, 'Rediscovered works of Ferdinando Tacca for the former high altar of S. Stefano al Ponte Vecchio', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz*, 29 (1985), pp. 111-28; Anthea Brook, *Ferdinando Tacca's High Altar for Santo Stefano al Ponte and its Bronze Adornments*, Florence 2017.

¹⁹ Anthony Radcliffe, 'Ferdinando Tacca, the Missing Link in Florentine Baroque Bronzes' in *Kunst des Barock in der Toskana. Studien zur Kunst unter den letzten Medici*, Munich 1976, pp. 14-23.

FERDINANDO TACCA'S VERSION OF THE MONUMENT TO FERDINANDO I

²⁰ Inv. E-261. Letizia Azcue Brea, *La Escultura en la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. Catálogo y Estudio*, Madrid 1994, pp. 353-55.

As we have seen, it was the young Ferdinando Tacca who was sent by his father Pietro to Livorno in 1638, to install the final section of the Livorno monument, the bronze trophy of arms symbolising booty captured from the Ottomans, which was placed at the feet of Ferdinando. It is not inconceivable that as a young apprentice in his father's workshop, Ferdinando could have been entrusted with some of the finishing work on this subsidiary element of the monument, cast by 1633.

It is not surprising that Ferdinando's own small-scale versions of the monument should reflect intimate knowledge of the original structure. Two versions of Ferdinando Tacca's reduction are known, the present model and another in the collection of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid.²⁰ The two versions are very similar, albeit with some important differences. Unlike the Trinity version, the Madrid example is made entirely from bronze, except for inset *pietra dura* plaques in the sides of the base. It was confiscated along with other works of art from

the Jesuit Convent in Madrid in 1774, arriving in the Academy in 1775.

The Trinity version in particular is a remarkable exercise in the successful translation of a large outdoor monument into a precious object, designed for display within the context of rich and elaborate Baroque courtly interiors.

In it, the basic architectural form of the monument is faithfully rendered in ebonised pearwood, including the steps and a section at the top, inserted in 1622 in order to raise the figure of the Grand Duke; there is some minor simplification to take account of the smaller scale. Likewise, the small bronze mounts to hold the slaves' chains are simplified winged volutes, rather than the marine harpies on the monument. The base of the Trinity version is further embellished with red jasper panels framed in gilt-bronze, whilst the Madrid version has *pietra dura* panel inlays without frames. This treatment would at first sight appear to reflect the red marble decorative panels to be seen today on the sides of the monument in Livorno, however the matter is not quite so simple.

Although Pietro Tacca gave instructions in 1626 for seven of the eight panels to be filled with coloured marble and the eighth with a touchstone (black stone) panel for the dedicatory inscription,²¹ this instruction

elements, the variations between original monument and the reductions are more apparent. Compared with Bandini's somewhat static marble statue of the Grand Duke, the small bronze version has a far greater

²¹ 'e ne vani della base mettervi le pietre o diaspri..' In a document of 25 June 1626 concerning works required to complete the monument, including the trophy of spoils. Lo Vullo Bianchi (note 9), pp. 202-03, docs. XI-XII.



was evidently not carried out at the time. The panels in the sides of the monument therefore remained blank, until the late nineteenth-century restoration campaign. When it comes to the figurative

sense of energy and movement. There is a stronger element of torsion in the body, with the body swinging at the hips and the left leg twisting outwards at the ankle. The positions of both arms have been modified, the left

Fig. 3: Ferdinando Tacca, Group of the Monument to Ferdinando I de' Medici, Real Academia di Bellas Artes di San Fernando, Madrid

pushed forward a little, whilst Ferdinando's hand is thrust into a fold of his garment. The right hand with the commander's baton has also been brought round so that the baton is held across the front of the body. The face is entirely different, as is the armour which, significantly, does not bear the Cross of the Order of Saint Stephen. The cloak is also quite different both at front and at back, draped over the shoulders and falling down the back in sharply-modelled angular v-shaped folds.

Whereas the figure of the Grand Duke can best be described as a free variant on Bandini's original figure, the four figures of Moors faithfully reproduce the poses, expressions and ethnic features of the originals, the only substantive change the fact that the oldest Moor, at the front of the monument to the Grand Duke's left, is here not shown naked but is draped, like the other three. The Moors are remarkable for the sensitivity with which the figures are modelled and finished.





ATTRIBUTION

The two small versions of the *Monument to Ferdinando I* may be securely attributed to Ferdinando Tacca, firstly on documentary grounds. That now in Madrid is clearly identifiable with the bronze group of this subject recorded in the inventory of Ferdinando Tacca's workshop, made after the artist's death in 1686:

'The Statue of the most serene Grand Duke Ferdinando, with the Four Slaves and Trophies, and with its base, the whole of Bronze, the base with four inset hardstones, similar to the one that is in Livorno, the figures are around half a *braccio* high [c. 30 cm.]²²

To this may be added stylistic evidence. The figures of the Moors match closely those to be found in the *Stoning of Saint Stephen* antependium and the two figure bronze groups attributed to Ferdinando Tacca: the softly-modelled bodies; the facial types with smallish, almond-shaped eyes delineated without pupils, and set deep within sockets marked by prominent eyelids; the absence of eyebrows; the half-closed

mouths; the carefully-modelled squarish hand and toe nails. When it comes to the statue of Ferdinando, stylistic features again point to Ferdinando Tacca's authorship: the rather balletic pose; the modelling of the head and face, including the bunch of hair at the forehead and the v-shaped hair at the nape of the neck; the modelling of the armour, including such smaller features as the scallop-shaped decoration at the top of the boots, and the scalloped piccadill edging on the shoulder sections (pauldrons). Parallels for all these motifs can be found among the figures on the antependium relief of the *Stoning of Saint Stephen*. The finishing of the surfaces, with extensive use of a small file, is characteristic of Ferdinando Tacca, who also often used small punches to stipple elements of his bronzes such as the areas of ground, habitually embellished with stippled whorl patterns. Here, a very fine pointed tool has been used to stipple the shaven heads of three of the slaves (the fourth, the elderly slave Ali, is shown entirely bald).

²² 'La Statua del Ser.mo Granduca Ferdinando, con li quattro Schiavi e Trofei, con Sua base il tutto di Bronzo, e nella base n.º quattro Pietre dure, Fatta simile a quella che è in Livorno e le figure Sono alte Mezzo braccio in circa.' Dimitrios Zikos, 'Giambolognas Kleinbronzen und ihre Rezeption in der florentinischen Bronzeplastik des 17. Jahrhunderts', Ph.D. dissertation, Albert-Ludwigs Universität, Freiburg im Breisgau 2010, p. 279.



HISTORY

The version of Ferdinando Tacca's *Monument to Ferdinando I* can boast a distinguished provenance from the mid-eighteenth century. Made for the Medici, it is first recorded in 1761 in an inventory of the Palazzo Pitti:

'A bronze relief maximum of 12 soldi high [c. 35 cm.] depicting the Grand Duke Ferdinando II, with a sword at his side, and a commander's baton, and a Turkish turban, he stands upon a base made of ebonised pear-wood, into which are set panels of breccia with small bronze frames; around this base may be seen four bronze slaves a maximum of 1/3 [braccio; i.e. c. 19 cm.] high, they are all chained to little mounts, likewise of bronze.'²³

The scribe made some errors in his description – the ensemble is not a relief and the figure is of course Ferdinando I – but the description otherwise matches closely Ferdinando Tacca's reduction of the Livorno monument. At this time in Florence, under the new Habsburg-Lorraine Grand Dukes there was much

clearing out of objects from the collections. The monument next appears at auction in London in 1766, as part of a sale of paintings and sculptures at Prestage's auction house, of property belonging to a John Greenwood, a merchant who seems to have specialised in importing paintings and works of art from the Continent for sale in London. Lot 44 on the second day of the sale, the monument was attributed to Pietro Tacca, bizarrely misdescribed as 'Pietzo Zucca' and was described in the catalogue as 'The Model of the Fountain at Leghorn, Cosmus V. with the Slaves, an exceeding high-finished, elegant Bronze.' There were a number of other Giambolognesque bronzes in the sale, some of which may also have come from the Medici collections. They included on the first day lot 41 'A Gladiator', probably a version of Giambologna's *Mars*, and lot 42, 'A Groupe of a Satyr and a sleeping Nymph'. On the second day, in addition to the Livorno monument, lot 42 was 'A Group of a Moor on a Horse, fighting a Lion', which

²³ 'Un basso rilievo di bronzo alto nel più soldi 12 rappresentante il granduca Ferdinando 2°, con spada in fianco, e bastone del comando, e un turbante da Turco, posa sopra una base di pero tinto di nero, con formelle incastrate di breccie con cornicette di bronzo; vedonsi attorno a detta base quattro schiavi di bronzo alti nel più 1/3 in circa stanno tutti incatenati a una borchia di rame simile.' Florence, Archivio di Stato, Guardaroba Medicea, Appendice, 94, fol. 5v. In the 'Seconda camera dipinta di mano del Colonna con finestra alta sulla piazza'. Document first identified by Dimitrios Zikos.

²⁴ Jeremy Warren, *Beauty and Power. Renaissance and Baroque Bronzes from the Peter Marino Collection*, London 2010, no. 9.

²⁵ For recent discussion, Warren (note 3), no. 109.

²⁶ James Oldham, *The Mansfield Manuscripts and the Growth of English Law in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols., Chapel Hill/London 1992, I, p. 25.

must have been an example of the equestrian group variously attributed to Ferdinando Tacca or to his assistant Damiano Cappelli,²⁴ and lot 45 'Hercules and the Stag, a most capital and pleasing Piece' attributed to Giambologna.²⁵ The sale exemplifies the strength of the market in London at this time for bronze sculptures by Giambologna and his school. Ferdinando Tacca's monument to Ferdinando I and the version of Giambologna's *Hercules and the Stag* fetched by far the highest prices for sculptures in the sale, 21 guineas (£21 1s. or £21.05) each.

It has hitherto been assumed that the buyer of the Tacca, at the sale or shortly thereafter, was David Murray, second earl of Mansfield (1727-1796). However, Viscount Stormont, as Murray then was, was British Ambassador in Vienna between 1763 and 1772, so is most unlikely to have been in London at this time. Unless he acquired the sculpture at a later date, therefore, the buyer is more likely to have been the great lawyer and politician William Murray, first Earl of Mansfield (1705-93), a close friend of the poet Alexander Pope. In 1754 Murray bought Kenwood House on Hampstead Heath, which he commissioned the Adam brothers to expand and improve. The house, with its beautifully landscaped gardens, became a model for gracious country living and the principal place of entertaining for Lord

and Lady Mansfield. In 1757 Lady Mansfield wrote to her nephew that 'Kenwood is now in great beauty. Your Uncle is passionately fond of it. We go thither every Saturday and return on Mondays but I live in hopes we shall now soon go thither to fix for the Summer.'²⁶ As Lord Chief Justice from 1756 to 1778, Lord Mansfield had jurisdiction over cases in England pertaining to slavery; his judgment in the 1772 case concerning James Somerset, which prevented planters from forcibly returning to the West Indies slaves who were resident in England, has often been thought to mark the beginning of serious steps towards the abolition of slavery. Within Mansfield's household at Kenwood and at his London home in Bloomsbury Square lived a mulatto woman, Dido Elizabeth Belle (1761?-1804), the illegitimate daughter of Mansfield's nephew Sir James Lindsay, whom Mansfield brought into the household as a companion for his adopted great-niece, Lady Elizabeth Murray. Mansfield was extremely fond of Dido, to whom he bequeathed a generous legacy.

Assuming it was acquired by the first Earl, Ferdinando Tacca's monument of Ferdinando I was presumably first kept at Kenwood or at Bloomsbury Square. It first came to notice however at Scone Palace, the Earls of Mansfields' Scottish home, from which it was sold in 2007.



DATING AND PURPOSE

If the histories of the two known versions of the Livorno monument are compared, the one now in Madrid seems to have been a reference model of some kind, kept by Ferdinando Tacca in his workshop until his death in 1686. The Trinity version on the other hand, recorded in 1761 in the Medici collections in Palazzo Pitti, was presumably made for the ruling family. It is likely to have been in existence by 1646, since the painted fresco of the monument in Volterrano's cycle at the Villa La Petraia, completed by that year, appears to show direct knowledge of this version.

The evidence for this is the trophy of arms. In all three versions, the lost element from the original monument (in so far as its form can be deduced from Stefano della Bella's etching) and the two bronze versions, this element is modelled differently. In both della Bella and in the Madrid reduction, there is a large double swathe of drapery descending over the edge of the base, in front of the Grand Duke's feet; in both these versions the commander's baton may also be seen projecting out from the left of the monument,

as seen by the viewer. In the Trinity version there is just a single swathe of drape, whilst the baton projects out from the right side. In Volterrano's fresco the trophy appears to have been quite carefully reproduced; there is just a single swathe of drapery at the front, whilst the baton clearly projects from the right. Volterrano also shows on the left the quiver and bow and the turban behind Ferdinando's left foot – in the lost panoply on the Livorno monument, it seems to have been placed between his feet. In only one respect does Volterrano's image suggest greater direct knowledge of the monument as opposed to the reductions, the blank lower panels on the sides of the monument; his fictive dedicatory panel on the front of the main element of the base perhaps recalls Pietro Tacca's instruction in 1626 for the insertion of a touchstone panel, for the dedicatory inscription. It would seem probable therefore that Volterrano saved himself the trouble of having to travel to Livorno, by accessing some image of the monument in Florence. This could well have been Ferdinando Tacca's

reduction made for the Medici collections.

Without documentary evidence we cannot know precisely for what purpose the Trinity version was made. It is stylistically clearly the work of Ferdinando Tacca rather than his father Pietro, so cannot be a preliminary model made c. 1626 as a guide for the completion of the Livorno monument; in addition, such a model would be unlikely to have the elaborate gilt-bronze frames, stylistically consistent with other furniture made in the court workshops for the Palazzo Pitti in the middle decades of the seventeenth century. It could have been made by Ferdinando around the time that he visited Livorno, to oversee the completion of the monument with the installation of the trophy of arms.

Or perhaps it was made further into the 1640s. The most curious aspect of the sculpture, given that it was made for the Medici collections, is the figure of Ferdinando I. The four Moors are the best modelled figures, sophisticated reductions of Pietro Tacca's originals, which capture much of the pathos of the larger figures. They are proportionately slightly smaller in relation to the remainder of the monument than the original figures in Livorno; this has the effect in the reduction of increasing the overall presence of the bronze figure of the Grand Duke. The figure of Ferdinando is somewhat perfunctorily modelled, certainly when

compared with the Moors. The hanging strap for the sword is missing (it is present in the version in Madrid) and the head of the Grand Duke is surprisingly weak, especially the hair at the back; although just recognisable as Ferdinando I, it is not a close likeness. The absence in the reduction of the Cross of the Order of Saint Stephen on Ferdinando's breastplate can hardly be accidental, given the potency of this symbol in Tuscan Grand Ducal iconography; its omission immediately weakens the association of the small versions of the monument with the Order.

These iconographic anomalies are difficult to explain. However, the 1640s were a period of serious financial difficulties for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, during which the state had to abandon many of its pretensions to a major role on the European stage. One of the prominent victims of the subsequent economy drive was the Order of Saint Stephen which had, over the decades, become increasingly unpopular with the mercantile citizens of Livorno. One of the paradoxes of the sixteenth-century wars against the Turks had been that trade between the two sides had generally continued, even in the midst of hostilities. As the military threat from the Ottomans gradually diminished, merchants in cities such as Livorno became increasingly resentful of the Order's perpetual state of readiness for

war, which impacted ever more heavily on their lucrative trade with the Ottoman empire. The decision by Grand Duke Ferdinando II in 1647 to sell the major part of the fleet of the Order to the French may therefore be seen, on the one hand, as a classic government spending cut, but on the other as a gesture to placate the citizens of Livorno and to reorient the port firmly towards a more purely commercial role. Is it possible therefore to see Ferdinando Tacca's versions of the Livorno monument as reductions intended subtly to downplay both its original

purpose of celebrating the Order of Saint Stephen, but also the figure of its principal champion Grand Duke Ferdinando I, here transformed into a just recognisable, but slightly more anonymous ruler figure? On the other hand, the most celebrated part of the Livorno monument, Pietro Tacca's Four Moors, are certainly not downplayed in this splendid reduction, in which the young Ferdinando Tacca produced four figures of great subtlety and elegance, small bronzes set within a beautifully and harmoniously conceived ensemble, which pay true homage to his father's genius.



