The occupation of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence by Cosimo I de’ Medici and his family in 1540 required an extensive series of alterations to the former Priors’ palace in preparation for its employment as an appropriate ducal residence. Most of the architectural and decorative works considered to be of immediate necessity were undertaken not in the duke’s apartment, but in that of his consort, Eleonora di Toledo. These works were executed to insure that the duchess had a modern apartment that would serve for both her residence and the reception of visitors.

The public function of this apartment was clearly considered of primary importance since the very first work completed in the Quartiere di Eleonora was the creation and decoration of the duchess’s audience chamber, the Camera Verde (Pl. Ia). Following the publication over a century ago of a 1553 palace inventory, the Camera Verde has generally been identified as the duchess’s bedroom. However, a re-examination of this inventory reveals that the room was in fact Eleonora’s audience chamber, or saletta, the most public of the rooms in her suite.

1 This paper developed from research that I began for my dissertation, The Early Patronage of Eleonora di Toledo: The Camera Verde and its Dependencies in the Palazzo Vecchio, Ph.D. diss. Harvard University, Cambridge (Mass.), 1995 (hereafter Edelstein [1995]). Subsequently, this material has been enormously improved due to the kind advice of many scholars, including my dissertation readers, John Shearman and Mirka Beneš. Various colleagues offered generous comments following the oral presentation of some of this material in conference papers given in Florence and Los Angeles, especially Molly Bourne, Robert Carlucci, Edward Goldberg and Ilaria Hoppe. Special thanks are due to Sara Matthews-Grieco for her invaluable editorial suggestions.

2 The inventory was published by Cosimo Conti, La prima reggia di Cosimo I de’ Medici nel Palazzo già della Signoria di Firenze descritta ed illustrata coll’appoggio d’un inventario inedito del 1553 e coll’aggiunta di molti altri documenti, Florence, 1893 (hereafter Conti [1893]).

3 The Camera Verde is perhaps best thought of as saletta, the type of room
Other primary sources provide confirmation for this employment of the Camera Verde. The Green Chamber served principally as a setting for Eleonora’s important role as manager of both household accounts and the Medici estates, as well as the duchess’s own remarkable financial affairs. These activities alone insured that the Camera Verde was an important center for court life in its day, although its importance is largely underestimated in modern accounts of the history of the Palazzo Vecchio during the period of its employment as a ducal palace. Using documentary evidence, this essay proposes a reconstruction of the appearance, furnishings and employment of the Camera Verde in the mid-sixteenth-century, when it served as the Florentine audience chamber of Eleonora di Toledo.

The reconstruction of the Camera Verde here proposed suggests that its decorative program was consciously crafted to reflect the duchess’s own carefully constructed courtly identity, an identity that balanced her newly acquired Florentine persona as Cosimo’s consort with her important, natal Hispano-Neapolitan one, as the daughter of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V’s viceroy in Naples. The propagandistic intent of Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio’s fresco decorations are revealed in such obvious elements as heraldic devices and in less obvious ones, such as the use of grotesques, here linked precisely to Eleonora’s Neapolitan heritage. Further evidence, such as the furnishings described in contemporary court inventories, suggest a variety of ways in which this «Green Chamber» may be seen as a mirror of Eleonora’s identity.

The Camera Verde

When Eleonora di Toledo arrived at the former Priors’ palace in 1540, the rooms reserved for her did not constitute an apartment suitable for both public and private uses. The second floor suite occupied by the duchess had previously served as a dormitory for the Priors, who had not required the kind of state apartment with a series of rooms in enfilade that became necessary for court ceremonial by the mid-sixteenth century⁴. By

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⁴ According to Vasari, the original Trecento space had been a single open hall, divided by wooden screens or partition walls; Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de’ più eccellenti pittori scultori et architettori*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, II, Florence, 1878-1885, p. 436 (hereafter Vasari [1878-85]). However, Trachtenberg provides a logical alternative reconstruction of the disposition of the second floor rooms on the southern (or via
1553, the woodworker and architect Battista del Tasso had succeeded in creating such a suite, whose rooms conformed in number and plan to what is now known as the Quartiere di Eleonora. Precisely where Tasso began work in the duchess’s apartment is of special significance. The first space created and decorated specifically for Eleonora’s use was the Camera Verde (fig. 1, no. 10), along with its better-known dependencies the Chapel della Ninna) side of the palace at the time of its construction; M. Trachtenberg, *Archaeology, Merriment, and Murder: The First Cortile of the Palazzo Vecchio and its Transformations in the Late Florentine Republic*, in *Art Bulletin*, LXXI, Dec. 1989, 4, p. 598-601. According to Trachtenberg, the first dormitory constructed for the Priors contained five rooms in positions analogous to those eventually created for Eleonora in the sixteenth-century by Battista del Tasso. The principal difference between the early fourteenth-century arrangement and the mid-sixteenth-century one was one of communication between the rooms: the original Priors’ rooms were connected by an external balcony, removed by Michelozzo in the fifteenth century during his remodeling of the courtyard; the rooms in Eleonora’s suite are linked by internal doorways. For Michelozzo’s renovation of the suite, see Vasari and Trachtenberg. For the development of the apartment in fifteenth-century Italy, see P. Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior 1400-1600*, New York, 1991, p. 300-312 (hereafter Thornton [1991]).
As we shall see, the Camera Verde served as the duchess’s audience chamber; thus, the most urgent concern in adapting this suite of rooms for Eleonora’s use appears to have been the necessity to establish an appropriate, and legitimating, context for her public role.

Tasso’s concern for the duchess’s public role conforms to a general program adopted for the transformation of the Palazzo Vecchio from the republican seat of government (the Palazzo della Signoria) to the ducal residence (Palazzo Ducale), begun in 1540. The first work undertaken for Cosimo was the conversion of the Great Council Hall, the greatest symbol of the former republican regime, into a ducal audience hall. This project was commissioned from Baccio Bandinelli and begun in 1542. In the following year, Francesco Salviati was commissioned to produce a fresco cycle depicting the story of Camillus in the audience hall previously employed by the Priors of Florence, the Sala dell’Udienza, to serve temporarily as an appropriate setting for the reception of public dignitaries by the duke until Bandinelli’s more grandiose work was complete. It seems clear, then, that the ducal couple’s principal goal in commissioning the adaptation and decoration of the Camera Verde for Eleonora’s use was the creation of a setting appropriate for her recently established court persona, a highly active role that included widely-varying but always significant responsibilities: consort to Cosimo; future mother of the ducal heirs; manager of the Medici estates; and acting head of state during her husband’s absences and illnesses, a role she would be required to play on numerous occasions.


\(^6\) At 9.20 m × 4.72 m, the Camera Verde was by far the smallest of all the public halls in use in the Palazzo Vecchio at the time of Cosimo’s and Eleonora’s early residence there. Compare its dimensions with those of the Salone de’ Cinquecento (length of the west wall 53.47 m; length of the east wall 51.61 m; width 22.15 m), the Sala de’ Dugento (23.80 m × 15.72 m), or the Sala dell’Udienza (15.70 m × 9.75 m). I thank Dr. Laura Lucchesi of the Musei Comunali di Firenze for graciously providing me with these measurements.

\(^7\) On Eleonora’s political and financial responsibilities as Duchess of Florence, see Edelstein, Nobildonne napoletane e committenza: due Eleonore a confronto, in Quaderni storici, 104, XXXV, 2000, 2, p. 295-329 (hereafter Edelstein [2000]).
Construction and Interior Decoration

The earliest indication that Cosimo may have been considering transferring his residence from the Medici Palace in via Larga appears to have occurred in September 1539, less than three months after the arrival of Eleonora in Florence as his bride. At that time, he ordered two administrative bodies still housed in the Palazzo della Signoria, the Otto di Pratica and the Magistrate of Police, to be transferred to the Bargello. Cosimo and Eleonora would occupy the Palazzo Vecchio just eight months later; it is likely, therefore, that only some of the construction work required by the ducal family was complete before their transfer of residence on 15 May 1540, although it cannot be presumed that this included the Camera Verde. The only known recorded payment to Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio for his frescoes in the Camera Verde is dated 20 May 1542. Thus, the alterations required to create the Camera Verde must have taken place between late 1539 and early 1542. However, it is probable that this work was completed earlier rather than later. Construction on the Chapel was certainly complete by 1541, when Bronzino began painting its fresco decorations. Since the only construction work necessary for the

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8 Noted by the contemporary anonymous continuer of Luca Landucci's diary; Luca Landucci, *Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516 continuato da un匿名imo fino al 1542*, ed. Iodoco del Badia, Florence, 1883, p. 376 (hereafter Landucci [1883]). The Magistrate of Police, the «Bargello» himself, had actually been housed in one of the adjacent buildings in via de' Gondi, east of the Sala Grande, that is, those buildings which would subsequently be incorporated into the palace to create Vasari's Quartieri Nuovi.


10 Allegri & Cecchi [1980], p. 21, 26, 28, attribute the construction of the Chapel of Eleonora to Battista del Tasso, and date it as early as 1539. For the dating of Bronzino's fresco cycle and comments on the construction of the Chapel of Eleonora, see now Edelstein, *L'uscio di una porta e sei apostoli in cerca d'autore: ipotesi su due committenze al Tribolo per la Cappella di Eleonora*, in Niccolò detto il
creation of the Camera Verde was the erection of the partion wall that divides it from the Chapel and the extra subsidiary space that now links the Quartiere di Eleonora to the balcony on the south (via della Ninna) side of the Salone dei Cinquecento, it is likely that this too was complete by 1541. Although these dates are somewhat approximate, they nonetheless establish that the Camera Verde and its dependencies were the site of the earliest architectural alterations made to the former Priors’ palace for the ducal family.

The Camera Verde was constructed by subdividing a pre-existing hall into three spaces: the Camera Verde itself, the Chapel of Eleonora, and the Scrittoio della Duchessa (fig. 1, nos. 9-11)\(^{11}\). The Chapel, carved out of a portion of the last of the three bays of the original hall, was then fitted with a false vault, while the original ribbed cross vaults of the first two bays appear to have been maintained largely unaltered in the Camera Verde\(^{12}\). In the Camera Verde, the lunettes created by its vault correspond only approximately to the wall openings around the room; evidently, perfectly regular framing of the windows and doors below was not considered a priority at the time of the vault’s construction. Unfortunately, no documents have yet been located to provide detailed information regarding this construction or permit its secure dating.

Just as Battista del Tasso, capomaestro of palace works, appears not to have erected a new ceiling when he created the Camera Verde, he also most probably had neglected to replace the flooring. The court correspondence of 12 March 1550 provides important evidence that Eleonora closely followed the renovation of spaces reserved for her use. On that date, sottomaiordomo Tommaso de’ Medici wrote on the duchess’s behalf to majordomo Pierfrancesco Riccio to have new tiles installed in the Camera Verde and in one of the attic rooms; the tiles in this hall – possibly more than a century old by this time – were presumably no longer in satisfactory

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\(^{11}\) For the identification of the pre-existing hall with an office for the Ufficio del Monte designed by Brunelleschi according to his early biographer Antonio Manetti, see G. Lensi Orlandi, *Il Palazzo Vecchio di Firenze*, Florence, 1977, p. 72 (hereafter Lensi Orlandi [1977]). For comments on this identification, see Edelstein [1995], I, p. 119-127.

\(^{12}\) Lensi Orlandi [1977], p. 137-140, first noted that the chapel’s vault is false. The third space, the Scrittoio, was subsequently provided with a wooden palco decorated with Domus Aurea-style grotesques by Francesco Salviati.
condition\textsuperscript{13}. It is not known whether Riccio complied, but the forceful tone of the letter suggests that he would have done well to do so, and quickly. A problem arising from another of Eleonora’s requests had given her «the impression that her affairs are not being attended to and that the worst possible efforts have been made on her behalf»\textsuperscript{14}. Tommaso suggested that Riccio attend to the matter immediately to avoid incurring the duchess’s further wrath.

The enormous losses to the decoration in the duchess’s reception hall render its name incomprehensible in its present state. It was called the «Green Room» not because of the unsightly color the walls are now painted, but because they originally featured rich, «verdant» landscapes by Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio\textsuperscript{15}. Although it is often stated that the only surviving portion of this decoration is the fragment just over the marble portal leading to the Chapel of Eleonora, this is only the most legible of several extremely damaged but still extant passages of Ridolfo’s landscapes (Pl. Ib). Considering the poor state of preservation of the wall frescoes, the vault of the chamber is frescoed with grotesque decorations that are surprisingly well preserved (Pl. II).

In its original state, the Camera Verde’s walls were covered with landscape views and its vault with grotesque decorations\textsuperscript{16}; the hall was

\textsuperscript{13}Appendix A, Doc. 1. The attic room belonged to one of Eleonora’s damigelle (ladies-in-waiting), Isabel de Rainosa. The rooms above the Quartiere di Eleonora were reserved for the dame, balie and Cosimo’s and Eleonora’s children and were properly considered part of the duchess’s suite. Isabel de Rainosa was one of only two dame specifically named in association with these rooms in the 1553 inventory, ASFi, Guardaroba Medicea (hereafter GM) 28, fol. 10v-13v (Conti [1893], p. 72-78). I do not agree with Cross’s conclusion that from 1553, «Eleonora’s activity shifted to the rooms and terrace above» and that the Camera Verde became Cosimo’s exclusive domain at that time; Cross [1990], p. 12.

\textsuperscript{14}Appendix A, Doc. 1.

\textsuperscript{15}Vasari [1878-85], VI, p. 545-546 : «Dipinse Ridolfo nel palazzo del duca Cosimo, nella camera verde, una volta di grottesche; e nelle facciate alcuni paesi, che molto piacquero al duca». Similarly, Raffaello Borghini, \textit{Il riposo}, Florence, 1584 (facsimile ed. Hildesheim, 1969), p. 491-492 (hereafter Borghini [1584]). Lensi Orlandi [1977], p. 134, attributes the frescoes to Ridolfo’s student, Michele Tosini, called Michele di Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio. While there is no reason to doubt the tradition that ascribes the design of these frescoes to Ridolfo, a significant portion of their execution may well have been consigned to assistants like Michele di Ridolfo. Regarding Ridolfo’s workshop, see D. Franklin, \textit{Ridolfo Ghirlandaio’s Altar-pieces for Leonardo Buonafé and the Hospital of S. Maria Nuova in Florence}, in \textit{The Burlington Magazine}, CXXXV, 1078, Jan. 1993, p. 4-16, esp. p. 12-13.

\textsuperscript{16}A memory of Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio’s decorations in the Camera Verde may be preserved in an addition to the Quartiere di Eleonora made some forty years
thus intended to be experienced as a sort of virtual loggia. The effect must have been similar to the now lost decorations created by Giovanni da Udine and Giorgio Vasari for the ground floor room at the southeast corner of the Medici Palace in via Larga, where Cosimo I and Eleonora di Toledo had resided until their transfer of residence to the Palazzo Vecchio. As the most recent and significant residential decoration for the Medici in Florence, the grotesques and histories of this ex-loggia would have been an important model for the first decorations to be executed in the adaptation of the Palazzo della Signoria to its new role as a Palazzo Ducale. The choice of this particular decorative scheme as a paradigm, and its personal significance for the duchess, may well lie in the imperial associations of this former palace hall, renowned in its day for its lavish decorations and for its occupation on state occasions by illustrious guests.

The Ceiling Grotesques: Sources and Significance

The high regard in which the room at the southeast corner of the Medici Palace was held was due in no small part to Michelangelo having designed its architectural adaptation from the small loggia previously located there. After its conversion from an open loggia to an enclosed later: the so-called Stanza da Lavoro on the terrace adjacent to the chapel. This was created and frescoed for Bianca Cappello in 1581-82; on the sides of the terrace flanking the «workroom», Tommaso del Verrocchio depicted open logge framing landscape views. For the decorations of the Stanza da Lavoro, see Allegri & Cecchi [1980], p. 351-352.

17 Allegri & Cecchi [1980], p. 31, also associate the style of Ridolfo’s vault grotesques with Giovanni da Udine’s lost decorations in the Medici Palace.

space, the hall was provided with a now lost grotesque ceiling decoration in fresco and stucco by Giovanni da Udine\(^9\). Over a decade later, this incomplete project was revived by Duke Alessandro de’ Medici, who commissioned Vasari to paint four frescoes on the walls of the ex-loggia depicting episodes from the life of Julius Caesar\(^20\). Upon receiving the

\(^9\) As Vasari himself was later commissioned to complete the decorations left unfinished by Giovanni da Udine in the ex-loggia of the Medici Palace, his description ([1878-85], VI, p. 556-557) of these now lost decorations is probably reliable: Cardinal Giulio de’ Medici, later Pope Clement VII, «mandò [Giovanni da Udine] a Fiorenza, acciochè, fatta nel palazzo de’ Medici una camera, cioè in sul canto, dove già Cosimo vecchio edificator di quello avea fatta una loggia per commodo a ragunanza de’ cittadini, secondo che allora costumavano le famiglie più nobili, la dipignesse tutta di grottesche e di stucchi. Essendo stata adunque chiusa questa loggia con disegno di Michelagnolo Buonarroti, e datole forma di camera con due finestre inginocchiate, che furono le prime di quella maniera fuora de’ palazzi ferrate; Giovanni lavorò di stucchi e pitture tutta la volta, facendo in un tondo le sei palle, arme di casa Medici, sostenute da tre putti di rilievo con bellissima grazia ed attitudine : oltra di questo vi fece molti bellissimi animali e molte bell'imprese degli uomini e signori di quella casa illustissima, con alcune storie di mezzo rilievo fatte di stucco : e nel campo fece il resto di pitture, fingendole di bianco e nero a uso di camei, tanto bene, che non si può meglio imaginare. Rimase sotto la volta quattro archi di braccia dodici l’uno ed alti sei, che non furono per allora dipinti; ma molti anni poi da Giorgio Vasari, giovinetto di diciotto anni, quando serviva il duca Alessandro de’ Medici suo primo signore l’anno 1535 : il qual Giorgio vi fece storie de’ fatti di Giulio Cesare, alludendo a Giulio cardinale sopradetto che l’avea fatta fare. Dopo fece Giovanni, accanto a questa camera, in una volta piccola a mezza botte, alcune cose di stucco basse basse, e similmente alcune pitture che sono rarissime; le quali ancor che piacessero a que’ pittori che allora erano a Fiorenza, come fatte con fierezza e pratica maravigliosa, e piena d’invenzioni terribili e capricciose; perochè erano avvezzi a una loro maniera stentata ed a fare ogni cosa che mettevano in opera con ritratti tolti dal vivo, come non risoluti; non le lodavano interamente, né si mettevano, non ne bastando per avventura loro l’animo, ad imitarle». Thus, Giovanni’s decorations in the Medici Palace provided one of the earliest examples to arrive in Florence of the new style developed by Raphael and his followers in Rome, before the arrival of Perino del Vaga in 1523 and well before 1527, when many Florentine artists returned as refugees from the Sack of Rome. This, in part, may account for the tepid reception given to Giovanni’s work by local artists and their hesitancy to imitate it. For further suggestions regarding the appearance of the lost decorations in both the ex-loggia and the adjacent Scrittoio, see : Cecchi [1983], p. 25-26; N. Dacos and C. Furlan, Giovanni da Udine : 1487-1561, Udine, 1987, p. 155. Furlan, p. 154, convincingly dates Giovanni’s work to 1521-1522.

\(^{20}\) Giorgio Vasari, Il libro delle ricordanze, ed. A. del Vita, Rome, 1938, p. 23 (hereafter Vasari [1938]) : «Ricordo come a dì 10 di dicembre 1534 lo Illustissimo et Eccellentissimo Signor Duca Alessandro, primo Duca di Fiorenza, per ordine del Magnifico Messer Ottaviano de’ Medici suo depositario, mi allogano a dipigniere nel Palazzo della Illustissima Casa de’ Medici una Camera a terreno dov’era fatto per
commission in December 1534, Vasari called Giovanni’s decorations «one of the most beautiful and noteworthy things that are in Florence» 21. The first person to be housed in this lavishly decorated room was the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, who made a triumphal entry into Florence in 1536. Vasari’s work was interrupted on this occasion and the artist reports mano di Maestro Giovanni da Udine una volta di stucchi et pittura: che manchava le facciate, che erano quattro, le quali volsono che in esse si dipingessi 4 storie di Cesare, nelle quali una fussi quando e’ salva e’ comentari: nell’altra quando fa abruscire le scritture di Pompeo, et nell’altra terza quando in una barcha scanpa che al marinaio si dà da conoscere et nella quarta il suo trionfo [...]]. Detailed descriptions by the artist himself of the subjects of these historiated land- and seascapes survive in a letter of 1536 to Pietro Aretino in Venice that originally accompanied one of the cartoons for the project, a gift to the poet; see K. Frey ed., Der Literarische Nachlass Giorgio Vasaris, I, Munich, 1923-1930 (reprint: Hildesheim-New York, 1982), p. 46-47 (hereafter Vasari [1923-1930]). A memory of this early commission may be retained in Vasari’s later decorations for the Scrittoio in the Quartiere di Leone X; the principal scene of the ceiling in this room depicts Julius Caesar writing the Commentaries; see : A. Lensi, Palazzo Vecchio, Milan-Rome, 1929, p. 173-174 (hereafter Lensi [1929]); Allegri & Cecchi [1980], p. 161. Cf. also Borghini [1584], p. 542.

21 Vasari [1923-30], I, p. 30-31 (to Antonio da Pietro Turini in Arezzo) : «Et da che il grande Iddio mi tolse mio padre si tosto forse per spaventarmi et per sppronarmi, (che, s’io fussi stato nelle comodità ch’io stavo, et non mi fusse rimasto il peso di tre sorelle, forse che io non mi sarei così prontamente incamminato a quella via che voi sentite giornalmente ch’io cammino), [che] in cambio di mio padre che era povero cittadino et artigiano, mi ha Sua Maestà per Sua bontà provista di dua principi ricchi, i primi et più famosi di nome, di forze et di liberalità di tutta Italia, et poi (di) uno Ottaviano de’ Medici per guida et datomi forze, che nello havere satisfatto al presente il duca Alessandro d’un suo ritratto et tutta la corte insieme, mi ha cresciuto l’amor di sorte, che mi ha chiesto al cardinale per suo; volendo, ch’io resti qui a dipignere una camera nel palazzo de’ Medici; dove Giovanni da Udine, nel tempo che viveva Lione X.mo, fece in quella una volta di stucco et di pittura, che oggi è una della più belle et notabili cose che sieno in Firenze. Questa sarà cagione, (che) s’io fò il debito mio, oltra alla fama et l’honore, m’ha promesso Sua Eccellenza ([che] come l’ho finita) darmi la dote per la mia sorella maggiore; et di già ho scritto a Don Antonio che sia con voi, per trovargli il marito». As Vasari here observes, the commission to complete the decoration of the ex-loggia followed the execution of a portrait of Alessandro for Ottaviano de’ Medici that the duke greatly admired. On Ottaviano de’ Medici and Vasari, see : A. M. Braccante, Ottaviano de’ Medici e gli artisti, Florence, 1984, p. 70-71; Id., Vasari e Ottaviano de’ Medici, in Giorgio Vasari: principi, letterati e artisti nelle carte di Giorgio Vasari : lo storiografo dell’arte nella Toscana dei Medici; la pittura vasariana dal 1532 al 1554, eds. L. Corti, M. Daly Davis, C. Davis, J. Kliemann and A. M. Maetzke, ex. cat. (Arezzo, Casa Vasari and Sottochiesa di S. Francesco), Florence, 1981, p. 75-77, esp. p. 76. Borghini [1584], p. 493, also includes Giovanni da Udine’s Medici Palace decorations among the artist’s most important works.
having attached the cartoon of the incomplete fourth fresco to the wall temporarily in order to simulate the complete decorative ensemble for the Emperor\(^{22}\). Vasari naturally expected to complete the project after Charles’s departure, but the assassination of Duke Alessandro in the following year caused it to be abandoned. Both Giovanni da Udine’s vault decorations and the completed portion of Vasari’s wall cycle are now lost.

When Eleonora arrived in Florence in 1539, the decorations of this ex-loggia were the most modern and stylish to be seen in the palace that served as the duchess’s first home in her new city. As the daughter of one of the Emperor’s most trusted allies, Pedro de Toledo, Eleonora’s interest in this space was likely to have been enhanced by its having served as the lodging for Charles V only three years previous. Given the probability that this space held both political and personal significance for the duchess, she may well have played an active role in the selection of a similar decorative scheme for the Camera Verde\(^{23}\).

The initial impetus to choose grotesque decorations for the duchess’s audience chamber, however, was probably provided by the extant frescoes

\(^{22}\) Vasari [1923-30], I, p. 49-52 (to Raffaello [del Colle?] in Borgo San Sepolcro; dated 15 March 1536 [but after 29 March?] ) : «Mentre ch’io finivo la terza storia di Cesare che ’l duca Alessandro mi faceva dipignere nel suo palazzo, è venuto da Napoli ordine da Sua Eccellenza che l'imperatore passa per Firenze [...] Io ho havuto a sollecitare di finire la storia, perché la camera è ordinata per alloggiare Sua Maesta; et per quella storia che manca vi si è messo il cartone, così disegnato, per finirla poi, quando sarà partito». In his letter to Pietro Aretino (cited above, n. 19), Vasari specifically notes that the cartoon of the unfinished fourth scene depicted the Triumph of Julius Caesar.

\(^{23}\) Eleonora’s high regard for the decorations of the ex-loggia of the Medici Palace may also be suggested by subsequent events. In 1553, when the duchess’s brother, Luis de Toledo, took up residence in the palace, an attempt was made to obtain Vasari’s services to finish the decoration. Vasari [1923-30], I, p. 382-383 (Bernardetto Minerbetti to Vasari in Rome, 10 November 1553) : «Dovete sapere che ’l signor Don Luigi si fa acconciare pomposamente la casa de’ Medici per habitarla, poiché e’ Bartholini hanno venduta quella che esso teneva a Santa Trinità. Et hieri, vedendo che alla camera di stuco di Clemente mancha a dipingiere una di quelle lunette, vicino alla volta, disse: ‘Io voglio farlo dipingiere. A chi darò la cura?’ Risposi : ‘A messer Giorgio d’Arezo, che sia qui presto, che la farà et presto et bene.’ Mi preghò che, in arrivando voi, io gliene dicessi». Census records of 1561-62 document Luis’s continued presence in the Medici Palace : L. Ginori Lisci, The Palazzi of Florence: Their History and Art, I, trans. J. Grillo, Florence, 1985, p. 374, n. 4; ASFi, Miscellanea Medicea 224 (facsimile edition : S. Meloni Trkulja, I Fiorentini nel 1562: descrizione delle bocche della città et stato di Firenze fatta l’anno 1562, Florence, 1991), fol. 110 v. Cf. also W. A. Bulst, Uso e trasformazione del palazzo mediceo fino ai Riccardi, in Cherubini & Fanelli [1990], p. 123.
in the apartment reserved for the duke's use in the Palazzo Vecchio. Cosimo's suite, located on the piano nobile and linked directly to the Camera Verde by a spiral staircase concealed in the body of the wall on the south (or via della Ninna) side of the palace, had been provided with grotesque decorations some forty years earlier. The Gonfaloniere a Vita Piero Soderini had commissioned these from Morto da Feltre when he ordered the creation of the first floor apartment for himself and his wife in 1503. However, it is unclear how long the frescoes survived after the arrival of the ducal family in the palace since Vasari already refers to them as ruined in the 1550 edition of the Lives.

Assuming that Morto da Feltre's grotteschi did indeed survive through the 1540s, a more unified decorative program may have been intended in the pre-Vasarian period of palace renovations than has previously been thought. It may also be fairly concluded that the employment of

24 On Soderini's apartment, see N. Rubinstein, *The Palazzo Vecchio, 1298-1532: Government, Architecture, and Imagery in the Civic Palace of the Florentine Republic*, Oxford, 1995, p. 43-46 and p. 76-77 (hereafter Rubinstein [1995]); Rubinstein observes that the apartment properly included both the future Quartiere di Cosimo I, on the same floor as the principal public spaces of the palace (the Sala de' Dugento and the Great Council Hall), and the mezzanine floor above it. In 1540, the mezzanine floor was largely reserved for the use of Cosimo's mother, Maria Salviati. Early confirmation for this distribution of space in the Palazzo Vecchio to the ducal household is provided by a letter dated 8 October 1540 from court secretary Lorenzo Pagni at Poggio a Caiano to the future majordomo Pierfrancesco Riccio in Florence, ASFi, MdelP 1169, ins. 5, doc. 15 (consecutive pencil numeration 181) : «[...] il S.or Duca tiene lo appartamento di sotto, la S.ra Maria quel di mezzo, et S. Ex.a [Eleonora di Toledo] quel di sopra, et [...] il resto del palazzo è ingombrato da e' camerieri del S.or Duca, dalle damigelle di S. Ex.a, et dalla guardarobba [...]». On the political significance of Cosimo's occupation of the former Gonfaloniere's suite, see Lensi [1929], p. 98 and p. 123.


26 Only Forster suggests the possibility of unified iconographic program for the
grotesque decorations with clear reference to Medici patronage was intended to neutralize those provided for the republican Soderini\textsuperscript{27}. A propagandistic intent appears clear, as the central motif of the surviving ceiling fresco is a large Medici-Toledo coat of arms, embraced by the Hapsburg eagle (Pl. II). The \textit{stemma} gives visual form to Eleonora's courtly identity, balancing her Florentine persona, recently acquired through her marriage to Cosimo, with her Hispano-Neapolitan heritage, characterized by her close familial ties to Charles V\textsuperscript{28}. Through their marriage, the duchess thus solidified the duke's own ties to his feudal lord, the Holy Roman Emperor.

The propagandistic intent may also account for the commission of the Camera Verde decorations being awarded to Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio, an artist with longstanding Medici associations. As early as 1512, Ridolfo had been among the first artists to benefit from the patronage of the Medici, newly restored to power after their expulsion from Florence by Savonarola's followers in 1495. Along with his assistants, Andrea di Cosimo Feltrini and Fra Mariano da Pescia, Ridolfo was commissioned to execute the decoration of the Chapel of the Priors, also located on the second floor of the Palazzo Vecchio (fig. 1, no. 17)\textsuperscript{29}. In 1531, he painted the earliest known portrait of Cosimo at the age of twelve\textsuperscript{30}. Ridolfo was also a major

\textsuperscript{27} One may see a similar process in Cosimo's attempt to recontextualize the politically-charged works of sculpture in the square below the Palazzo Vecchio, Michelangelo's \textit{David} and Donatello's \textit{Judith}, see J. Shearman, \textit{Only Connect... : Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance}, Princeton, 1992, esp. p. 52-53.

\textsuperscript{28} On Eleonora's Hispano-Neapolitan heritage, see Edelstein [2000].

\textsuperscript{29} Although the commission had already been given to Ridolfo under Soderini (the artist received payment for works executed in the chapel as early as August 1511), the reinstated Medici regime likely imposed an alteration in the program of these decorations from the original project to reduce the republican content, Rubinstein [1995], p. 77-78. At any rate, the Medici must have been pleased with the result because the commission was immediately followed in 1515 by another to Ridolfo, Feltrini and the young Pontormo to execute very similar decorations in the Cappella del Papa in Santa Maria Novella in time for the triumphal entry of the Medici Pope Leo X later that same year. See Vasari [1878-85], VI, p. 541-542; Vincenzo Fineschi, \textit{Memorie sopra il cimitero antico della chiesa di S. Maria Novella di Firenze}, Florence, 1787 (fascimile ed. Rome, 1977), p. 36, n. 1; Id., \textit{Il forestiero istruito in S.a Maria Novella}, Florence, 1836 (Facsimile ed. : Rome, 1977), p. 75.

\textsuperscript{30} Vasari [1878-85], VI, p. 545; C. Gamba, \textit{Contributo alla conoscenza del Pontormo}, Firenze, 1956, p. 16; Forster [1971], p. 72; K. Langedijk, \textit{The Portraits of...
contributor to all of the most important schemes of ephemeral decoration commissioned by the Medici in the first half of the sixteenth century: the triumphal entry of Leo X into Florence in 1515; the marriage festivities of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, to Maddalena de la Tour d’Auvergne in 1518; the triumphal entry of Charles V into Florence in 1536; and Cosimo and Eleonora’s own marriage apparato of 1539. Of course, the commission for the Camera Verde frescoes may also have been awarded to Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio because he may have been considered a specialist in grotesque decorations. Grotesques had featured prominently in two of his most important works for the Medici: the decorations in the Chapel of the Priors and those in the Cappella del Papa in Santa Maria Novella.

the Medici: 15th-18th Centuries, I, Florence, 1981-1987, p. 82, 428 (cat. 46). Although this attribution appears never to have been questioned, it is unclear whether Vasari meant to attribute the portrait to Ridolfo alone, or to Ridolfo along with his student, Michele Tosini, since the description of this work comes at the end of a long list of pictures attributed by Vasari to their collaboration. The painting is described in a 1555 inventory of the Guardaroba, ASFi, GM 31, fol. 39r, as «Un quadro del ritratto del Duca Cosimo di età di dodici anni con ornamento di noce tocco d’oro». However, the artist’s name is not supplied until the 1560 inventory, ASFi, GM 45, fol. 59r: «Un ornamento di noce tocco d’oro entrovi il ritratto dello Ill.mo S.or Duca Cosimo de’ Medici quando era giovanetto di mano di Ridolfo del Grillandaio». Two significant events in the young life of Cosimo may account for the existence of a portrait of him at twelve. In 1531, Alessandro de’ Medici was recognized by Charles V as head of state in Florence and Cosimo entered his service as a court page; the portrait may then have been commissioned to commemorate his first public role. Alternatively, a letter written by Maria Salviati on 3 May 1531 to Cardinal Giovanni Salviati in Rome suggests that Cosimo’s mother may have been seeking to arrange a marriage for him at this time as well; the portrait may therefore have been requested in preparation for these negotiations. For the letter, see C. Guasti, Alcuni fatti della prima giovinezza di Cosimo I de’ Medici illustrati con i documenti contemporanei, in Giornale storico degli archivi toscani, II, 1858, p. 28-30; for further discussion of Maria Salviati’s attempts to secure a noble bride for the young Cosimo, see also Edelstein [1995], I, p. 26, n. 59.

Vasari [1878-85], VI, p. 86, 436, 541-542, 545, 575-577. Ridolfo may have already begun work on the frescoes in the Camera Verde when he contributed to another Medici apparato: the baptism of Francesco I in August 1541, ibid., p. 90.

The grotesques in both of these earlier works were in fact subcontracted to Andrea di Cosimo Feltrini and this may have been the case in the decoration of the Camera Verde as well. Feltrini was still alive in the early 1540s and Ridolfo could have assigned the grotesques to him or to another member of the active Ghirlandaio workshop. However, the style of Feltrini’s grotesques in the Cappella de’ Priors and the Cappella del Papa is quite different from those on the vault of the Camera Verde, which appear to be directly modeled on the all’antica style developed by Giovanni da Udine and his followers in Rome.
In the 1568 edition of the *Lives*, Vasari devotes an entire chapter of his introductory treatise on painting to the subject, «How to Work Grotesques on Stucco». His description of this type of decoration provides important clues to their popularity in the mid-sixteenth century and suggests why they might have appealed to Eleonora in particular:

Grotesques are a licentious and very ridiculous sort of painting, executed by the ancients to adorn spaces in which nothing else was appropriate except things in the air. Thus, they made them full of deformed and monstrous things, strictly according to the nature, whim and caprice of their makers. These are made without adherence to any rule, depicting a thread so fine that it could not possibly bear the weight suspended from it, a horse with legs made of leaves, a man with the legs of a crane and infinite numbers of banners and small birds. The artist capable of imagining the strangest subjects was held to be the most valiant. [...] This practice became so widespread that in Rome, and in every place that the Romans resided, some vestige of these decorations is still preserved. In truth, with their touches of gold and carved stucco, these are cheerful works that are delightful to see. [...] Ancient examples can be seen in innumerable places in Rome and Pozzuoli, near Naples.

Thus, grotesques were considered appropriate decorations for patrons who wished to emulate the example of the ancients. Simultaneously, they allowed artists great freedom in subject matter.

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33 Vasari [1878-85], I, p. 193-194 (translation mine): «Le grottesche sono una spezie di pitture licenziose e ridicole molto, fatte dagli antichi per ornamenti di vani, dove in alcuni luoghi non stava bene altro che cose in aria: per il che facevano in quelle tutte sconciature di mostri, per strettezza della natura, e per gricciolo e ghiribizzo degli artefici; i quali fanno in quelle cose senza alcuna regola, appiccando a un sottilissimo filo un peso che non si può reggere, ad un cavallo le gambe di foglie, e a un uomo le gambe di gru, ed infiniti sciarpelloni e passerotti; e chi più stranamente se gl’immaginava, quello era tenuto più valente. [...] E sì innanzi andò questa pratica, che in Roma ed in ogni luogo dove i Romani risedevano, ve n’è ancora conservato qualche vestigio. E nel vero, tocche d’oro ed intagliate di stucchi, esse sono opera allegre e dilettevoli a vedere. [...] Se ne veggono delle antiche in infiniti luoghi a Roma, e a Pozzuolo, vicino a Napoli». Vasari had already included this passage in the 1550 edition of the *Lives*, *idem* [1986], p. 73-74. It must therefore have served partly as the inspiration for Antonfrancesco Doni’s discussion of the etymology of the word «grotesques» and his description of their subject matter in his *Disegno*, Venice, 1549 (facsimile edition: ed. Mario Pepe, Milan, 1970), fol. 22r-v (hereafter Doni [1549]). For the evidence of Doni’s knowledge of the first edition of Vasari’s *Lives* as early as 1547, see Pepe’s introduction in *ibid.*, p. 14-15. For a discussion of Doni’s comments, see P. Morel, *Les grotesques : les figures de l’imaginaire dans la peinture italienne de la fin de la Renaissance*, Paris, 1997, p. 37-40 (hereafter Morel [1997]).

34 The idea of artistic license as an essential component of grotesques is also
In his description of the ancient art of grotesque decoration, the only site other than Rome that Vasari considered noteworthy enough to mention by name is Pozzuoli. This is striking since Pozzuoli was not only the site of important ancient ruins, but also where Eleonora’s father had begun building a new villa in 1536, three years before her departure for Florence. To facilitate travel to and from this villa, Pedro de Toledo

explicit in Doni [1549], fol. 22r-v. See now Morel [1997], p. 20-22, on «imagination» and «fantasy» as fundamental concepts in grotesques. Cf. also Chastel [1988], p. 31-32, on the significance of Vasari’s description and a discussion of its rapport with Vitruvius’s condemnation of this type of decoration in De architectura.


36 The construction of the villa at Pozzuoli was preceded by an earthquake that destroyed most of the town that had previously existed there; the earthquake is recorded as having taken place on 7 August 1536 by the contemporary diarist Gregorio Rosso, Istoria delle cose di Napoli sotto l’imperio di Carlo V cominciando dall’anno 1526 per insino all’anno 1537, Naples, 1770, p. 73 (hereafter Rosso [1770]). The villa may have been projected as soon after the earthquake as December; ibid., p. 74: «Alli 23 [December 1536] il Vicerè Toledo se ne andò a Pozzuolo, per fare in quella Città le festi di Natale, con desegno de fari una casa, piacevoli quella stanza». However, cf. F. Strazzullo, Edilizia e urbanistica a Napoli dal ’500 al ’700, Naples, 1968, p. 16-18; Strazzullo dates both of these events to 1538, that is, one year prior to Eleonora’s departure for Florence. Pedro was considered the protector of Pozzuoli for having defended it from attacks by the pirate Barbarossa (see Sarnelli [1784], p. 52), and for his work in restoring the city after the earthquake of 1536; see ibid., p. 54-56: «Alla desolazione della Città porse rimedio la pietà del Vicerè D. Pietro di Toledo col ristorarla; ed acciòcché fusse riabitato sì bel luogo, vi fece edificare un superbo Palazzo con un bellissimo giardino, ed ornò la Città di nobili fontane di vive acque; onde molti Signori Napoletani vi edificarono essi parimenti nobili abitazioni. Su la porta del giardino del Toledo avvi la seguente iscrizione. Petrus Toletus Marchio Ville Franchæ, Caroli V. Imper. in Regno Neapolit. Vicarius, ut Puteolanos ob recentem agrì conflagrationem palanteis ad pristinas sedes revocaret, hortos, portus, & fontes marmoreos ex spoliis, quæ Garsia filius, parta victoria Africana, reportaverat, otio, genioque dicavit; ac antiquorum restaurato, purgatoque ductu, aquas sitientibus Civibus sua impensa restituit. Anno a partu Virginis M. D. XL.».

The inscription recorded by Sarnelli provides a terminus ante quem of 1540 for the construction of the villa. It must therefore have been either completed or close to completion prior to Eleonora’s departure in 1539. That this was a preferred residence of the viceroy is confirmed by Castaldo, who notes that Pedro spent much
enlarged and repaved the famous grotto linking Pozzuoli to Naples. Both King Ferdinand of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor Charles V visited Pozzuoli in conjunction with their triumphal entries into Naples. An indication of the high regard in which this site was held at the time is also provided by Gregorio Rosso, a contemporary diarist, who noted of Charles’s visit in 1536, «On the 4th of February the Emperor went [...] to Pozzuoli to see the Sulfatara and those antiquities, worthy to be seen by everyone. They say that nothing astounded him more than the grotto, which is to be found along the road to Pozzuoli».

Given the importance of Pozzuoli to the viceregal court in sixteenth-century Naples, Eleonora is likely to have made the same association as Vasari between grotesque decoration and this ancient site near her former home. Such a direct reference to Naples may have been most welcome in

of the winter and spring of 1543 at Pozzuoli on account of his bad health; Antonino Castaldo, Dell’istoria: ne’ quali si descrivono gli avvenimenti più memorabili succeduti nel regno di Napoli sotto il governo del Vicerè D. Pietro di Toledo e de’ vicerè suoi successori fino al Cardinal Granvela, in Raccolta di tutti i più rinomati scrittori dell’istoria [...] di Napoli, VI, Naples, 1769, p. 31-155 (hereafter Castaldo [1769]). The necessity for a new suburban villa must have been apparent to Pedro upon his arrival in Naples, since Poggioreale had long been reduced to a noble ruin, cf. F. Strazzullo, Documenti per il palazzo e giardini di Poggioreale, in ASPRENAS, X, 1, Jan.-March 1963, p. 47-58.

Sarnelli [1784], p. 52; Sarnelli, p. 6-8, associates Pedro’s restoration of the grotto with the imperial visit of 1536, noting specifically that the windows had been enlarged for this occasion. The grotto is actually a long, natural tunnel, which in the nineteenth century was believed to be haunted by evil spirits, see C. Tait Ramage, The Nooks and By-Ways of Italy: Wanderings in Search of its Ancient Remains and Modern Superstitions, (abridged ed.: Ramage in South Italy, ed. Edith Clay), London, 1965 (reprint Chicago, 1987), p. 66.

R. Filangieri, Castel Nuovo: reggia angioina ed aragonesa di Napoli, Naples, 1934, p. 315-316. The entries took place in 1506 and 1536, respectively. An important eighteenth-century visitor to Pozzuoli was Goethe, who came by boat from Naples and spent a pleasant day there in March 1787; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Italienische Reise, ed. P. Sprengel, Munich, 1986, p. 175.

Rosso [1770], p. 70: «Lo stesso giorno dell’ 4. di Febraro andò l’Imperatore [...] a Pozzuolo a vedere la Sulfatara, e quelle anticaglie, degne di esserno [sic] viste da ogn’uno. Dicono, che di nissuna cosa se maravigliasse più che della grotta, che sta per la via per andare a Pozzuolo». Later in the sixteenth century, Francesco I de’ Medici considered the Baths of Pozzuoli to be a subject worthy to be depicted by Girolamo Macchietti for his Studiolo in the Palazzo Vecchio, which may also be an indication of the renown of this site. For Macchietti’s work, see Lensi [1929], p. 237; L. Berti, Il principe dello studio: Francesco I dei Medici e la fine del Rinascimento fiorentino, Florence, 1967, p. 74, 77; Allegri & Cecchi [1980], p. 333.
the decoration of her audience chamber only a year or two after her arrival in Florence. Unfortunately, there are no known documents that confirm the identity of the patron of the Camera Verde, that is, whether the duke, the duchess, or one of their agents was primarily responsible for the decisions made regarding this commission. It is probable, however, that Eleonora played a significant role in the choice of its decoration since surviving documents reveal her to have been actively involved with the selection of decorations for her chapel, begun by Bronzino at the same time. Eleonora’s personal involvement in decisions affecting the decoration of the Camera Verde is especially likely since she was already in residence in the apartment on the second floor of the Palazzo Vecchio when Ridolfo began painting the frescoes.

Furnishings and Function

For more than a century, scholars have generally identified the Camera Verde as Eleonora’s bedroom. There is, however, one fundamental argument against that assumption: according to the inventory of the Palazzo Vecchio taken in 1553, the room did not contain a proper bed. While the duchess’s sleeping chamber may not have retained a fixed position throughout her residence in the palace, it appears never to have been located here. Eleonora’s bedroom was most frequently the future Sala di Penelope (fig. 1, no. 14), which featured a bed in 1553 and was situated in a significantly more private location within the apartment.

In 1553, the furnishings of the Camera Verde included:

- Fifth Room (Camera Verde).
- 8 tapestry panels with the ducal arms intended as mule covers of wool and floss-silk lined with yellow linen, 5 by 4 braccia.
- A walnut lettuccio, locked.
- 2 mattresses covered in yellow taffeta stuffed with tow, for said lettuccio.


41 Among other furnishings recorded in the 1553 inventory, the future Sala di Penelope contained (ASFi, GM 28, fol. 9v [Conti [1893], 58]) : «Una lettiera di noce di br. 4 et 3. 2 materassi bianchi, uno di lana et uno di bambagia. Uno materasso di tela rozza di lana. Uno materasso di traliccio di lana. Uno piumaccio di federa, pieno di piuma». 
An oval mirror in steel that reflects from all sides.42
A padded quilt in red taffeta lined with blue linen, for said lettuccio.
A (small?) walnut table for counting money, with its stand.
2 German iron chests for storing money, locked.
A red velvet close-stool.
A walnut stand for a small portable table (tavolino da campo), with its chains.

In said room are the two small rooms that are locked, thus their contents were not inventoried43.

42 The mirror that reflected from «all sides» was presumably convex. By 1555, it had been placed in storage in the Guardaroba, ASFi, GM 31, fol. 262r.

43 ASFi, GM 28, fol. 10r (Conti [1893], p. 61):
«Quinta et Camera Verde
8 panni d'arazzo con l'arme ducale a uso di coperte da mulo di lana et filataggio foderati di tela gialla di braccia 5 et 4.
Uno lettuccio di noce serrato.
2 materassi di taffettà giallo di bambagia per il decto lettuccio.
Una spera d'acciaio aovata che mostra da ogni lato.
Una coltre di taffettà rosso imbottita di detto lettuccio foderata di tela azzurra.
Uno tavolello da contare danari di noce con sua piedi.
2 cassoni di ferro tedeschi da tener danari serrati.
Una seggietta di velluto rosso.
Uno piedi di noce da tavolino da campo con sua catene.
In detta camera sono e’ dua stanzini serrati però non s’inventariorono».

Conti believed that this description referred to the room that eventually became the Sala di Gualdrada and associated the description of the sixth room in the inventory with the Camera Verde. Allegri & Cecchi [1980], p. 31, recognized that this was incorrect but simply substituted the «camera prima» of the inventory for the «camera sesta». For the correct sequence through the Quartiere di Eleonora followed by the compilers of the 1553 inventory, see Edelstein [1995], I, p. 176-182. Subsequently, I learned that Cross [1990], esp. p. 5 and 7, employing different documentary evidence, had already arrived at similar conclusions to my own regarding the order the compilers of the 1553 inventory used as they moved through the suite; however, there are significant differences in our interpretations of other matters regarding the general organization of the apartment, especially the processional order of the rooms Prior to Vasari’s reorganization of the suite, and the furnishings and functions of some of the individual rooms.

In the fall of 1559, one of the iron chests mentioned here was transferred to the lost Stanzino del Duca in Cosimo’s apartment on the first floor of the Palazzo Vecchio, Vasari [1923-30], I, p. 522; see also Edelstein [1995], I, p. 228-236; Cross [1990], p. 12. Pedestals for the type of table called a «tavola da campo» are described by Thornton as being «x-frame stands that had two chains at the top or bottom to prevent the hinged stand from opening too far» Thornton [1991], p. 214 (for an image, see ibid., p. 218, fig. 246). Thornton mentions this pedestal specifically but incorrectly suggests that the table was complete; the inventory lists only the «piedi».
The principal item of furniture listed in the inventory is the walnut _lettuccio_ with its yellow taffeta mattresses and red taffeta quilt. This cannot be identified as a bed intended for sleeping on a regular basis; rather, the _lettuccio_ was more properly a day bed or couch. Eleonora’s _lettuccio_ may well have resembled the couch depicted in the tapestry designed by Bronzino of _Joseph Fleeing Potiphar’s Wife_ (Pl. III), rather than the more familiar, high-backed, Quattrocento version. The costly taffeta coverings of the mattresses and quilt for this _lettuccio_ indicate how unlikely it was for the duchess to have slept there on a regular basis.

The most costly of the furnishings listed in the 1553 inventory of the Camera Verde were likely to have been the eight wool and silk tapestry panels. These «mule covers», approximately three by two and one-third meters each, featured the ducal arms and were backed with yellow linen. The panels were manufactured by the recently established Medici...

...without their tabletop. Thornton, p. 216, also refers to the table for counting money, which he describes as a grand version of the traditional shop counter.

44 On _lettucci_, see: E Borsook, _A Florentine Scrittoio for Diomede Carafa_, in _Art the Ape of Nature: Studies in Honor of H. W. Janson_, eds. M. Barasch and L. Freeman Sandler, New York, 1981, p. 91; J. Kent Lydecker, _The Domestic Setting of the Arts in Renaissance Florence_, Ph. D. diss. Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1987, p. 56-58; Thornton [1991], p. 149-153. Lydecker specifically notes that during the course of the sixteenth century the principal use of these pieces of furniture shifted from sleeping to seating. Eleonora’s _lettuccio_ may have been located along the middle of the south (via della Ninna) wall of the Camera Verde; cf. J. Burckhardt, _The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance_, London, 1985, p. 231. The door to the Vasari Corridor presently located on this wall was not added until 1565.

45 Against this hypothesis, it should be noted that the 1560 inventory (ASFi, GM 45, fol. 78v) records among the items stored in the _guardaroba_ : «Un predellone verde con arme della Ill.ma S.ra Duchessa». This type of platform was frequently employed with the more traditional type of _lettuccio_. However, since the size of the _predellone_ is not indicated, it could also have been a platform for a bed, table, or desk. Thornton [1991], p. 151, hypothesizes that the couch depicted by Bronzino was an actual piece of furniture.

46 That Eleonora did not sleep here may also be suggested by the absence of a pillow among the bed furnishings; one is listed in the inventory of the future Sala di Penelope. However, pillows may have been stored inside the _lettuccio_ since it is listed in the inventory as locked. Two elegant pillowcases of crimson «ormesino» (_sic, ermesino_, a fine silk named after Ormuz, Persia) ordered by Eleonora on 8 May 1548, may have been intended for the _lettuccio_ as well; a pillowcase «embroidered in gold and pearls» was sent at that time from Pisa as a model for the embroiderers, Appendix A, Doc. 2. If these pillows were not required for the _lettuccio_, than they were probably intended for use in one of the duchess’s _lettighe_. On litters and their luxurious furnishings, see below.

Pl. II

Jan van der Straet, called Giovanni Stradano, after Giorgio Vasari, *The Proxy Marriage of Cosimo I de' Medici and Eleonora di Toledo in Naples* (proposed subject), c. 1557-8, fresco, Sala di Cosimo I, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence (photograph: Soprintendenza per i beni artistici e storici delle provincie di Firenze e Pistoia).
tapestry-works (Arazzeria Medicea). Three of the first seven tapestries executed by the Flemish master-weavers Rost and Karcher were in fact mule covers.

The 1553 inventory does not specify how these tapestry panels were displayed in the Camera Verde. It is unlikely that they were simply being stored there, in which case they would probably have been placed in a chest or wardrobe of some sort. The use of the tapestries as decorative wall hangings also appears improbable, given the presence of Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio’s landscape views on the walls of the Camera Verde. The size, shape and number of the mule covers point towards their potential employment, however, as portiere and window treatments. Stradano’s


\[48\] Adelson [1983], p. 904-5. For the consignment of these, see ASFi, GM 12, fol. 5 r-v (also cited by Smyth [1971], p. 92), where they are identified as donkey covers, «coperte da some», rather than mule covers. The other three tapestries consigned at this time were the second of Rost’s Primavera portiere and his Vindication of Innocence, both woven after cartoons by Bronzino, and Karcher’s Pietà altar tapestry woven after a cartoon by Salviati.

\[49\] Due to their cost and fragility, tapestries were not usually installed on a permanent basis but brought out of storage for use on important occasions, see Adelson [1980], p. 154.

\[50\] The use of tapestries as window treatments in the sixteenth century was apparently quite common. In the Quartiere di Eleonora, one would later be installed over a window in the Sala di Ester; see C. Adelson in P. Barocchi (ed.), Palazzo Vecchio: committenza e collezionismo medicei, ex. cat. (Florence, Palazzo Vecchio), Florence, 1980, p. 53. It is possible that a pair of more elegant, embroidered portiere recorded in the 1560 inventory were replacements for the mule-covers, if indeed the latter were employed as such in 1553, ASFi, GM 45, fol. 49r: «Una portiera di
vignette in the Sala di Cosimo I (Pl. IV), probably representing the proxy marriage of Cosimo and Eleonora, offers an indication of how this type of tapestry with its Medici-Toledo arms would have appeared when installed as a portiera51.

Documents frequently refer to Eleonora attempting to locate adequate mules, her preferred mode of travel, for herself (either as mounts or for her litter) and for her companions52. In Tommaso de’ Medici’s letter to Piefrancesco Riccio of 12 March 1550, cited above in regard to the pavement of the Camera Verde, the duchess’s dissatisfaction with a mule purchased from a certain Bonifazio is reported: «It has not turned out to be as the Florentine described, she says that it is not what she wants and it must be sent back»53. The mule covers, then, may often have traveled with Eleonora on her and her husband’s almost incessant journeys around the duchy54. Portable furnishings are recorded throughout the Quartiere di

velluto chermisi con fregio di teletta ricamata con l’arme del duca et duchessa, soppannata di tafettà rosso. Una portiera di velluto simile ricamata d’argento con arme del duca et duchessa, foderata di tafettà chermisi».

51 For a discussion of the vignette’s subject, see Appendix B.

52 See, e.g., Appendix A, Doc. 3. According to Pieraccini, Eleonora personally oversaw the construction of her litter, insuring that it was «lined inside with green satin and outside with green velvet» G. Pieraccini, La stirpe de’ Medici di Cafaggiolo: saggio di ricerche sulla trasmissione ereditaria dei caratteri biologici, II, Florence, 1986 (1st ed. Florence, 1924-5), p. 60 (hereafter Pieraccini [1986]). Pieraccini cites the so-called diary of Marucelli, an anonymous contemporary chronicle, according to which Battista del Tasso’s staircase in the Cortile della Dogana was constructed precisely to allow the litter to be carried to the duchess’s apartment on the second floor of the ducal palace. The chronicler refers to Eleonora as a «donna superba et inemica de’ Fiorentini affatto», and reports that she travelled in her litter «a guisa di un tabernacolo di reliquia, cioè mezza la lettiga scoperta et sotto l’altra metà stava lei, cosa veramente maravigliosa vedere una donna di così grande alterigia»; see the recent critical edition of the diary E. Coppi ed., Cronaca fiorentina 1537-1555, Florence, 2000, p. 65, 93. Cf. also Cross [1990], p. 9.

53 Appendix A, Doc. 1. The phrase is so characteristic that it is hard to imagine that these are not Eleonora’s own words. In another part of the letter, Tommaso specifies, «I write this thing exactly as the Lady Duchess said it to me».

54 See, e.g., ASFi, MdelP 1170, ins. 2, doc. 12 (Pietro Camaiiani in Pisa to Pierfrancesco Riccio in Florence, 13 November 1542) : «Pasquino non vole lassare di fare noto che all’arrivo suo qui trovò mancho [cancelled : quattro] tre coperte da muli, cioè, una di quelle della Duchessa, una di quelle vecchie con l’arme, et una di quelle da cucina. Et per ancora non l’ha ritrovate et mi dice che per aventura potrebbero esser costi o a Castello». On the political significance of Cosimo’s and Eleonora’s travels, see G. Spini, Cosimo I e l’indipendenza del principato mediceo, Florence, 1980, p. 141.
Eleonora in the 1553 inventory. Like other courts of the day, the Medici court was highly peripatetic and these furnishings suggest the frequency with which it moved between different locations.

Tovaglia, Ricci and Cecchi, the compilers of the 1553 inventory, noted in their description of the Camera Verde that it contained «two small rooms that are locked, thus their contents were not inventoried». In 1553, the hall had in fact not two but three dependencies: the Chapel of Eleonora, the Scrittoio, and the so-called Ripostiglio (fig. 1, bordered by nos. 10, 12 and exterior wall). Both physical and documentary evidence suggest that the last of these, the Ripostiglio, was unlikely to have been counted.

Although the Ripostiglio is generally indicated in plans, from the earliest surviving one of the eighteenth-century (fig. 2) on, as being of a similar size to the Scrittoio della Duchessa, it is in fact much smaller. The function of this space during Eleonora’s residence in the Palazzo Vecchio is unknown, but there is good reason to believe that it served as a privy. The palace was notable for its lack of such amenities when the duke and duchess arrived in 1540; toilets and baths were therefore installed in spaces that could not be otherwise employed. It was quite common to use the irregular spaces under staircases for such functions; Cosimo’s bath on the first floor was constructed precisely under a staircase. The physical evidence of the Ripostiglio, presently employed as a broom closet, may also indicate that a flight of stairs once passed over it as well; this staircase would have connected the hallway between the Camera Verde and the Sala delle Sabine to the attic floor rooms above.

The 1553 inventory itself also offers evidence for supposing the existence of an agiatoio among the dependencies of the Camera Verde. «A

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55 For the Bagno di Cosimo I, see Lensi Orlandi [1977], p. 129-130. For general information on sixteenth-century bagni, stufe and toilets, see: Frommel [1973], I, p. 75-78, 85-86; Thornton [1991], p. 242-251, 315-19; B. Contardi and H. Lilius eds., Quando gli dei si spogliano: il bagno di Clemente VII a Castel Sant’Angelo e le altre stufe romane del primo Cinquecento, Rome, 1984. According to both Frommel and Thornton, the installation of toilets under staircases was a common practice.

56 A number of twentieth-century plans of the palace also indicate the possibility that a small staircase was once located over the Ripostiglio, see, e.g.: my fig. 1, presumably that of Lensi [1929]; G. Sinibaldi, Il Palazzo Vecchio di Firenze, Rome, 1934; P. Bargellini, Scoperta di Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, 1968; Cox-Rearick [1993]. Bargellini (p. 257), unhesitatingly refers to the dependencies of the Camera Verde as «Bagno», «Studiolo» and «Cappella», although he erroneously attributes these to Vasari. A staircase linking the duchess’s audience hall to the attic floor would have been most expedient since the latter contained the rooms assigned to Eleonora’s children (the Stanze d’Oro), her ladies-in-waiting and the children’s nurses.
red velvet close-stool» is cited in the inventory. Thornton has noted that it was unlikely for this to have been among the visible furnishings of the room. He suggests that it was located «in a niche, perhaps with a small door», and that such a space would not have been considered a separate room by the compilers of an inventory. The size and small round-headed door to the Ripostiglio (Tav. Ia) conform precisely to the type of space hypothesized by Thornton. Its employment as a privy, therefore, may suggest why Tovaglia, Ricci and Cecchi did not find it necessary to include the Ripostiglio among the dependencies of the Camera Verde.

Another reason why the compilers of the 1553 inventory may have failed to include the Ripostiglio with the other «stanzini» may regard the employment of locked doors. Since privies were frequently too small to be used with the door closed, the legs of the occupant remaining outside, there was little reason to lock them. Indeed, if the Ripostiglio was employed for this purpose, the seggietta was probably drawn out of the cupboard and into the main space of the Camera Verde when it was required by the duchess, whose cumbersome court costumes could hardly have been accommodated in this narrow closet. Thus, upon opening the unlocked door to the Ripostiglio, the compilers of the inventory would have duly recorded the seggietta inside but they would not have been likely to note its precise location in the inventory.

The Scrittoio and the Chapel of Eleonora, by contrast, were locked. Since these rooms frequently contained extremely valuable objects, Tovaglia, Ricci and Cecchi carefully noted at the end of their inventory of the Camera Verde that they had been unable to record the contents of these ancillary spaces. The note, then, served merely as a reminder to do so when

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57 See note 43 above. On the seggietta, see Thornton [1991], p. 248. I have used his translation of this word although I am not certain that all items inventoried under this name correspond to the object depicted in his fig. 279, rather than the more chair-like forms he describes. Perhaps «commode» is a sufficiently general term to correspond with greater precision to sixteenth-century usage. Thornton refers specifically to Eleonora’s red velvet covered close-stool as being situated in her bedroom. He is not incorrect in this, since an identical item is listed in the inventory of the future Sala di Penelope, ASFi, GM 28, fol. 9 v (Conti [1893], p. 58), «Una seggietta di velluto rosso, vechia». It is unclear to which of the two Thornton refers. See also Lensi Orlandi [1977], p. 129-130.
58 Thornton [1991], p. 248.
59 I wish to thank Edward Goldberg for discussing the logistics of the duchess’s privy with me and for this suggestion in particular. For the exposure of Eleonora at her commode, see below, Appendix C.
the court returned to Florence and they could obtain the keys\textsuperscript{60}. Numerous letters survive from various court secretaries responding to requests for these keys from majordomo Riccio, providing evidence that, when the court was not in Florence, these two rooms were generally kept locked and the keys travelled with Eleonora herself. On 14 September 1549, for example, Cristiano Pagni wrote to Riccio: «I am sending to your lordship the keys to the Chapel and the \textit{Scrittoio} that are adjacent to the Camera Verde. The duchess, our patron, ordered that said keys be given me for that purpose stated in your lordship’s letter. Please write to inform me when you have received them»\textsuperscript{61}.

The furnishings of the Camera Verde described in the 1553 inventory examined thus far reflect the chamber’s employment for both ceremonial and practical functions: the rich decorations, tapestries and carved furnishings suggest its use as a public space, while the presence of the \textit{seggietta}, or close-stool, serves as a reminder that practical aspects of daily living were also accommodated here. It would appear, then, that the duchess frequently spent long periods of time in the Camera Verde. The rest of the furnishings described in the inventory indicate why this was so: the Camera Verde served as the administrative center for Eleonora’s financial affairs, both for her personal finances and for the management of the Medici estates under her control. In particular, the storage and counting of Eleonora’s money took place here.

Tovaglia, Ricci and Cecchi note the presence of two large iron chests of German manufacture in the hall, carefully specifying that they were used «for storing money» and that they were «locked». Similarly, they described the small walnut table as intended «for counting money». Other documentary evidence confirms that the Camera Verde was often the site of important financial transactions, where the duke or one of his servants came to obtain loans from the duchess, exchange currencies with her or, while gambling, to lose or win large sums of money from her\textsuperscript{62}.

\footnote{60 However, see Cross [1990], p. 12, esp. n. 46, for a rather different interpretation of the compilers’ note in the inventory.}

\footnote{61 Appendix A, Doc. 4.}

\footnote{62 For a large loan from Eleonora to Cosimo in 1544 see, e.g., ASFi, GM 10, fol. 17 right: «La Ill.ma et Ex.ma s.ra la duchessa, n.ra s.ra, di contro de avere f. III mila CCIII d’oro, di moneta l. IIII s. VIII d. VI, quali per tanti posto S. Ex.tia debitricie in altro conto in questo [c.] 57, f. 3203, l. 4.9.6». For a long series of debts incurred by Cosimo, 15 March-17 September 1545, specifically «in camera della duchessa», see \textit{ibid.}, fol. 41 left-right. That the \textit{camera} referred to is the Camera Verde can be deduced from \textit{ibid.}, fol. 2 left, recording various gambling debts}
incurred by Cosimo «in camera verde per passar tempo»; throughout the series of entries, the phrase «camera verde» is used interchangeably with «camera della duchessa». A loan of 214 florins, 2 lire, made by Eleonora to Cosimo on 31 May 1553, is described in ibid., fol. 57 right, as «datoli di contanti in camera verde in un fazzoletto». On the same day, the duchess made other loans totaling 8,970 florins, 17 soldi, 2 denari. Cf. also ibid., fol. 259 left-right, for Eleonora’s debts and credits during the period 9 August 1552-10 February 1553, including a loan of 100 gold scudi on 18 August 1552, «portò contanti m. Gieronimo Trotti in camera verde». Similarly, a series of debts incurred by Cosimo in June and July 1552 took place «in camera verde»; ibid., fol. 248 left, 5 records of 107 florins, 1 lira («vi era la S.ra Luysa Palavisina», present for the first of these), and records of 214 florins, 2 lire, 171 florins, 3 lire, and 85 florins, 5 lire. What is perhaps surprising are two other entries in the same list: «E addì X detto [July 1552], a S. Ex.tia scudi 100 d’oro in oro, portò m. Gieronimo Trotti suo cameriere, in cappelletta, a uscita 49, posto el mayordomo avere [c.] 255, f. 107, l. 1. E addì 13 detto, scudi 100 d’oro in oro a S. Ex.tia, per mano di m. Pierfrancesco Ricci, in cappelletta di camera verde, a uscita 49, posto avere el mayordomo in questo [c.] 255, f. 107, l. 1». The use of the Chapel of Eleonora for financial transactions suggests its greater privacy relative to the Camera Verde itself. On the duchess’s passion for gambling, see Edelstein [1995], I, p. 51, n. 106; Id., Observations on the Genesis & Function of Bronzino’s Frankfurt Modello for the Vault Decoration in the Chapel of Eleonora, in L. R. Jones and L. C. Matthew (eds.), Coming About... A Festschrift for John Shearman, Cambridge (Mass.), 2002. See also : Pieraccini [1986], II, p. 60; S. Ricci, Tra storia e leggenda : cronaca di vita medicea, in K. Aschengreen Piacenti and C. Chiarelli eds., Moda alla corte dei Medici : gli abiti restaurati di Cosimo, Eleonora e don Garzia, ex. cat. (Florence, Galleria del Costume, Palazzo Pitti), Florence, 1993, p. 21 (hereafter Ricci [1993]); R. Orsi Landini, L’amore del lusso e la necessità della modestia : Eleonora fra sete e oro, in ibid., p. 35. Appendix A, Doc. 3, contains a reference to palio banners won by the duchess, evidence of her interest in horse racing. Eleonora may have acquired her taste for gaming from her father; according to Castaldo [1769], p. 45, Pedro «era inclinatissimo al giocare, sicchè vi consumava le notti interie, e grosse summe di denari». 
Verde provided an appropriate setting for Eleonora’s principal role as Duchess of Florence: manager of the accounts for the Medici household and its estates. Court expenses amounted to enormous sums of money that were counted, registered and sometimes stored in this hall. The Camera Verde thus provided a legitimating space that conveyed a strong visual impression of the duchess’s vast wealth, managerial authority and right to rule, expressed through the lavish furnishings and decorations that once adorned it.

Bruce Edelstein

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63 On Eleonora’s financial activities, see Edelstein [2000].
APPENDIX

A – DOCUMENTS

1 – Sottomaiordomo Tommaso de’ Medici in Pisa to Majordomo Pierfrancesco Riccio in Florence, 12 March 15501.

Molto Rever. s. mio,

La Ill.ma s. duc.a mi comandò questa mattina che io scrivessi a v. s. che desidera che si facci riamattonare la Camera Verde dipinta et quella dove lavora la s. Isabel de Reinoso, et che m.ro Mariano facci quello uscio dove la duc.a gli ordinò che facessi nella camera dove lavora la s. Isabel de Reinoso. Io scrivo questa cosa come propriamente la s. duc.a me la ha detto.

El mulo di Bonifatio venuto hieri, perché non riescie come el fiorentino haveva dato ad intendere, dice che non è quello che voleva et bisognierà rimandarlo. Così costui, perché gli rincrescie la fatica, attende a2 mettere giornalmente ganillationi3 sopra questi muli et imprime nella mente della s. duc.a che a’ casi suoi non si pensa et fatte e’ cattivi ufitii che si può fare. Conviene una volta pensare a fare quattro buoni muli et levare via l’occasione.

Per questa non dirò altro per havere detto questa mattina abastanza. Di Pisa el di 12 di marzo 1549.

Di V. S. Servitore,

Thommaso de’ Medici

2 – Court Secretary Lorenzo Pagni in Pisa to Majordomo Pierfrancesco Riccio in Florence, 8 May 15484.

Molto R.do s.or mio oss.mo,

Comparsel Pierone da Bruscoli, et fu visto volentieri, et dipoi licentiato con la medesima risposta che gl’haveva fatto V. S.

La risposta della lettera del Conte Pauolo da Civorio si manderà in mano di V. S. et se li scriverrà che S. Ecc.a è contenta d’accettare in petto suo quel castello et stato che lui ha, et che egli li vuol commettere nel suo testamento. Et non si manda con questa cavalcata perché S. Ecc.a non ha fermato la lettera.

Piacque alla p[refat]la Ecc.a d’intendere che Morgante si trovasse in buon

1 ASFi, MdelP 1176, ins. 3, doc. 2.
2 The letter is unclear in the manuscript; «a mettere» may possibly be an abbreviated form of «commettere».
3 Presumably a noun form related to the verb «gannire». However, the word is unclear in the manuscript and may possibly read «gavillationi».
4 ASFi, MdelP 1170a, fasc. 4, fol. 549.
termine del suo male, et si rise di quella compagnia che haveva seco, d'un frate, d'un servigiale, d'uno petiale, et d'un'hoste.

Questa cavalcata si spedisce per ordine della Duchessa nostra sig.ra per inviare alla S. V. una federa ricamata d'oro et di perle, legata in due asse, et coperta d'incerato, perché l'Ecc.a Sua vuole che la S. V. insieme con madonna Cassandra Nerli de' Bachiacca commetta al Ricamatore5 che ne facci dua della medesima misura d'ormesino rosso cremisi col medesimo lavoro apunto d'oro et di perle. Ma vuole siano finite per tutto il presente mese et che detta madonna Cassandra veda ogni giorno tal lavoro et lo solleciti. Dice Sua Ecc.a che vi si metta su quattro persone a lavorarle et che la prima cosa si facci il lavoro che vi va d'oro et fatto questo si pesino. Et di qua si manderanno poi le perle che saranno di bisogno. Et col peso fatto dell'oro et dell'ormesino si vedrà apunto quante perle vi anderanno. Però la S. V. pigli questa cura insieme con detta madonna Cassandra, alla quale ne scrivo con la alligata6.

Restami dirgli che S. Ecc.a vuole che la S. V. gli mandi qua quella scatola di lavori che già dette a me per portare a Roma al Car.le della Cueva, che havendo incontrato Don Diego poco lontano da Siena et non havendo a passar più innanzi la rimessi a Siena in mano della S. V. perché si mandasse a Roma per qualche modo fidato et sicuro.

V. S. ha visto in che termine stia il negotio di Pionbino per quello ch'io scrisse hieri a M. Lelio, al quale mandai copia della carta di Don Francesco et d'una di S. M.ta a Don Fernando Gonzaga. Ma è bene non pubblicate la cosa per rispetto di esso Don Ferrando, che così ricerca si facci. Dell'Elba non ci son lettere da hieri in qua, però non li posso dire altro. Bacioli le mani et prego Idio che la conservi sana et contenta. Di Pisa li VIII di maggio 1548.

Di V. S. R.

Servitor, Lorenzo Pagni

5 A subsequent letter reveals the identity of the «ricamatore» to have been Antonio Bachiacca, ASFi, MdelP 387, fol. 384 (Pierfrancesco Riccio in Florence to Lorenzo Pagni «alla corte» [possibly in Pisa], 13 May 1548) : «Finalmente il Bachiacca ricamatore è quello che tira innanzi le dua federe da ricamarsi, che ogni altro spediente sarebbe stato molto più lungo, massime con monache. Perché quel ricamo exemplare parea loro più difficile che e' non si mostra, come anche al Bachiacca parea una particella che vi è di quel oro tirato. Pure fa buon animo per servire alla Duchessa n.ra Sig.ra». See also an unsigned and undated letter to Eleonora, probably from a Guardaroba official (possibly in the hand of Mariotto Cecchi), ASFi, MdelP 5922a, fol. 142 : «Antonio di Ubertino Verdi detto el Bachiacha richamatore di v.ra Ex.tia fa intendere a quella come ha fornito di richamare e' guanciali et per lui non manca che non sia omgni cosa in sua perfectione. Hora per non gli essere mai stato dato perle et oro tirato non può mostrare quanto e' desidera di mandare ad effecto quello che gli è inposto per conto di v.ra ex.tia. Sicché degni quella dare adviso et ordinare si che el decoto oro et perle gli sia consegnoto [...] [Rescript signed by Lorenzo Pagni :] Il Maiordomo lo proveda di quanto fa bisogno perché così comanda la Duchessa n.ra s.ra».

6 Eleonora subsequently acknowledged the impossibility of completing this task in the time requested, cf. ASFi, MdelP 1170a, fasc. 4, fol. 551 (Lorenzo Pagni in Pisa to Riccio in Florence, 11 May 1548) : «La Duchessa ha inteso che cestui ricamatori si gravano del breve termine datoli a fare quelle fodere da guanciali, et dice che non li daranno noia dieci giorni più, ma che si sollecitino ad quantum currit».

7 This appears as a kind of blot in the manuscript : «a» appears to be written over «di».
3 – Court Steward and Chaplain Francesco Pretino in Borgo Sansepolcro to Court Secretary Pierfrancesco Riccio in Florence, 17 August 1544.

R.do et S.or mio molto hon.,

Per il presente eshibitore si manda uno asinino quale la II.ma S. D. mie S. mi ha commisso che a V. S. l’invii et perché dice che per il giardino et di Castello et Cafagiulio lo vuol cavalcare. Imperò dice che di e’ pali di velluto rosso che si sono vinti V. S. li facci uno fare uno fornimento che lo possa cavalcare. Et senz’altro di V. S. la man basando mi raccomando che Dio la guardi. Dal Borgo alli 17 d’agosto del ‘44.

Di V. S. Servitore,

El Pretino

4 – Court Secretary Cristiano Pagni at Poggio a Caiano to Majordomo Pierfrancesco Riccio in Florence, 14 September 1549.

Molto R.do S.or mio oss.mo,

Pardo fu troppo licentioso a non voler aspettare le lettere di V. S. R., il Tosingo malaventurato, et il cavallaro pur gione a buon porto. Ma per tornare al atto di Pardo, Sua Ecc.a, non senza alteratione, leggendogli la lettera di V. S., mi ha detto che non vuole che nessun, sia chi si voglia, parta in poste senza la licentia, et di costi et di dove la sarà lei, et che non si comporti. Et da qui innanzi se il postieri darà le cavalle senza la licentia, che se li faccino dare subito duoi buon tratti di corda. Et così V. S. farà osservare l’ordine.

Mando a v. s. le chiave della cappella et dello scrittoio che sono a canto alla Camera Verde, le quali la Duchessa nostra patrona mi ha fatte dare per quello effetto che v. s. ha scritto, et le piacerà di ricevuta. La sopraddetta mia s.ra mi ha detto che se a Mons.r Jovio torna scommodo il venire qua a cavallo, che v. s. lo faccia provvedere d’una lettiga dove possa venire commodamente.

Del miglioramento di m.ro Andrea s’è preso piacere, et del bene stare del signorino infinito contento. Sono le loro Ecc.tie in buona saluta et così i signorini che son qua. Altro non mi occorre, né ho tempo di scrivere a v. s.ria sendo hora di dormir. Le bacio la mano et con tutto l’animo me li raccomando. Dal Poggio alli XIII di settembre 1549.

Di V. S. molto R.

Affett.mo Servitor, Christiano Pagni

B – THE SUBJECT OF STRADANO’S VIGNETTE IN THE SALA DI COSIMO I

An oval vignette designed by Vasari and executed by Stradano for the Sala di Cosimo I in the Palazzo Vecchio has generally been identified as a depiction of the birth of Francesco I (Tav. IV). The identification follows Vasari’s own description
of the subject in the *Ragionamenti*\(^\text{13}\). However, as Ugo Muccini and Alessandro Cecchi have observed, this identification is incorrect\(^\text{14}\). The subject of the vignette is of significant interest in regard to the Camera Verde, since the scene has generally been presumed to be set in this room.

If the scene represented in the oval has a Florentine setting, it is logical to assume that the room depicted is an actual hall. It is well known that Vasari took great pains to research the historical appearance of both landscape features and architectural settings to represent them as accurately as possible throughout his decorations in the Palazzo Vecchio. As the event depicted is generally presumed to have taken place in the palace itself, the room in Stradano's vignette has frequently been identified with the Camera Verde because it is one of the palace's few vaulted spaces. However, to my knowledge, there are no rooms in the Palazzo Vecchio that feature both a sail vault and round-headed windows of the precise type depicted in the oval, although the Camera Verde may possibly be considered the closest match. The problem of the identification of the setting depicted in the vignette may therefore be considered to have two distinct but related components: the identification of the vignette's subject and the physical characteristics of the hall depicted. Consequently, both the subject and the form of the hall would need to be compatible with the Camera Verde as a setting.

The first problem presented by identifying the vignette's subject as the birth of Francesco I is that there is no evidence to suggest that the prince was born in the Palazzo Vecchio or that his birth took place specifically in the Camera Verde. Based on the assumption that the scene depicts Francesco's birth, previous scholars sought to identify the locale as Eleonora's bedroom in the Palazzo Vecchio, which we have seen was mistakenly thought to be the Camera Verde\(^\text{15}\). While it should be recognized that rooms in noble palaces in the mid-sixteenth century rarely maintained a fixed or permanent function, the Palazzo Vecchio being no exception, two objections may nonetheless be raised against identifying the locale of Francesco's birth with the Camera Verde. First, at the time of his birth, both Bronzino and Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio were probably very busy executing their respective decorations for the Chapel of Eleonora and the Camera Verde\(^\text{16}\). As we have seen, Ridolfo's work is documented as having been finished by 1542, making the possibility that work was suspended in the Camera Verde at this time highly unlikely, in turn suggesting the improbability that the birth occurred there\(^\text{17}\). Second, most of Eleonora's subsequent periods of lying in occurred at the Medici villa of Poggio a Caiano; it is possible that this event also took place there\(^\text{18}\).

\(^{13}\) Vasari [1878-85], VIII, p. 196.


\(^{15}\) For the actual function of this room, see above, «Furnishings and Function».

\(^{16}\) Cf. Allegri & Cecchi [1980], p. 21, 26, 28 and 30-31.

\(^{17}\) See above, «The Frescoes».

\(^{18}\) Neither the anonymous continuer of Landucci nor Lapini record the location of Francesco's birth, although it should be noted that the early seventeenth-century source, Cini, claims that the birth took place in the former Priors' palace; Landucci [1883], p. 376; Agostino Lapini, *Diario fiorentino dal 252 al 1596*, ed. G. O. Corazzini, Florence, 1900, p. 102-103 (hereafter Lapini [1900]); G. B. Cini, *Vita del Serenissimo Signor Cosimo de Medici Primo Gran Duca di Toscana*, Florence, 1611, p. 111. Pieraccini [1986], II, p. 147, notes only that Francesco and the other Medici children spent their earliest years with their grandmother, Maria Salviati, at Castello, but not the location of his birth; however,
An examination of the physical characteristics of the room depicted in the vignette also suggests that it cannot be the Camera Verde. If one presumes that the room depicted is this one, then the window seen on the left must be identified with one of the existing round-headed windows of the type designed by Brunelleschi for the Palazzo di Parte Guelfa located on the side of the hall that faces the interior courtyard. This would then mean that the great-canopied bed depicted blocks the entrance to the Chapel of Eleonora. Even more problematic are the locations of the doors in the vignette. The door at the rear of the room next to the bed would lead to the roof of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, not yet raised to the height of the Camera Verde by Vasari. Subsequent evidence suggests that the Camera Verde was indeed connected to a «passo» that traversed the Great Council Hall, linking Eleonora's apartment to the rooms of the new Quartiere degli Elementi. However, at the time of Francesco I's birth, these rooms had not yet been created and it is unlikely that a portal would have already existed to mark this destination for the duchess and the members of her court. Worse, the door on the wall opposite the window would lead to a three-storey drop onto via della Ninna. This door appears to be located where the present access to the Vasari Corridor is. However, both the Uffizi, to which the corridor links Eleonora's apartment, and the corridor itself were built about twenty years after the birth of Francesco I. Furthermore, these structures were not created, and probably not even planned, until at least six years after the vignette was painted.

Nothing about the scene in the vignette suggests that it depicts a birth, causing various authors recently to identify it as the ducal couple receiving felicitations following the birth of Francesco I. However, a careful examination of the vignette suggests that it portrays something else entirely: an engagement. Muccini and Cecchi have suggested just this, speculating that the engagement depicted may possibly be that of Lucrezia de' Medici to Alfonso d'Este; indeed, Vasari hurried to prepare the Quartiere di Leone X, where this vignette is located, in time for Lucrezia's and Alfonso's marriage festivities. Muccini and Cecchi, however, avoid the problem of the identification of the site depicted by stating that it takes place in an unspecified «room of the palace».

Unfortunately, the summary characterization of the persons represented in the oval does not permit their identification. However, the position of the vignette in the series of events in the life of the duke depicted by Vasari in the Sala di Cosimo I may offer significant clues regarding its subject. It is adjacent to a wall containing two similarly framed scenes depicting The Departure of Eleonora di Toledo from Naples and The Arrival of Eleonora di Toledo at Poggio a Caiano. Thus, the scene depicted...
could well be the logical preceding moment to these: Cosimo's and Eleonora's marriage by proxy in Naples. The two male figures standing in front of the bride, the closer one being given her hand by a priest, would be Luigi Ridolfi and Jacopo de' Medici, the duke's proxies on that occasion; the seated figures would be Eleonora's parents, the Viceroy and Vicereine of Naples, Pedro de Toledo and Maria Osorio Pimentel.

Further evidence for identifying the subject of Stradano's vignette as Cosimo's and Eleonora's proxy wedding may also be provided by the coats of arms featured prominently as decoration in the hall. Both of the identifiable crests, those over the door to the right and on the portiera at the rear of the hall, depict the impaled Medici-Toledo arms. If the scene is properly identifiable as a betrothal or wedding, then the appropriate coat of arms would seem requisite. Thus, for Isabella's marriage to the Duke of Ferrara, the subject suggested by Muccini and Cecchi, either the portiera or the overdoor should contain a d'Este-Medici stemma. The celebration of the Medici-Toledo union through the repeated motif of their impaled arms, however, suggests the possibility that the ceremony depicted is the proxy marriage.

Within the fresco cycle of the Sala di Cosimo I, Cosimo's and Eleonora's proxy marriage would also appear a more logical subject for the position accorded the vignette. To the right on the wall opposite the main entrance to the hall from the Sala di Leone X, the scenes depicted in the eight ovals would then appear to be placed regularly in chronological order as one moves clockwise around the room back to the same wall. The subjects appear to be:

1. The Proxy Marriage of Cosimo I de' Medici and Eleonora di Toledo in Naples
2. The Departure of Eleonora di Toledo from Naples
3. The Arrival of Eleonora di Toledo at Poggio a Caiano
4. The Baptism of Francesco I
5. The Restoration of the Fortezza da Basso to Cosimo I
6. The Encounter of Cosimo I and Charles V at Genoa
7. The Investiture of Cosimo with the Order of the Golden Fleece in Florence Cathedral
8. Cosimo I takes possession of Siena

With the exception of Cosimo's encounter with Charles V in Genoa, out of sequence solely by a matter of months, the scenes move in chronological order from events of 1539 (1-3) to 1541 (4) to 1543 (5-6) to 1545 (7) to the final scene (8), depicting either Cosimo being granted possession of Siena in 1557 or his physical entry into the city in 1560. Thus, the importance of Cosimo's marriage to Eleonora would have been highlighted as the first significant moment in the duke's life chronologically to be depicted in the cycle. Together with the extension of Cosimo's reign to include Siena on the same wall, the scene's significance would have been further emphasized by its position opposite the entrance from the Sala di Leone X.

If the hypothesis is correct that the scene depicted is Cosimo's and Eleonora's proxy marriage, then its setting would not represent a Florentine site, resolving the
significant difficulty of identifying the features of the painted hall with the physical characteristics of the Camera Verde. The proxy marriage took place in Naples and the room depicted would presumably be a hall in the Castel Nuovo. Although Vasari worked in Naples between 1544 and 1545 for Pedro de Toledo, it cannot be assumed that he visited the Castel Nuovo at this time. While it is certainly conceivable as an employee of the viceroyal court that he did so, I know of no evidence to support this. Furthermore, we cannot be certain that if Vasari had visited the Castel Nuovo that he would have known the particular room where the proxy marriage took place or that he would have recalled it well enough after more than a decade to depict it accurately. Thus, if the subject proposed here is correct, then the setting depicted by Stradano in the vignette is likely to be a generic rather than a specific one, whose locale in the viceroyal residence in Naples is suggested by the inclusion of the multiple Medici-Toledo coats of arms.

C – Cellini in the Quartiere di Eleonora

A passage in Benvenuto Cellini’s Autobiography provides a rare glimpse of life in the most public part of Eleonora’s apartment at exactly the same time that the 1553 inventory was being completed, that is, the beginning of 1554. With the discovery of the famous Etruscan Chimera near Arezzo in November 1553, a number of small bronze statuettes were also found. Cosimo commissioned Cellini to restore these objects, specifically requesting that the work be carried out in a room in the newly created Quartiere degli Elementi (fig. 1, nos. 1-7). Cellini, therefore, needed to pass frequently between the Guardaroba, the central headquarters for precious metalworkers in the Palazzo Vecchio, located where the present Sala delle Carte Geografiche is (fig. 1, no. 20), adjacent to the Sala de’ Gigli (fig. 1, no. 22), and his temporary workroom. In order to do so, he had to traverse several rooms in Eleonora’s apartment and the fifteenth-century palco of the Great Council Hall before arriving in the new apartment. This was the only possible way to arrive in the new apartment at this time since it did not yet have its own staircase, begun by Vasari only in 1556 (fig. 1, between nos. 7 and 8).

As Cellini’s comments are revealing not only in regard to the organization of the rooms in the Quartiere di Eleonora but also for their employment, it is worth reproducing the entire passage here:

In questi giorni e’ si murava quelle stanze nuove di verso i Leoni : di modo che, volendo sua Eccellenza ritirarsi in parte più secreta, ei s’era fatto accogliere un certo stanzino di queste stanze fatte nuovamente, e a me aveva ordinato che io me

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27 Vasari received a commission from Pedro de Toledo for the viceroy’s new villa at Pozzuoli but these remained unexecuted. For Vasari’s Neapolitan works, see: L. Corti, Vasari: catalogo completo dei dipinti, Florence, 1989, p. 51-61.
28 Now in the Museo Archeologico, Florence.
29 Vasari [1878-85], I, p. 220-221, commenting on the discovery of the Chimera, mentions these: “Ed oltre a questa, nel medesimo luogo furono ritrovate molte figurine di bronzo della medesima maniera; le quali sono appresso il detto signor Duca.”
30 For the beginning of Vasari’s work on the staircase, see his letter to Cosimo, dated 23 April 1556, Vasari [1923-30], I, p. 444.
n’andassi per la sua guardaroba, dove io passavo segretamente sopra ’l palco della gran sala, e per certi pugigattoli me n’andavo al detto stanzino segrettissimamente: dove che in ispazio di pochi giorni la Duchessa me ne privò, facendo serrare tutte quelle mie comodità: di modo che ogni sera che io arrivavo in Palazzo, io avevo a’ spettare un gran pezzo per amor che la Duchessa si stava in quelle anticamere dove io aveva da passare, alle sue comodità; e per essere infetta, io non vi arrivavo mai volta, che io nolla scomodassi. Or per questa e per altra causa la mi s’era recata tanto a noia, che per verso nissuno la non poteva patir di vedermi; e con tutto questo mio gran disagio e infinito dispiacere, pazientemente io seguiutav d’andarvi; e il Duca aveva di sorte fatto ispressi comandamenti che subito che io picchiavo quelle porte, e’ m’era aperto, e senza dirmi nulla e’ mi lasciavano entrare per tutto: di modo che e’ gli avvenne talvolta che, entrando chetamente così inaspettatamente per quelle secrete camere, che io trovava la Duchessa alle sue comodità; la quale subito si scrucciava con tanto arrabbiato furore meco che io mi spaventavo, e sempre mi diceva: «Quando arai tu mai finito di racconciare queste piccole figurine? perché oramai questo tuo venire m’è venuto troppo a fastidio». Alla quale io benignamente rispondevi: «Signiora, mia unica patrona, io non desidero altro, se none con fede e cone estrema ubbidienza servirla; e perché queste opere, che mi ha ordinato il Duca, durerranno di molti mesi, dicami vostra Eccellenzia illustrissima se la non vuole che io ci venga più: io non ci verrò in modo alcuno e chiami chi vuole; e se bene e’ mi chiamerà ’l Duca, io dirò che mi sento male e in modo nessuno mai non ci capiterò». A queste mie parole elle dicievavi: «Io non dico che tu non ci venga e non dico che tu non ubbidisca al Duca; ma e’ mi pare bene che queste tue opere non abbonno mai fine». O che ’l Duca ne avessi auto qualche sentore, o in altro modo che la si fussi, sua Eccellenzia ricominciò: come e’ si appressava alle 24 ore, e’ mi mandava a chiamare; e quello che veniva a chiamarmi, sempre mi diceva: «Avvertisci a non mancare di venire, ché ’l Duca ti aspetta»; e così continuai con queste medesime difficoltà, parecchi serate. E una sera infin l’altra, entrando al mio solito, il Duca che doveva ragionare colla Duchessa di cose forse segrete, mi si volse con el maggior furore del mondo; e io, alquanto spaventato, volendomi presto ritirare, in un subito disse: «Entra, Benvenuto mio, e va là alle tue facciende, e io starò poco a venirmi a star tec». In mentre che io passavo, e’ mi prese per la cappa il signior don Grazìa, fanciullino di poco tempo, e mi faceva le più piacevol baiuzze che possa fare un tal bambino; dove il Duca maravigliandosi disse: «Oh che piacevole amicizia è questa che i mia figliuoli hanno tec!».[31]

Through comparison with plans, it is possible to establish Cellini’s exact path. From the Guardaroba (fig. 1, no. 20) Cellini passed through the Sala de’ Gigli (fig. 1, no. 22) to the Salotto (fig. 1, no. 18) and then the room which would later become the Sala delle Sabine (fig. 1, no. 12). From there he continued to the left, through the Camera Verde (fig. 1, no. 10), and then to the right of the Chapel of Eleonora (fig. 1, no. 11) to traverse the wooden ceiling of the Great Council Hall.[32] Arriving in the new


[32] That Cellini literally passed «sopra il palco della gran sala» is confirmed by a letter from Vasari to Cosimo, 23 April 1556, from which it is clear that a balcony along the southern side of the Great Council Hall had not yet been constructed (ASFi, MdelP 453,
Fig. 2 – Anonymous Italian?, Plan of the Second Floor of the Palazzo Vecchio, Hapsburg Family Archive, Prague, 18th Century (photograph: Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz).
Quartiere degli Elementi (fig. 1, nos. 1-7), he passed through certain «bugigattoli» meaning uncomfortable little rooms or closets, to the room where he was to work on the Etruscan statuettes.

Cellini clearly states the reason for Eleonora’s displeasure with him: while passing unnoticed through her apartment, he encountered the duchess on one occasion «alle sue comodità» in one of «those secret rooms». There are several places along Cellini’s route that may have been employed as toilets or baths in Eleonora’s time. However, the most likely of these would appear to be the so-called Ripostiglio in the Camera Verde. As noted above, the agiatoii in the palace were generally miniscule spaces, so small in fact that during their employment the user was either constrained to leave the door open to accommodate his or her legs, or even to draw the chamber pot or close-stool out of the cupboard during use and replace it afterwards. This explains why Cellini would have been able to pass by one of these cabinets and find the duchess exposed while using it.

Cellini’s brief description contains much additional information regarding the organization of Eleonora’s apartment that is less explicit than his indications about its privy. Of primary importance is Cellini’s reference to all three of the rooms through which he passed as «anticamere». This function is indeed suggested by the evidence of the 1553 inventory for the Salotto and the future Sala delle Sabine. However, it is especially noteworthy that Cellini includes the Camera Verde among these «anticamere». As we have seen, based on Conti’s misreading of the 1553 inventory, it has generally been presumed that the Camera Verde was Eleonora’s bedroom. If this had been the function of the room, Cellini would almost surely have specified that his route constrained him to pass through the duchess’s chamber, the «camera della duchessa». The account, therefore, offers additional evidence to support the functions here attributed to the Camera Verde.