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ATTRIBUTED TO

GIUSEPPE LIRONI  
1679 (?) – 1749 (?)

OR

ANTON FRANCESCO ANDREOZZI  
FLORENCE 1663 – FLORENCE 1731

*ST JAMES THE GREATER*

FIRST HALF 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Terracotta, on a wood base.  
60 (72,5 cm overall) x 29 x 18,5 cm

This highly finished terracotta statuette depicts St. James the Greater, identifiable with his pilgrim's staff and the cockleshells ornament. The saint, standing on a circular wood base decorated with a wax festoon, holds a book under his left arm while turning towards his left hand side. One of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ, St. James is called "the Greater" to

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distinguish him from “James the Less”, another apostle. The high degree of finish of the terracotta and the decorated wood base, probably made at the same time, could indicate it was a final model praised by the artist who modelled it. The careful realisation of the eyes and the hands as well as the sophisticated drapery are the work of a talented sculptor.

Although no final sculpture of the same composition is known, two hypotheses can be suggested. The first, and most convincing one, is based on striking stylistic resemblances with the work of Giuseppe Lironi (Vacallo, 1689/1691 – Rome, 1749)<sup>1</sup>. The drapery folds on the torso and the cloak pulled back in the front, underneath the book, show strong similarities with Lironi’s *bozzetto* for the statue of *Prudence* (fig. 1) as well as with the marble of *Hope* in St. Peter’s (fig. 2). The long neck and the majestic position of the head are also a characteristic of Lironi’s work. The same degree of finish noticeable in the *St James* appears in the *modello* for the *Prudence*.

Giuseppe Lironi was born in the Canton of Ticino (in Switzerland) but active in Rome during the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>2</sup>. He must have moved to Rome at an early age since he took part in the Accademia di San Luca’s Concorsi Clementini in 1705 and in the following years, according to the biographer Lione Pascoli, Lironi was one of the four students of Lorenzo Ottoni worthy of being remembered. The artist was active on a number of important 18th-century projects in Rome, including several commissions for St Peter’s basilica. Between 1722 and 1725, he sculpted one of the *putti* holding a holy water font, in collaboration with Francesco Moderati and Giovanni Battista de Rossi. In the following years, he executed two monumental statues of *Prudence* and *Hope* for the portico of the basilica.

The sculptor worked on two occasions for commissions outside of Rome, both in the early 1730s. For Padre d’Evora, the Portuguese ambassador in Rome, he sculpted a statue of *St. Bruno* for the Basilica of Mafra in Portugal. He also realised a monumental statue representing *St. Joseph* (fig. 3), commissioned by Cardinal Annibale Albani, for the Oratory of St. Joseph in Urbino. In 1733–36, Lironi was involved with decorations for the Corsini Chapel in St. John in the Lateran, for which he produced a statue of *Justice with Two Mourning Putti*. The decoration of this chapel is one of the most prestigious of the century and many sculptors contributed to it (e.g. Filippo Della Valle, Pietro Bracci, Giovanni Battista Maini).

Another hypothesis can also be suggested. The present terracotta figure was for a long time connected with Camillo Rusconi’s sculpture of *St. James* in the Lateran (fig. 4). Previously ascribed to Rusconi himself, it was thought to be a *modello* for the over life-sized marble statue completed in 1718<sup>3</sup>. The present terracotta shows some similarities in the stance with Rusconi’s finished marble, especially in the position of the legs and the direction of the saint’s gaze. However, it diverges in many aspects, the most remarkable differences being the presence of the book in the terracotta and the bare shoulder in the marble.

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<sup>1</sup> The attribution of this terracotta to Giuseppe Lironi has been suggested by Anne-Lise Desmas. Jennifer Montagu does not exclude this possibility but sees this sculpture as almost too elegant for Lironi’s style.

<sup>2</sup> On Giuseppe Lironi see R. Engass, *Early Eighteenth-Century Sculpture in Rome*, University Park and London, 1976, I, pp. 171-175; C. De Angelis, “Note sul percorso stilistico e iconografico dell’opera di Giuseppe Lironi”, in Elisa Debenedetti (ed.), *Sculture romane del Settecento, III. La professione dello scultore*, Rome, 2003, pp. 341- 364.

<sup>3</sup> On Rusconi’s statue see R. Engass, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 101-102.

At the dawn of the eighteenth century, pope Clement XI decided to ornate the niches that Borromini had designed in the nave of St. John of the Lateran with colossal marble statues of the Twelve Apostles. The architect Carlo Fontana and the painter Carlo Maratti were appointed artistic advisors on the project. Maratti prepared designs of the statues that were to serve as models for the various sculptors. They would first realise several *bozzetti* according to Maratti's drawing and then a finished clay model measuring 3 *palmi* (i.e. 67 cm). Once the model was approved, they would execute a full-scale model before executing the marble statue<sup>4</sup>.

In 1703, the statue of St. James the Greater was not commissioned to Camillo Rusconi but to a Florentine sculptor trained in the workshop of Giovanni Battista Foggini: Anton Francesco Andreozzi (Florence, 1663 – Florence, 1731). Andreozzi had indeed been highly recommended by Cardinal Francesco Maria de' Medici to Cardinal Benedetto Pamphilj in charge of coordinating the Lateran project. The Florentine, like the other sculptors, was given the drawing made by Carlo Maratti for the statue. In several letters addressed to his former master in Florence, Andreozzi complains about the painter's design that was apparently not adapted for a sculpture. However, he worked on several *bozzetti* and, in July 1703, finally presented his final model to the pope who apparently was very satisfied with it. The situation seems to have changed a month later. Andreozzi and Maratti were in complete disagreement and, the sculptor returned to Florence without executing the statue and bringing Maratti's design to his homeland. The marble statue was only completed fifteen years later by Camillo Rusconi

The connection between this terracotta and Andreozzi's final *modello* for the Lateran is an appealing proposition. It is however difficult to demonstrate on a stylistic basis due to the very few sculptures ascribed to the artist (fig. 5)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> For the development of the commission see M. Loret, "Carlo Maratti e gli scultori delle statue degli apostoli in S. Giovanni in Laterano", *Archivi d'Italia e rassegna internazionale degli archivi*, II, 1935, pp. 140-144; M. Conforti, "Planning the Lateran Apostles", *Studies in Italian art and architecture*, pp. 243-260; R. Enggass, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 99-102; A.-L. Desmas, "Why Legros rather than Foggini carved the 'St Bartholomew' for the Lateran: new documents for the statue in the nave", *The Burlington magazine*, CXLVI, no. 1221, pp. 796-805; J. Montagu, "Carlo Maratti e la scultura", in L. Barroero, S. Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, S. Schütze (ed.), *Maratti e l'Europa*, Rome, 2015, pp. 60-65.

<sup>5</sup> On Andreozzi, see S. Blasio in Giovanni Pratesi (ed.), *Repertorio della scultura fiorentina del Seicento e Settecento*, Torino, I, pp. 35-36, 69.



Fig. 1 – Giuseppe Lironi, *Prudence*, 1725-28, terracotta. Franckfort, Liebighaus.



Fig. 2 – Giuseppe Lironi, *Hope*, 1728-38, marble. Rome, St. Peter's.



Fig. 3 – Giuseppe Lironi, *St. Joseph*, 1730, marble. Urbino, Oratory of St. Joseph.



Fig. 4 – Camillo Rusconi, *St. James the Greater*, 1718. Rome, St. John in Lateran.



Fig. 5 – Anton Francesco Andreozzi, *The Rape of Europa*, 1691. Florence, Palazzo Medici Riccardi.