

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



The Choice Between Virtue and Vice

Paolo Veronese (Paolo Caliari) (Italian, 1528–1588)

Date ca. 1565

Medium Oil on canvas

Dimensions 86 1/4 x 66 3/4 in. (219.1 x 169.5 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1912.1.129

Currently On View

First Floor, Room 13, West Gallery

Commentary At a crossroads, Hercules encountered Vice, who offered a path of ease and pleasure, and Virtue, who indicated a rugged ascent leading to true happiness — a moral lesson underlined by the motto on the entablature at upper left: [H]ONOR ET VIRTUS/[P]OST MORTE FLORET (Honor and Virtue Flourish after Death). The long talons of Vice have ripped the hero's stocking. A jagged knife leans against the breast of the sphinx supporting her throne. Source: Art in The Frick Collection: Paintings, Sculpture, Decorative Arts, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996.

Collection History Emperor Rudolph II. Queen Christina of Sweden, Stockholm and Rome. Bequeathed by her in 1689 to Cardinal Decio Azzolini, Rome. Marchese Pompeo Azzolini, Rome. Sold by him in 1696 to Prince Livio Odescalchi. Marchese Baldassare Odescalchi and Cardinal Erba Odescalchi (1713). Sold by them in 1721 to the Duc d'Orléans. Orléans family. Sold to Walkeurs in 1792. Sold by him in 1792 to Laborde-Méréville. Duke of Bridgewater and Lords Gower and Carlisle. Thomas Hope (1799–1800). The Hope family. Sold by the trustees of the Hope family to Agnew. Knoedler (1910). Frick, 1912. Source: Paintings in The Frick Collection: French, Italian and Spanish. Volume II. New York: The Frick Collection, 1968.