

ULISSE ALDROVANDI

Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605) was one of the most innovative scientists of the XVI century in Bologna. He studied medicine, mineralogy and zoology, moreover he wrote the most detailed description of the three kingdoms (mineral, plant and animal) called *de animalibus insectis*. In 1549 he was accused of heresy for exposing the antitrinitarian beliefs of the Anabaptists. After this period, in 1554 he was the first university professor of natural sciences; his experiments and inventions are conserved in a room of Palazzo Poggi dedicated to him: SALA ALDROVANDI. In 1568 he created the botanical garden. In 1577 Pope Gregory VIII decided to publish Aldrovandi's books.

DACTYLOPTERUS VOLITANS

Aldrovandi proposed a classification system that divided fish into those with a cartilaginous skeleton and those with a bony skeleton. His work on ichthyology, *de Piscibus*, was published posthumously (1613) by Cornelius Uterverius. The specimen shown in the photo, *Dactylopterus volitans*, commonly known as a *flying gurnard*, is a bony fish that, when excited, spreads its wings, which are semitransparent, with a phosphorescent bright blue coloration at their tips. The fish also has large eyes and he reaches up to 50 cm in length and 1.8 kg in weight.

THE TWO MOLDS

In the pictures there are two molds representing a dragon. Ulisse Aldrovandi conducted some interesting studies about natural deformities. This man of genius wrote lots of scientific encyclopedias about common and uncommon natural phenomena, commissioned different artists to create outstanding art panels for universities as objects of study and prepared the first natural history museum. After his death, his writings and his images about monsters were collected in a book named *Monstrorum Historia*.

POPE BENEDICT XIV (cardinal Lambertini)

This painting was made in the XVIII century and it represents Cardinal Lambertini. He was the cardinal of Bologna in 1731 and he was an important figure for the city. First of all, he became a political mediator between the Senate and the Church. Secondly, he commissioned works of art that enriched the city centre. Most of all, he was a science promoter who contributed to the founding of the "Institute of sciences" which was located in Palazzo Poggi, so that's the reason why there's a portrait of a clergyman inside the SALA ALDROVANDI.

