

Mattia & Maria Novella Romano

A Selection of Master Drawings



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Index of Artists

3
Cherubino
Alberti



15
Giuseppe
Bernardino Bison



16
Umberto
Brunelleschi



5
Giuseppe Cesari called
Cavalier d'Arpino



9
Vincenzo
Dandini



7
G. M. della Rovere
called Il Fiamminghino



6
G. A. Donducci
called Il Mastelletta



13
Fedele
Fischetti



10
Giacinto
Gimignani



2
Lombard Artist
16th century



11
Carlo
Maratta



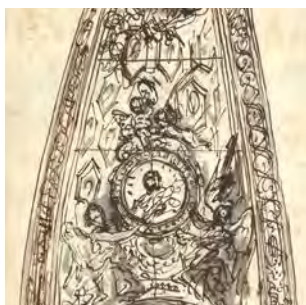
8
Pietro Novelli
known as Il Monrealese



4
Francesco
Vanni



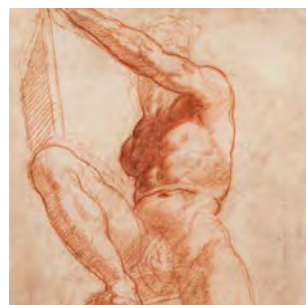
12
Luigi
Vanvitelli



14
Venetian Artist
19th century



1
Taddeo
Zuccari



1 Taddeo Zuccari

Sant'Angelo in Vado 1529 - 1566 Rome

Study of a nude seated on an architectural stand for a figure of a prophet or evangelist

Red chalk on ivory laid paper
396 x 265 mm (15 5/8 x 10 3/8 in.)

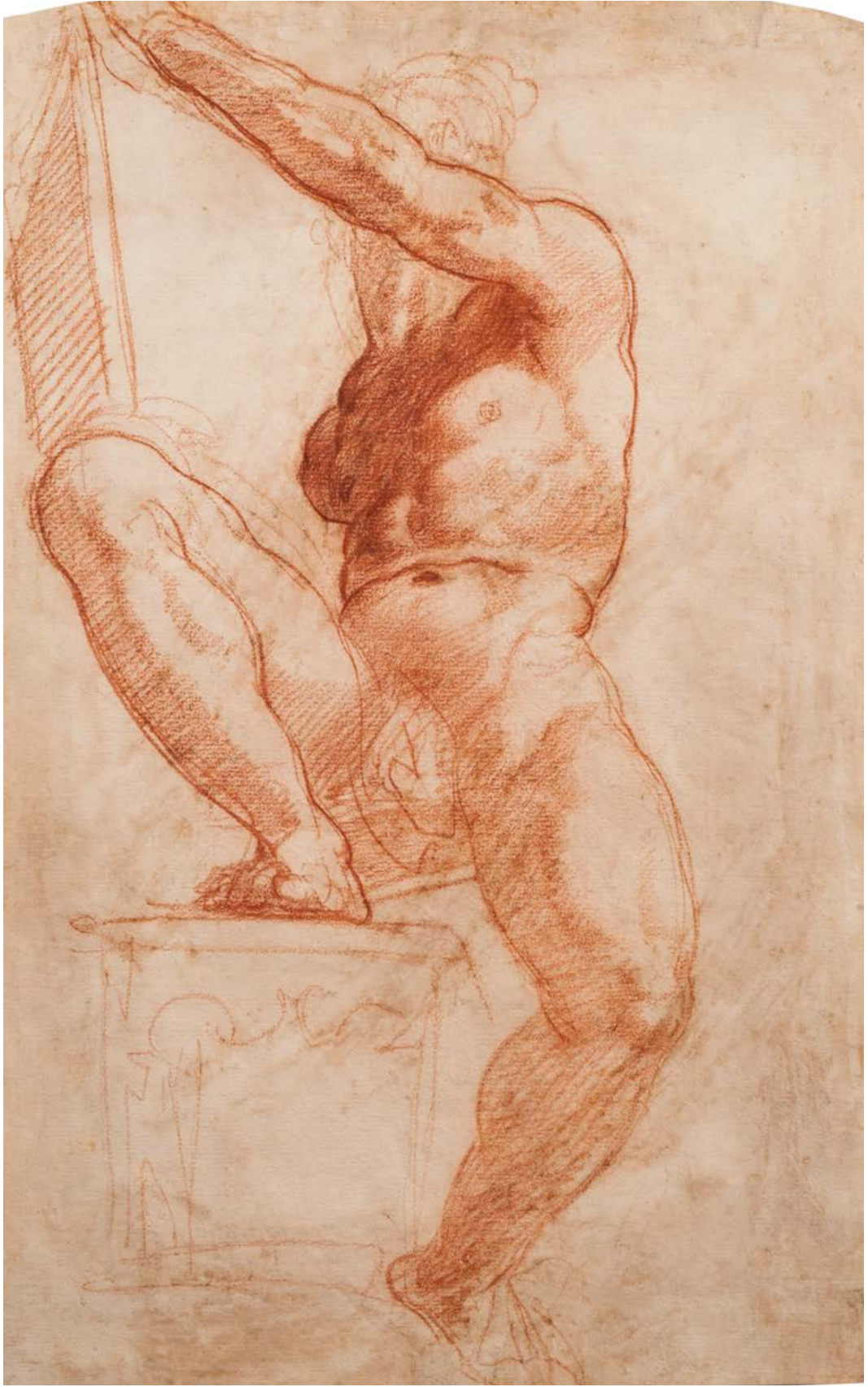
Provenance: private collection.

This study of a nude marked out in sanguine with great confidence and freedom by the artist's hand, which has built up the anatomical forms with strength and steady precision, immediately recalls the nudes on the arched ceiling of the Sistine Chapel painted by Michelangelo at the start of the 16th century. These became the model of beauty and strength for the whole century, until the



1. Taddeo Zuccari, *Standing nude man*, red chalk highlighted with traces of white gouache on laid paper, 420 x 287 mm (16 1/2 x 11 1/4 in.), Metropolitan Museum, New York.

creation of the frescoes on the arched ceiling of the Palazzo Farnese by Annibale Carracci. In the context of Rome, a comparison with these nudes was inevitable for anyone who wanted to display a figure seen from below within an architectural setting. In this case too, the powerful musculature of the chest and the build of the right leg, with the contracted thigh, almost deformed from the strain of supporting the whole figure, are a clear meditation on the style of Michelangelo. The sudden interruption of the line also derives from his style, becoming faint where it suggests the volumes of the head and of the architectural stand, almost as if to indicate that the purpose of this drawing is solely an anatomical study of the figure. However, other stylistic characteristics are also evident in the piece: a sweeter and more harmonious tone to the stroke, a rounded construction of the shapes, which are classically formed, and a clear light defining the skin on the athletic body in a more naturalistic way, almost caressing the layers of the musculature. These elements recall the methods of Raphael, the other great and essential role model for every artist who was trained during the first two decades of the 16th century and therefore seeing the respective artistic climates of Florence and Rome. A similar synthesis between the two routes, together with the more natural tone of the drawing, reminds us therefore of the midpoint of the 16th century, when, especially in Rome, attempts were made to marry these two expressive visions which were quite distant from each other. An example of an artist taking this route - both mindful of the masterful strength of Michelangelo and also of the harmonious balance of Raphael, was Taddeo Zuccari, and this beautiful piece is attributed precisely to his hand. It is datable to the time when he was most strongly bonded to the "Michelangioliism" of Rome, when he created the frescoes in the Cappella Mattei at Santa Maria della Consolazione¹. A direct comparison can be made with a piece in the Metropolitan Museum





2-3. Taddeo Zuccari, *A man seen from behind* (verso), red chalk, pen and brown ink on laid paper; *A man seen from behind* (recto), red chalk heightened with white on laid paper, 344 x 183 mm (13 ½ x 7 ¼ in.), Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

in New York (inv. no. 68.113) (fig. 1) wherein the use of sanguine in defining a nude with “polydoresque” origins has many points which connect it to the sheet we are presenting here.

Despite the figure in the American drawing being at a later stage of completeness, there are several similar aspects such as the persistent outline marked out in definition of the edges of the figure, and above all the double parallel hatching with which Taddeo observes the light and shade of the musculature. In particular on the legs of both figures the outline has the same style, as well as the lighter, more rounded and freer stroke, which suggests only the edge of the head.

Another comparison can be made with a drawing held at the National Gallery in Washington (inv. 1972.4.2.b) (fig. 2), a preparatory piece for a dressed figure seen from behind at the centre of the fresco showing the *Last supper* in the cappella Mattei. On the recto of the sheet (inv. 1972.4.2.a) (fig. 3) the same figure has been carefully completed in sanguine, whilst on the verso the freer stroke of the edges builds up volumes similar to those in the drawing that we are presenting here. The line forming the edge of the figure has also been drawn over

several times as if in an attempt to find the line which is most functional to the movement of the figure, whilst the shadows are defined with the characteristic parallel hatching also appearing on this sheet. In addition one can observe how the same Michelangiolesque character penetrated the anatomical forms in both pieces, providing a clear basis for the dating of the sheet in question to within the almost four years in which Taddeo worked on the cappella commissioned by Jacopo Mattei, between 1553 and 1556. The reaching pose of the figure lightly sketched in sanguine, with the arm raised to hold a tablet which could be the outline of a large open book invites one to consider the hypothesis that the sheet is a first idea for an Evangelist figure. If in the frescoed arched ceiling the Evangelists overlook as half-busts within small polygonal spaces, one can easily observe how in an idea which was more advanced in terms of its progress, Taddeo still continued to study whole figures. In this case two sheets in particular can be pointed out; the first in a private collection published by Cristina Acidini², the second held in the Archdiocesan Museum in Kroměříž, (inv. KE 4504) (figs. 4, 5). On the verso of this latter sheet there are two partial studies of a figure, marked out in black chalk, where a Michelangelo-inspired torso presents considerable analogies with the figure in the drawing examined, so much so that it supports the theory that in a first idea for the cappella Mattei, Taddeo Zuccari had allocated a larger and more ascending space to the Evangelists than in the definitive frescoed composition.



4-5. Taddeo Zuccari, *Luke the Evangelist*, pen and brown washes, black chalk, heightened with white on laid paper (recto); *Two sketches of sleeping male nudes* (verso), black chalk on laid paper, 364 x 257 mm (14 ¾ x 10 ¼ in.), Archdiocesan Museum in Kroměříž.



6. Taddeo Zuccari, *Nude youth*, pen and brown wash, black chalk and red chalk on laid paper, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

At a more advanced stage the figures, now clothed, were then compressed into polygonal spaces which were already defined in the two pieces cited, whilst they were reduced to only the bust to give them a greater scale in proportion to the figures on the scene. Finally, the pose of the reaching figure on this sheet is compared with that of a nude marked out in pen in a sheet held at the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (inv. 1932.299) (fig. 6), usually referred to by critics as being from the time of the Cappella Mattei, or of the Cappella Frangipani di San Marcello al Corso, which followed soon after³.

Finally, one could point out that a pose similar to the one studied by Taddeo around 1554 - 1555 in this sheet was to be chosen by Federico Zuccari in 1571 for the clothed



7-8. Federico Zuccari, *Evangelists Luke and Mark*, The Cappella Ruiz in Santa Caterina dei Funari, Rome.

figures of the Evangelists Luke and Mark in the Cappella Ruiz, in Santa Caterina dei Funari in Rome (figs. 7-8). This partial revival is evidence of the long-standing use by the youngest of the Zuccaris of Taddeo's sheets, which remained in the workshop after his death in Rome on 1st of September 1566.

Carlo Falciani

- 1 See C. Acidini Luchinat, *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari, fratelli pittori del Cinquecento*, Milan-Rome, 1998, I, pp. 44-58, regarding this important episode in the youth of Taddeo Zuccari.
- 2 Cf. C. Acidini Luchinat, *op.cit.*, 1998, I, p. 50, fig. 14.
- 3 See *Renaissance into Baroque. Italian Master Drawing by the Zuccari 1550-1600*, exhibition catalogue, by E. James Mundy, (Milwaukee Art Museum November 1989 – January 1990) Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 83-84.

2 Lombard Artist - 16th century

Eucharistic Adoration with St. Francis, St. Clare and worshippers

Pen and brown ink, with brown wash, heightened with white and traces of squaring in chalk on laid blue paper
340 x 233 mm (13 3/8 x 9 1/8 in.)

Inscriptions: on the old mount, bottom right corner in ink *Collez. Durazzo.*

According to the inscription on the old mount, the drawing, which we are presenting to the public for the first time here, was part of the collection of one of the most renowned noble families of Genoa, the Durazzo family.

A precise attribution has yet to be found. The sheet has great executional quality and iconographic interest and due to its technical and stylistic features, it can be recognised as the work of a northern Italian artist, probably from Lombardy, active during the last thirty years of the 16th century. The creator of our drawing entrusts the definition of the volumes to the action of the light; they are built up in white lead which is applied in delicate stripes, bringing out the blue colour of the paper. This is an effect which tends towards painting, and is typical of northern Italian artists, in particular of those from Lombardy, who share a fancy for tinted paper and strong tonal contrasts.

The drawing was executed in preparation for a devotional image. The composition, simple in its structure, regular in size, and essential in exposure, is scrupulously aligned with the iconographic decrees imposed by the post-tridentine catholic reforms. It was in the years that followed the closure of the Council of Trent (1563) that St. Francis and St. Clare, founders respectively of the Franciscan order and the Poor Clare nuns, and protagonists of our drawing, acquired even more fortune in the field of catholic devotional painting¹.

The sheet portrays a choral scene at the centre with the two saints who raise to the heavens, as a sign of devotion, a Gothicised shaped precious monstrance. It has the architecture of a shrine with an ornate circular base with pinnacles and gables, and the top is decorated with three spheres and a cross and inside with a Christ crucifix. The northern features of this elegant piece of goldwork, perhaps inspired by an object from reality, would seem to serve as further guidance in identifying the area where the piece originates from.

Arranged in a semicircle around the two saints, with the women on one side, the men on the other, are the worshippers. They are kneeling before the sacrament of the Eucharist, symbolised by the precious monstrance whose sacredness is emphasised by the presence of the piece of cloth used by the two saints to raise the object to the heavens, thus avoiding the direct contact of their hands with the symbol Jesus's sacrifice. The theatrical effect of the ceremony, performed in the foreground, is accentuated by the presence of two little angels standing on the two columns in the background, which support a pair of curtains, thus introducing the worshippers to the mystery of the Eucharist. It is the view of the monstrance which arouses in the worshippers a certain feeling of wonder revealed by the expansive arm gestures which we see in the two devotees kneeling in the foreground. The privileged positions of the man and woman, and the clothing corresponding to sixteenth century fashions, could suggest that they are the patrons.

The drawing presents the finished character of a scale version and the squaring, which has partially disappeared but is still quite visible, suggests that the piece was translated into a painting. It remains to be discovered whether or not the drawing was used as the model for an altarpiece or for a mobile painting. The vertical format, and the total lack of spatial indications could, perhaps, lead one to think that it was intended for the creation of a processional banner, for which it was necessary to create a simple image, without excessive frills, which guaranteed that the public could read it clearly, even from a distance.

1 On this subject see *L'immagine di San Francesco nella Controriforma*, exhibition catalogue by S. Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, C. Strinati, Rome, Calcografia, 9 December 1982 - 13 February 1983.



Cherubino Alberti

Borgo San Sepolcro 1553 - 1615 Rome

Beheading of St. John the Baptist

Pen, brown ink, brown washes and traces of black chalk on laid paper
250 x 285 mm (9 ¾ x 11 ¼ in.)

Inscriptions: on the verso in brown ink *Al Illustr.mo Sig. et Pa.*

Provenance: private collection.

Born in San Sepolcro into a family of artists (his father, Alberto di Giovanni, was an architect, sculptor, carver, and his two brothers, Alessandro and Giovanni, painters and engravers), Cherubino mainly worked in Rome where he was active, particularly as a printmaker and draughtsman, until the end of the 1570s. "Principe" (Director) of the Accademia di San Luca for four years (from 1611 to 1614), Cherubino is primarily remembered for his extremely fine engravings. He also worked in the field of painting and amongst his most memorable works are the frescoes of the Clementine Hall in the Vatican (1597-1598) created with the collaboration of his brother Giovanni for Pope Clement VIII, the arched ceiling of the Aldobrandini chapel in Santa Maria sopra Minerva (1606), and finally, the frescoes of the sacristy of San Giovanni in Laterano.

As well as hundreds of engravings by Cherubino, there are numerous drawings attributed to him. A great number of these are held in Florence, at the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe in the Uffizi, and in Rome, at the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica which holds a volume of drawings, purchased by the Italian State in 1913, which originates directly from Alberti's heirs¹.

Amongst the many works on paper which make up the volume, the largest part is, precisely like the work that we present here, a body of studies. Indeed, our drawing appears to be the first conception for a *Beheading of St. John the Baptist*: outlined only in pen, without the use of any watercolour (reserved for the second stage of a work), this lively sketch in brown ink manifests the first projection of an idea on paper for the narration of the epilogue of the story of St. John the Baptist. As in *Group of figures with vases* in the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica², which is similar to our drawing in its technique, style and level of finishing, in the sheet that we present here

the artist is captured at work: after having traced the *silhouettes* of the figures with black chalk, he goes over them in pen, finding different solutions for the poses of the figures (see the hand of the executioner drawn twice), and finally erasing the parts which he is not sure of, such as the two eagle heads drafted in the centre of the piece and redrawn more definitely at the centre of the frame. The outer border, typical of the decorative exuberance of Cherubino, similarly expressed in other well-known drawings by the artist such as in the *Portrait of Henry IV King of France*³, Alberti tries different solutions: on the left, the body of the eagle is finished with an acanthus curl within which appears a little male head, instead on the right this is transformed into the foot of the bird of prey clawing at the edge of the frame. The imaginative zoomorphic invention expressed in the frame, as well as the restless line that outlines it, show a clear dialogue with the Roman works of Perin del Vaga, a painter who Cherubino Alberti always regarded with profound admiration. The same *Beheading* reminds one of the painted and graphic work by Perino whose influence is captured, for example, in the gracious poses of the figures, who move almost as if in a dance, in the long and flexible physiques of the figures, and in the quick fluid lines that depict them.

The scene is skilfully built up in groups, in a diagonal direction which leads from the foot of the soldier facing away from us at the front on the right, and extends along the sword of the executioner, the sloping line of Salome's sword and finally disappears, in the group of onlookers who close the image at the top left. This is a composition which is not found in any painting or print by Cherubino but which is closely reminiscent of a drawing in the British Museum (this one is slightly more finished), *Gnaeus Pompeius before his consuls*, a



preparatory work for a fresco in the lodge of Palazzo Ruggeri, in Rome (ca. 1591) to which the *Beheading* can be close to chronologically⁴. Thus, the figure of Salome, who “leaps” on tiptoe towards the front of the picture, is reminiscent of *Judith with the head of Holofernes*, the protagonist of an early print by Cherubino⁵.

Our *Beheading*, whose charm lies in the clear incompleteness of the work, allows us to follow Alberti in the creative process of designing the image, which was perhaps intended to be translated into print form or into a painting for a decorative section of a larger cycle.



- 1 In the volume of drawings by the Alberti family held at the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica and more generally, with regards to the drawings by Cherubino, Giovanni and Alessandro see: *Disegni degli Alberti*, exhibition catalogue by K. Hermann Fiore, Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe, 25th November 1983 – 2nd January 1984.
- 2 Rome, Istituto Centrale per la Grafica, Inv. FN 2934; pen, brown ink, 241 x 171 mm. Cf. *Disegni degli Alberti*, exhibition catalogue by K. Hermann Fiore, Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe, 25th November 1983 – 2nd January 1984, pp. 146-147, cat. 87.
- 3 Rome, Istituto Centrale per la Grafica, Inv. FN 2882.
- 4 London, British Museum, Inv. 1965,1203.1, pen, brown ink, light blue washes, 161 x 206 mm; the drawing is published and discussed in relation to the fresco (probably the work of a collaborator) in: K. Hermann Fiore, *Studi sui disegni di figure di Giovanni e Cherubino Alberti*, in “Bollettino d’arte”, 65, 1980, 5, p. 41, fig. 2.
- 5 See: R. Manescalchi, *Cherubino Alberti: la luce incisa*, Florence, 2007, p. 38, cat. 6.



Francesco Vanni

Siena 1564 - 1610

Study for "The Madonna of the Rosary with Saints"

Chalk on cerulean laid paper
375 x 254 mm (14 ¾ x 10 in.)

Inscriptions: bottom centre in ink, in old handwriting *di vanni*.

Provenance: private collection, Florence.

Francesco Vanni is considered to be one of the artists who most represents Italian counter-reformation painting.¹ A leading player in the Siennese art scene between the end of the 16th century and the first decade of the 17th century, Vanni's painting production was very prolific and earned him significant fame, to such an extent that, by the end of his career, he was able to count himself amongst the city's nobility. He trained with the painter Arcangelo Salimbeni, his mother's second husband, and was introduced at a very young age to the erudite and religious Siennese environment linked to Rome. He undertook an apprenticeship in Bologna which is no better documented, during which he visited Rome when at only sixteen, he was able to work alongside Giovanni de' Vecchi and come into contact with the Roman mannerists. He returned to his hometown around 1585 and saw the commencement of several important religious and private commissions undertaken in his stepfather's studio with the collaboration, from 1595, of his stepbrother Ventura Salimbeni. In the first few years of the 17th century, Vanni, as well as in Siena, worked in Lucca (1602), Rome (1603), Genoa and Pisa (1606, 1610). He also received commissions from Lyon, Monaco and Salzburg. Amongst his most renowned works are: the Barocci-style *Immaculate Conception* (1588), Montalcino, Cathedral of St. Peter and the *Annunciation* (1588), Siena, St. Mary of the servants; *St. Ansanus baptising the people of Siena* (1596), Siena Cathedral; the *history of St. Catherine* (1585, pre 1600), Siena, Basilica of St. Dominic; the *Fall of Simon Mago* (1603), Vatican City, Basilica of St. Peter.

Vanni was a painter but he also executed drawings and engravings. His fame for his drawings extended beyond the borders of Siena from very early on. His sheets were sought after and collected throughout the 17th and 18th centuries by well-known collectors and today they

can be found in the most important drawings cabinets in Europe: by Leopoldo de' Medici in the Prints and Drawings cabinet of the Uffizi in Florence, by Everhard Jabach and Pierre Jean Mariette in the Louvre in Paris, by Carl Gustaf Tessin in the Nationalmuseum of Stockholm. Purely to highlight the interest that the drawings by Vanni must have aroused in the collectors and *amateurs* of the time, it is sufficient to mention that in 1673 Cardinal Leopoldo wrote to his Siennese agent to procure drawing tests from that school specifying that «*di quelli di Vanni ne prenderei anche fino in cento se si trovassero*»². His sketches, studies and finished drawings are rich in glowing and colourful suggestions in intense and textured marks. His quick sketches run into the hundreds, first ideas for compositions in chalk or in pen; individual figure studies marked out from life in red or black chalk; and the polychromed sketches in oils or watercolours.

This drawing is a compositional study for '*the Madonna of the Rosary and Saints*'. Executed in black chalk, it displays at the centre, (within a frame depicting sketches of the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary), the Madonna and child enthroned placed below a canopy with a small angel alongside her on one side. Kneeling at her feet, are St. Dominic on the left and St. Catherine of Siena on the right. Next to and behind them, other figures of Saints emerge, sketched lightly in chalk. Underneath at the centre, the sheet bears the inscription in pen, in old handwriting, "*by Vanni*". The inscription, although made after the execution of the drawing, leaves no doubt as to the authorship of the work. Typical of the Siennese style, a soft black and intentionally intense chalk line surrounds the figures. The little angels with supple, plump limbs and faces with tiny features, with an indication of the eye sockets, the curling curve of the lips and a chin which is a little chiselled are



L. nanni

characteristic in his compositions. There are numerous comparisons traceable to his other works. For the small angels, see for example the *Partial study of a little angel* in the Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati³, also executed in black chalk, although described in more detail, and linked to the altarpiece with the *Madonna and Saints* (1593) in the Church of St. Francis of the Capuchins at Arcidosso (Grosseto). A representation of St. Catherine kneeling, in a very similar pose to that in our piece, is present in a preparatory drawing portraying the *Virgin protector of the city of Siena* (around 1588?), in a private collection, although this one is mainly finished and the head of the Saint is rotated further upwards towards the Madonna.⁴

As it emerges from the study of the preparatory drawings for the paintings by Vanni, his operating approach is characterised by the meticulous planning of every single work, through sketches, studies and drafts executed in the most diverse of techniques. The artist did not hesitate to reuse his quick preliminary sketches for multiple works, even years after using them for the first time. In this case, in the opinion of John Marciari⁵, the drawing could constitute a first idea for the altarpiece portraying the *Madonna of the Rosary and St. Pius V* in the Co-cathedral of St. Peter and Paul in Pitigliano, dated 1609.

The sheet in question would therefore precede the compositional study held today in Oxford⁶, which is very similar to the definitive work, but which recalls the fundamental elements of our drawing: the Madonna and child, St. Dominic and St. Catherine kneeling in their presence, the angels at the top, and the saints in the background, some of whom with crowns on their heads. At the latest stage, the patron could have requested a modification to the preliminary study, desiring the inclusion of the figure of Pius V as well in the composition, thus “compressing” the main scene upwards.

The portrayals of the “*Madonna of the Rosary with St. Catherine and St. Dominic*”, which started to disseminate from the 15th century, became ever more popular after the establishment of the festival of the Madonna of the Rosary precisely by Pius V. The festival was created following the Victory of Lepanto to give thanks to the Madonna. In counter-reformed Siena this subject⁷ was requested to artists by religious patrons, by the brotherhoods dedicated to the Dominican patron saint and by private citizens.

Luisa Berretti

- 1 Please refer to the very recent and extended study on the artist written by M. Ciampolini, *Pittori senesi del Seicento*, 3 vols., Poggibonsi (Siena), 2010, vol. III (Marcantonio Saracini-Stefano Volpi), pp. 897-1016 (with preceding bibliography). In order to study Vanni's drawings the following contributions are essential: P. A. Riedl, *Disegni dei barocceschi senesi (Francesco Vanni e Ventura Salimbeni)*, exhibition catalogue, Florence, 1976; C. Garofalo, *Francesco Vanni (Siena, 1563-1610)*, in *Nel segno di Barocci. Allievi e seguaci tra Marche, Umbria e Siena*, exhibition catalogue by A.M. Ambrosini Massari and M. Cellini, Milan, 2005, pp. 346-369; C. Garofalo, *Aggiunte al “corpus” grafico di Francesco Vanni*, in “*Commentari d'arte*”, XIV, 39-40, 2008, p. 26-50.
- 2 Cf. C. Garofalo 2008, *cit.*, p. 26 and note 1.
- 3 Inv. S.II.3, c. 1r a.; cf. C. Garofalo 2008, p. 29, fig. 7; p. 33 and note 53.
- 4 *Francesco Vanni. Art in Late Renaissance Siena*, exhibition catalogue by J. Marciari and S. Boorsch, Yale, 2013, p. 68, fig. 8a.
- 5 Doctor Marciari, whom we thank here, expressed this opinion upon seeing the drawing in a photographic reproduction.
- 6 Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, inv. N. WA1998,174. Cf. J. Marciari, in *Francesco Vanni*, 2013, *cit.*, pp. 217-218, sheet no. 79.
- 7 By scrutinising the detailed list of works by Vanni compiled by M. Ciampolini *cit.*, 2010 the only one with this subject is the *Madonna of the Rosary and St. Pius V* in the Co-cathedral of St. Peter and Paul in Pitigliano, dated 1609.



5 Giuseppe Cesari called Cavalier d'Arpino

Arpino 1568 - 1640 Rome

St. Mark and David with the head of Goliath within two niches

Pen, brown ink, brown washes, heightened with white on laid paper
194 x 180 mm (7 5/8 x 7 1/8 in.)

Provenance: Jean-François Gigoux, Paris and Besançon (L. 1164); Raymond de Bailleul (?); Jean de Bailleul, Paris (L. 335); Alfred Normand, Paris (L. 153c).

Appeared on the market as a work by Cherubino Alberti (1553-1615), this attractive double drawing is in fact an early work by Giuseppe Cesari.

Originally from Arpino, Giuseppe, son of Muzio Cesari, not a very talented provincial painter, trained in Rome where his family moved to, probably by the first half of the 1570s. In the Eternal City, according to Giovanni Baglione, who dedicated one of the most eulogistic biographical essays to the painter in his *Vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti* (1642), Giuseppe Cesari started working as an assistant in the building sites of the Vatican lodges, where he was noticed by the superintendent Egnazio Danti; gifted with an early artistic sensitivity and a profound and very bright talent, Cesari managed to free himself from the position of assistant to start out on his own and impose himself, in a very short space of time, on the Roman art scene. Responsible for the most important public building sites of the papal capital – amongst which the cycle of frescoes in the Salone dei Conservatori at the Campidoglio (1595-

1639), the decoration of the transept of the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano (1599-1600) and the mosaic on the cupola of St. Peter's Basilica (1603-1612) –, and creator of numerous devotional and profane paintings, Giuseppe Cesari was at the head of the most important artistic workshop in Rome between the end of the 1500's and halfway through the following century¹.

The two drawings that we present here belong to the early stage of Giuseppe Cesari's career, to whom these can be attributed without reservation by means of stylistic comparisons with other sheets already attributed to the painter. For example, the *Study for a nude male* in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin (fig. 2) perhaps a preparatory drawing for the figure of Samson depicted whilst he battles the lion in a fresco on the Scala Sancta², or the *Justice of Brutus* in the Louvre, which has recently been attributed to Cesari by the writer (fig. 1)³, or, again, the *Project for the ceiling of the Olgiati chapel*, held today in the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe at the Uffizi⁴. These sheets were executed, precisely like the *St. Mark and David with the head of Goliath*, according to a technique, which Cesari used very frequently during his earliest years of activity. This followed the example of artists operating in Rome between the 1560s and 70s, and in particular of Raffaellino Motta da Reggio, a point of reference to all the young painters of Cesari's generation⁵. Pen is used to mark the outline of the figures, and brown wash applied extensively over the sheet, is used to give body to the volumes, which are emphasised with white lead applied in a thick weave of parallel and crossed hatching.

The same facial features of the figures from the round and sunken eyes, circled by a shadow, the small mouths matched with pointed noses, are typical stylistic expressions of the very young Arpino. He must have created the two sheets around halfway through the



1. Giuseppe Cesari called Cavalier d'Arpino, *Justice of Brutus*, pen, brown ink, brown washes, heightened with white on laid paper, 460 x 751 mm (18 1/8 x 29 1/2 in.), Département des Arts graphiques, Musée du Louvre, Paris.





2. Giuseppe Cesari called Cavalier d'Arpino, *Study for a nude male*, pen, brown ink, brown washes on laid paper, 280 x 175 mm (11 x 6 7/8 in.), Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen, Berlin.



1580s, close in date to the previously recalled *Justice of Brutus*, which should be placed around 1586. Although stylistic analysis of the two pieces allows them to be easily placed within a precise chronological window, the *St. Mark and David with the head of Goliath* are not precisely linked to any of the painted works attributed to the young Arpino. One can imagine the two figures within niches to be part of a large decoration, with the idea of filling the spaces in the walls next to vastly sized scenes. For example, this layout characterises the old Room of the Swiss Guards in the Vatican, where, around 1583, Cesari «*figure di chiaro, e scuro Sansone, che porta in spalla le porte della città di gazza*»⁶, or in the Sala dei Palafrenieri

in which Arpino painted some of the figures of the Apostles⁷. Amongst these a painted *St. Mark* has also been attributed to Arpino, however, it is executed using forms which are rather different to those which characterise the apostle in our drawing. With the evangelist in the Vatican fresco, it only shares the pose of the legs, the flexed and slightly raised right and the extended left. In the Sala Palafrenieri, depictions of figures and episodes from the Old Testament are missing, such as the David drawn on the right hand of our sheet. This, in my opinion, was imagined for the same decoration of the *St. Mark*, as the lighting on the figures, who are struck by an intense glow originating from the left, appears to suggest.

The drawing, destined therefore to a large decoration, either lost or which was created with a different iconography to that expressed in the sheet that we present here for the first time with its correct attribution, reveals the strength and excellence of the very young Arpino. It represents one of the artist's earliest known works on paper, and certainly one of the most fascinating due to its refined execution and formal elegance.

Marco Simone Bolzoni



- 1 With regards to the painted work of Giuseppe Cesari see the crucial monograph by Herwarth Röttgen and to the monograph exhibition catalogue dedicated to the painter and written by the same author: *Il Cavalier d'Arpino*, exhibition catalogue by H. Röttgen, Rome, Palazzo Venezia, 1973; H. Röttgen, *Il Cavalier Giuseppe Cesari d'Arpino: un grande pittore nello splendore della fama e nell'incostanza della fortuna*, Rome, 2002.
- 2 Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv. K. d. Z. 406; cf. M. S. Bolzoni, *Il Cavalier Giuseppe Cesari d'Arpino. Maestro del disegno*, Rome, 2013, p. 15, fig. 6, p. 164, cat. 4 (with preceding bibliography).
- 3 Paris, Musée du Louvre, Inv. 10550; cf. M. S. Bolzoni, *Il Cavalier Giuseppe Cesari d'Arpino. Maestro del disegno*, Rome, 2013, p. 17, fig. 7, pp. 161-162, cat. 2.
- 4 Florence, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi, Inv. 906 E; cf. M. S. Bolzoni, *Il Cavalier Giuseppe Cesari d'Arpino. Maestro del disegno*, Rome, 2013, p. 21, fig. 11, p. 228, cat. 73 (with preceding bibliography).
- 5 Regarding the relationship between Raffaellino da Reggio and Giuseppe Cesari see: M. S. Bolzoni, *Il Cavalier Giuseppe Cesari d'Arpino. Maestro del disegno*, Rome, 2013, p. 11 and ff.; on Raffaellino da Reggio see M. S. Bolzoni, *The Drawings of Raffaellino Motta da Reggio*, in "Master Drawings", 54, 2, 2016, pp. 147-204.
- 6 G. Baglione, *Vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti*, Rome, 1642, edition by J. Hess, H. Röttgen, Vatican City, 1995, p. 368 [270].
- 7 Regarding the painted decoration of the two rooms see H. Röttgen, *Il Cavalier Giuseppe Cesari d'Arpino: un grande pittore nello splendore della fama e nell'incostanza della fortuna*, Rome, 2002, pp. 227-231, cat. 2-3.

6 Giovanni Andrea Donducci called Il Mastelletta

Bologna 1575 - 1655

Recto: *The Preaching of St. John the Baptist*

Pen, brown ink, brown wash, squared in black chalk on light blue watermarked laid paper

Verso: *Three studies of heads in profile*

Red chalk on light blue watermarked laid paper

336 x 225 mm (13 ¼ x 8 ⅞ in.)

The main source for the life of the Bolognese painter Giovanni Andrea Donducci, better known as Mastelletta¹, is the biography by Carlo Cesare Malvasia who remembers him as an odd, hypochondriac, antisocial man: «*Nemico degli amici, sospettoso con tutti, in odio a se stesso, fantastico, impraticabile, peggio insomma che bestia [...] Ritiratosi in una casetta nel disabitato, in fondo alle Moline, vi si riduceva straora, acciò non si sapesse, ed osservasse qual fosse la sua abitazione: vi stava ascosto settimane intere, senza lasciati vedere*»². It's in these reckless features that Malvasia, not a great admirer of Mastelletta's work, believed he could see traces of also in the paintings by the Bolognese artist. However, it's precisely the uncommon character, sometimes even visionary, that characterises the creations of Mastelletta, which has so fascinated the modern critic.

If his paintings have recently been described and fully reassessed for their uniqueness - in the context of 17th century Bolognese painting - for their formal characteristics, Mastelletta's drawings instead have not yet received the same attention, probably due to their exiguous number. Indeed very few examples of these are preserved and the famous *corpus* of sheets attributed with certainty to Mastelletta comprise only about ten.

Therefore, *The Preaching of the Baptist* reveals itself as a rare work within Mastelletta's oeuvre. In the biblical episode, which depicts St. John whilst he announces the coming of Christ to the crowd, certain formulae typical of Emilian painting of the end of the 16th century can be identified, a style which Mastelletta always looked at throughout the course of his career. A passionate admirer of the formal elegance of Parmigianino (1503-1540) and of Nicolò dell'Abate (1512-1571) - reminders of their work consistently reappear in the that of our artist - Mastelletta developed a style made up of curving lines, and slender, slim,

elegant small figures, like those we see in his paintings and in the present drawing. The same abundant use of brown ink applied over the sheet in wide and light movements, is reminiscent of Emilian graphic art of the second half of the 16th century. The pictorial qualities of *The Preaching* are directly linked to the extreme freedom of the Mastelletta's paintings, which appear to be almost "improvised" on the canvas, without the guide of a preparatory drawing.



Verso



Our sheet, however, must certainly have been employed for the execution of a painting, given that it's completely squared up ready for the project to be recreated in larger format. It is not known, however, which work the sheet was a preparatory study for. Within Mastelletta's oeuvre only three paintings are known of the same subject: the first in a private collection, the second in Bologna in the sacristy of St. Mary of the Servants, and the third, whose location remains unknown, has recently appeared on the art market³. Only with the latter, although it doesn't exactly match our composition, it shares not only the vertical format but also the same style of executing the figures with tiny heads on slender silhouettes.

Similar features, which characterise our drawing can be found in the earlier well-known paintings by Mastelletta, such as *Moses releasing water from the rock* and the *Crossing of the Red Sea* in the Galleria Spada⁴. In these one can find the same taste for crowded compositions, arranged with compact groups, and with figures "in the abyss" in the immediate foreground, which appears to be a typical solution of the 16th century but which was still employed by Mastelletta in the first decades of the 17th century, the date which the two Roman paintings are attributed to, probably executed around 1630. Following a careful analysis of these compositional similarities, it can be suggested, albeit cautiously, that our *Preaching of the Baptist* was also produced around the same time to that attributed to the paintings.

As already mentioned at the start of this essay, drawings by Mastelletta are rare. The most consistent group is held at the British Museum in London: *The Coronation of a Saint lying on her deathbed*⁵, in pen and coloured washes, seems to be, of the few pieces attributed with a degree of certainty to our painter, the most similar to our sheet. In particular, the faces of the figures, "summarised" in quick, minute lines to indicate the eyes, nose and mouth, agree closely with the physical features which typify the figures in *The Preaching of the Baptist*.



- 1 For more information on the painter, see: A. Coliva, *Il Mastelletta. Giovanni Andrea Donducci 1575-1655*, Rome, 1980; A. Coliva in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani, ad vocem* Donducci, Giovanni Andrea, detto il Mastelletta, vol. 41, 1992; D. Benati, *Giovanni Andrea Donducci, detto il Mastelletta un "genio bizzarro"*, Bologna, 2007.
- 2 Cf. C. C. Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice. Vite dei pittori bolognesi* [1678], Bologna 1841, vol. II, pp. 67-72.
- 3 For the first two paintings see: A. Coliva, *Il Mastelletta. Giovanni Andrea Donducci 1575-1655*, Rome, 1980, pp. 94-95, cat. 10, p. 135, cat. 97; the third painting (Current location unknown, oil on canvas, 43 x 33 cm) recently appeared on the art market at Boetto auction house, on 22 February 2016, lot 168.
- 4 Cf. A. Coliva, *Il Mastelletta. Giovanni Andrea Donducci 1575-1655*, Rome, 1980, pp. 90-91, cat. 3-4.
- 5 London, British Museum, Inv. 1980, 1011.3, pen, brown ink, brown and green wash, 173 x 126 mm; the drawing is mentioned in: *Le génie de Bologne des Carracci aux Gandolfi: dessins des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles (Les dessins en Italie dans les collections publiques françaises)*, exhibition catalogue by C. Loisel, cat. 29.



7 Giovan Mauro della Rovere called Il Fiamminghino

Milan 1575 - 1640

The temptations of a hermit saint(?)

Pen and brown ink, with brown wash, heightened with white, over blue laid paper

213 x 207 mm (8 3/8 x 8 1/8 in.)

Inscriptions: on the old mount, bottom left corner in ink *Gio. Mauro Roveri*.

Also well-known as Fiammenghino, Giovanni Mauro della Rovere was born in Milan to a father of Flemish origins (hence the nickname) and a Lombard mother. According to the artistic biography dedicated to him by Pellegrino Antonio Orlandi in his *Pictorial A - Z* (1704) Giovanni Mauro carried out his artistic apprenticeship initially in the studio of Camillo and later in that of Giulio Cesare Procaccini¹. In collaboration with his elder brother Giovanni Battista (1561-pre-1633), also a painter, Giovanni Mauro della Rovere worked tirelessly from a very young age on the many assignments commissioned to the family “firm” which in short became one of the most active studios in Lombardy between the end of the 16th and halfway through the 17th centuries, so much so that Orlandi remembers that «*non v'è angolo, Chiesa o Palagio, nei quali non si ritrovino pennellate dei Fiammenghini*»².

Giovanni Mauro worked by himself, and with enormous success, for the whole of the 17th century, thus establishing himself as one of the most highly esteemed artists of his time. Amongst the many works by his hand, the ones which stand out due to the refinement of execution are *Gloria* in the church of Saints Gusmeo and Matteo in Gravedona (1608), the *Stories of the Virgin* in the Rosary chapel in the church of San Martino, Montemezzo (1619) and the frescoes in the church of the Baptist in Brenzio (1628-29). Our sheet, hitherto unpublished, relates to his mature years between the twenties and thirties of the 17th century, and is similar in technique and style to the three autograph works by Fiammenghino compiled by Sebastiano Resta in his *Galleria Portabile* (Milan, Ambrosian Library)³ and to the one portraying a *draped male figure* held in London at the British Museum⁴. As suggested by the inscription located on the lower right hand side of the London sheet, this was formerly attributed to the Lombard painter Paolo Lomazzo, who was inspired in his graphical productions by Fiammenghino, especially in the years of his maturity. Indeed, the works of the two artists are comparable by the use of blue paper and of washes, which contrast with the lead white and are distributed over the paper using full-bodied and textured strokes. It is precisely this attention to the pictorial

effects which typifies our sheet, one of the most unique features of Fiammenghino's drawing is that throughout the course of his career he always favoured the use of paper and washes (in particular blue) in his quest for refined colour effects. The speed of execution, the familiarity with the fresco technique and the narrative ease of Fiammenghino sparked huge demand for the artist, in particular for the creation of extensive cycles of mural paintings. Perhaps our drawing also relates to a cycle of paintings now lost or not yet found. Indeed, its subject has proven problematic to identify. In the foreground, lying on the ground, with her arms raised to the sky as a sign of wonder, is a woman, in front of whom is a monk, whilst a third figure appears on a cloud, a man (perhaps an angelic figure) ready to release the arrow from the large crossbow he clutches with both his hands. The pose of ostentatious devotion of the woman, the participation of the angel and the setting of the scene (a rocky cleft at the bottom of which one can glimpse the outline of a rugged landscape) could lead one to believe that the drawing depicts the temptation of a hermit saint, as we have suggested in the title of this sheet. However, it lacks the iconographic elements necessary to immediately identify the subject portrayed, that is, the attributes of the saint, the halos around the heads of the characters and the wings of the angel. This omission could perhaps be connected to how finished the drawing is. Indeed, the sheet could represent an intermediate stage of the fine-tuning of the depiction, between the sketch and the finished drawing.

1 A. Orlandi, *Abecedario pittorico ecc*, Bologna, 1704, p. 224.

2 *Ibidem*. Amongst the many works completed in collaboration with Giovanni Battista, the large paintings in the cathedral in Milan featuring the *Stories of the life of St Carlo Borromeo* (1602-03), or those of the Sacro Monte d'Orta (1607-08) have to be remembered.

3 G. Bora, *I disegni del Codice Resta*, Cinisello Balsamo (Milan), 1976, cat. 95-96 and 156.

4 London, British Museum, Inv. no. 1946,0713.360; pen, black and grey ink, heightened with white, over black chalk, on blue paper, 336 x 220 mm.



Pietro Novelli, known as Il Monrealese

Monreale 1603 - 1647 Palermo

The Holy Communion of St. Mary Magdalen

Pen, brown ink, watercoloured ink and chalk on laid paper. Squared in chalk and incised for transfer.
350 x 237 mm (13 ¾ x 9 ⅜ in.)

Inscriptions: bottom centre with an old attribution in ink *P. Novello*; bottom centre and on the right edge old numbering *Pa.ri 9 e 13*.

Exhibited: AA.VV., *Ritorno al Barocco da Caravaggio a Vanvitelli*, exhibition catalogue, Naples, 2009, n° 3.

One of the most celebrated artists in 17th century Sicily, Pietro Novelli, better known as Il Monrealese, received his first training in the workshop of his father, the painter and mosaicist Pietro Antonio (1568-1625). Even though little is known of Pietro's earliest career,



1. Pietro Novelli known as Il Monrealese, *The Holy Communion of St. Mary Magdalen*, oil on canvas, 333 x 352 cm, Galleria Regionale della Sicilia, Palermo.

works as *Daniel in the Lion's Den*, in the Abbey of Monreale (1629), or the *Coronation of the Virgin* in the church of San Domenico (1630), Palermo, reveal the influence of the Flemish Baroque painter Anthony Van Dyck¹, an artist Novelli may have come into contact with through the many Genoese and Flemish painters working in Sicily during the 1620s.

According to his biographers, Pietro first travelled to Rome and then to Naples. Close links to the art of Ribera, Battistello Caracciolo, Massimo Stanzione and Andrea Vaccaro appear, in fact, in Novelli's of the 1630's, as *The Miracle of St. Francis Xavier* (Naples, Chiesa del Gesù Nuovo) or *Joseph's Brothers Showing His Bloody Tunic to Jacob* (Palermo, Tasca d'Almerita collection). Back to Palermo, Novelli received numerous prestigious private and public commissions; in 1636 he was appointed Engineer and Architect of the Senate of Palermo, and in 1643 Engineer of the Kingdom.²

As noted by the art historian Maurizio Calvesi, Novelli's substantial output is at once the product both of eclectic contamination and influence (ranging from Rubens and Van Dyck to Ribera, Domenichino and the Carracci family) and of the search for an ideal of "mastery" and of expert measure, of the "proper distance" between man and the deity, in which dignified depiction becomes the unflinching goal of his creativity³. All of these elements can be easily detected in our drawing, a rare and exquisite example of Novelli's draughtsmanship. A preparatory study for the altarpiece with *The Holy Communion of St. Mary Magdalen* in the church of Santa Cita, the present drawing was executed between 1637 and 1642 when the Dominican fathers commissioned the painting for the order's church in Palermo (fig. 1)⁴.

The Dominican Order's patron saint since 1279, when her remains were discovered in the crypt of the Abbey of Saint Maximin in Provence, France, the protagonist



D. 9.
P. Novello

of the present drawing, St. Mary Magdalene, was a much venerated saint, particularly after the Council of Trent. The drawing's iconography is inspired by Provençal sources, which claim that after Christ's death, Magdalene travelled to South France with her sister Martha, her brother Lazarus and the Bishop Maximinus. After converting local pagan princes to Christianity, she retired to lead a penitent's life on the mountain of St. Baume, where she dwelt in a cave for thirty years. As death approached, the angels who had come to her aid during her time as a hermit carried her to Aix-en-Provence, where Bishop Maximinus administered her the Holy Communion.

This is moment of the life of Saint Magdalene selected by Pietro Novelli for his painting. Few differences distinguish Novelli's first design from the final painted composition: the architectural setting, the figures of the angels on the upper left, the pose of the angel holding St. Maximinus' stole with one hand and a candle with the other in the lower corner of the canvas. Furthermore, in the painting the head of the angel in the foreground is turned towards us, almost as though he was trying to draw the observer's attention. In the perfect balance struck between its various parts, the painting reveals the direct influence of Domenichino's *Communion of St. Jerome* (1614), while in the skilled juxtaposition of colours recalls Rubens' *Last Communion of St. Francis* (1616). A certain realistic appeal finds inspiration in the Neapolitan painting.

In addition to being one of the most exquisite examples of Novelli's artistic maturity, the present drawing is also one of the extremely rare handful of drawings that have come down to us, in which we can discern such a high level of formal definition⁵. In fact, what we are looking at is a fully-fledged preparatory drawing, squared for transfer and extremely meticulous in every detail, to which the accomplished use of watercolour confers both depth and strong effects of *chiaroscuro*.

This elegant drawing also displays a highly successful and possibly unique compositional synthesis in which Novelli expresses his experience both as a painter and as an architect in a masterly balance.

- 1 The Flemish painter had despatched the *Madonna of the Rosary* for the Oratory of the Rosary in San Domenico from Genoa prior to 1628.
- 2 Novelli's paintings – depicting for the most part religious subjects – are conserved in some of the most prestigious Sicilian churches and in the major public collections, in Italy and abroad. Most of these are to be found in the Galleria Regionale della Sicilia in Palermo and in the Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte in Naples; the list of foreign museums displaying his work includes the Gemäldegalerie in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna and the Paul Getty Museum in Malibu.
- 3 In this connection, see the introduction to the splendid and extremely significant exhibition entitled *Pietro Novelli e il suo ambiente* in the exhibition catalogue, Palermo, 1990, pp. 19–20.
- 4 See AA.VV., *Pietro Novelli e il suo ambiente*, exhibition catalogue, Palermo, 1990, pp. 320–322.
- 5 We know of one other example, the *Assumption of the Virgin* now in the Galleria Regionale della Sicilia in Palermo (inv. vol.1565/10), it too a preparatory study for an altarpiece for the church of the Capuchin Friars in Ragusa painted in 1635. See S. Grasso, *Appunti sui disegni figurativi di Pietro Novelli*, in AA.VV., *Pietro Novelli e il suo ambiente*, exhibition catalogue, Palermo, 1990, pp. 370 - 455. In particular, cat. III.20, pp. 390–392.





Vincenzo Dandini

Florence 1607 - 1675

Recto: *Reason refrains Will to embrace Sense and Pleasure*

Pen and brown ink on laid paper

Verso: *Two full figure studies for a Penitent St. Mary Magdalen;
Three quarter length study for a Penitent St. Mary Magdalen*

Pen, brown ink and red chalk on laid paper

144 x 207 mm (5 5/8 x 8 1/8 in.)

Inscriptions: on the recto to the centre in ink *Piacere Senso volonta ragione.*

Having trained in Florence in the studio of his elder brother Cesare (1596-1657), Vincenzo Dandini continued his apprenticeship in the studios of Domenico Cresti from Passignano, Matteo Rosselli and Andrea Comodi and commenced his painting career by enrolling at the *Accademia del Disegno* in 1631.¹ From the biography *Life* dedicated to him halfway through the eighteenth century by the famous Florentine naturalist Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti (1712-1783) (the descendent of the two brothers and of their nephew, Pietro di Ottaviano Dandini (1646-1712), who was also a painter, as well as heir to the vast collection of original drawings then in the family's possession) we learn that between 1635 and 1636 Vincenzo visited Rome where, as well as copying from the Antique and from the works of Raphael, Michelangelo, Annibale Carracci, Domenichino and Lanfranco, he also attended the school of Pietro da Cortona. Thanks to his support he was awarded the first prize for painting at the Accademia di San Luca.² After returning to Florence, Vincenzo Dandini spent the following twenty years fine tuning his own style which facilitated in a harmonic syncretism the constant cohesion with his brother Cesare with regard to the Cortonesque baroque, the classicism originating in Emilia-Romagna (Guido Reni, Domenichino, Nicolas Poussin, Andrea Sacchi) and the highly charged and sensual poetics typical of the exceptional production of Francesco Furini (1603-1646).

The indisputable masterpieces of the central stage of Dandini's career are the large canvas of *The Adoration of Niobe* (Florence, Florentine Galleries storage, inv. 1890, no. 8318), created between 1637 and 1638, commissioned by Don Lorenzo de' Medici,³ the slightly later *Moses abandoned in the waters* (New York, Marco

Grassi collection),⁴ the 'Furinian' *Mercury, Herse and Love* (Florence, Florentine Galleries storage, inv. 1890, no. 7800), formerly in the Medici family's Villa di Castello and datable to the first half of the fifth decade of the seventeenth century⁵ and finally, the beautiful





octagon portraying *Jeroboam and the prophet Achia* (Florence, Major Seminary), painted in 1645 for the rich Florentine gentleman Gabriello Zuti.⁶

His entry into the secular company of San Benedetto Bianco and the progressive growth of a personal religiosity which was ever more committed and obvious, had a determining influence on the subsequent pictorial production of Vincenzo Dandini starting with the altarpiece with the *Saints Andrea Zoerandro and Carlo Borromeo*, signed and dated 1657 for the abbey of Santa Maria in Gradi, Arezzo, which signifies a real turning point in that sense.⁷ Certain altar canvases in particular highlight the late activity of the artist during the seventh decade of the seventeenth century. Indeed, these were highly esteemed by his contemporaries, and which link together the elegance of the composition with its classicist Roman origins and the unavoidable references to Cesare Dandini with an overtly baroque solemnity of structure and eloquence. Those in question are, amongst the many others, the two altarpieces created in Prato respectively in 1663 and 1664 (*St. Bernadine of Siena in glory* in San Francesco al Palco and *St. Hyacinth crushes the demon* in San Domenico), the *Martyrdom of St. Margaret* (around 1665 circa; Florence, church of Santa Margherita in Montici)⁸ and the *Descent of the Holy Spirit*, documented in 1667 for the Florentine church of San Giorgio alla Costa and rediscovered in 2009 in the nearby convent of the Holy Spirit.⁹

The three sketches distributed on both sides of the present sheet, previously attributed to Francesco Furini, in my opinion reflect the mature graphical style of Vincenzo Dandini in a period of undeniable interest in the painting of the great Florentine master who died in 1646 (of whom our artist had possessed numerous autograph drawings¹⁰) and for some of the fortunate compositional inventions launching his expertise in the first half of the forties in three well-known room paintings. The desperate and thoughtless way the daughter of Lot throws herself at her mother transformed into a salt statue in the Furini canvas of the same name today held at the Horne museum¹¹ is shown again with just as much intensity in the fast movement, in opposition to the demon, granted by Vincenzo Dandini to the cited *St. Hyacinth* of Prato in 1664, as also in the symbolic personification of Will with arms outstretched (blind and winged as required by the *Iconologia* of Cesare Ripa) quickly outlined in pen on the verso of the sheet in question. On the verge of throwing herself, held back by Reason, towards Pleasure equipped with a harp, escorted by the Three

Graces, and Sense portrayed as «*un Giovane ignudo, & grasso* (a naked and fat young man)». ¹² The fact that the described moral allegory is a work by Vincenzo Dandini is shown by the evident style similarities, especially in the typical shortened portrayal of the faces and the legs, with some graphical examples in red chalk which can certainly be attributed to the later activity of the painter. For example, the well-known *Appearance of the angel to the Saints Cecilia and Valeriano* at the Louvre, datable to around 1662,¹³ or the contemporaneous study for a *Judith*, which appeared on the Milanese art market in 2007.¹⁴

A clear reinterpretation created by Vincenzo Dandini of another exceptional masterpiece by Francesco Furini, *Agar and the angel* now in the Piero Bigongiari collection in Florence,¹⁵ we will now consider the two pen sketches on the verso of the present sheet (one of which is partial) of a female figure seated on the ground with her hands holding her face in a pathetic manner, both marked by a quick and tangled stroke and similar in date and style (perhaps for the purposes of the same pictorial composition) to a *Penitent St. Mary Magdalen* executed in pen, a typical example of the later drawings by the artist.¹⁶

But further and decisive confirmation regarding the Dandinian authorship of the drawings on the present sheet and to their very late dating, situated in the second half of the seventh decade of the seventeenth century, comes from the three-quarter figure of the *Penitent St. Mary Magdalen* drawn on the reverse in red chalk. The 'dressed' variant of the famous Furinian prototype, which features an entirely nude figure, formerly in the Medici collections and now in Vienna¹⁷ (which echoes the seated pose with the arms outstretched along the torso and the hands superimposed on the left thigh) the Saint shares the simplified characterisation of the face, with her gaze raised to Heaven, and the lightness of stroke outlining the clothes with two originals by Vincenzo Dandini, likewise in red chalk, both portraying a *Holy Monk in prayer*.¹⁸ Although conceived as a "room picture" as proven by the framing that defines the edges, this drawn *Magdalen* was transposed into paint by Vincenzo Dandini in the image of the same saint, slightly differing in the light twisting of the head that is beside the Virgin Mary in the cited altarpiece with the *Descent of the Holy Spirit*, executed in 1667.

Maria Cecilia Fabbri



- 1 The biographical and professional journey of Vincenzo Dandini was reconstructed some time ago by Sandro Bellesi in his recent monograph and the successive projects which result from this; *Vincenzo Dandini e la pittura a Firenze alla metà del Seicento*, Ospedaletto (Pisa), 2003 (with preceding bibliography); *Dandini Vincenzo*, in S. Bellesi, *Catalogo dei Pittori Fiorentini '600 e '700*, 3 vols., Florence, 2009, I, pp. 127- 129; *Il fratello di Cesare: Vincenzo Dandini*, in S. Bellesi, *Studi sulla pittura e scultura del '600 -'700 a Firenze*, Florence, 2013, pp. 35-46.
- 2 Cf. *Le Notizie della Vita di Vincenzio Dandini il Vecchio*, by Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti, are kept at the National Central Library of Florence (Ms. Targioni Tozzetti 240, Band 323, cc, 1-41), and were transcribed and publicised by Sandro Bellesi in *Una Vita inedita di Vincenzo Dandini e appunti su Anton Domenico Gabbiani, Giovan Battista Marmi, Filippo Maria Galletti e altri*, in "Paragone", Nuova serie, no.s 9-10-11, 1988, pp. 97-123. This *Notizie* compensates for the lack of a biography expressly dedicated to the painter by Filippo Baldinucci.
- 3 S. Bellesi, *op. cit.* 2003, pp. 80-83, no. 7 (with preceding bibl.).
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86, no. 10 (with preceding bibl.).
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93, no. 15 (with preceding bibl.).
- 6 With regards to this octagon, belonging to the series of eight biblical scenes inherited in 1680 by the company San Benedetto Bianco (and also for everything regarding the discovery of the exact date), please refer to the very recent contribution of M.C. Fabbri, in *Il Rigore e la Grazia. La Compagnia di San Benedetto Bianco nel Seicento fiorentino*, exhibition catalogue (Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Palatine Chapel, 22 October 2015 – 17 May 2016) by A. Grassi, M. Scipioni and G. Serafini, Livorno, 2015, pp. 144-145, no. 18.
- 7 The importance of the Arezzo altarpiece in the artistic journey of Vincenzo Dandini has been widely proven by Sandro Bellesi (*op. cit.* 2003, pp. 28-29, 111-112, no. 33).
- 8 See S. Bellesi, *op. cit.* 2003, pp. 11-117, no.s 35-36, pp. 119-120, no. 39. regarding these three canvases.
- 9 S. Bellesi, *op. cit.* 2009, I, p. 128, II, fig. 460; S. Bellesi, *op. cit.* 2013, pp. 44-45, figs. 28-28a.
- 10 This news, inferred from documentary sources, was made known by Sandro Bellesi (*Cesare Dandini*, Turin, 1996, p. 212; *op. cit.* 2003, 59, 68, note 33).
- 11 F. Furini, *La moglie di Lot*, Florence, Museum of the Horne Foundation, inv. no. 7; cf. R. Maffei, in *Un'altra bellezza. Francesco Furini*, exhibition catalogue (Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Museo degli Argenti, 22 December 2007 – 27 April 2008) by M. Gregori and R. Maffei, Florence, 2007, pp. 226-227, no. 36 (with preceding bibl.).
- 12 Cf. C. Ripa, *Iconologia*, Rome, 1603, anastatic ed. Milan, 1992, p. 403.
- 13 Cf. S. Bellesi, *op. cit.* 1988, p. 118, note 79, tav. 154; S. Bellesi, *op. cit.* 2003, pp. 166-167, no. 19.
- 14 Cf. *Books, Prints & Drawings*, Sotheby's, Milan, 26 June 2007, no. 52.
- 15 Regarding this Furini painting, datable within the first half of the fifth decade of the seventeenth century, and today in the possession of the Pistoia and Pisa Building Society, please see F. Baldassari, *La collezione Piero ed Elena Bigongiari. Il Seicento fiorentino fra favola e dramma*, Milan, 2004, pp. 24; 128, no. 23; R. Maffei, in *op. cit.* 2007, pp. 224-225, no. 35.
- 16 Regarding this drawing (location unknown) see S. Bellesi, *op. cit.* 2003, pp. 169-170, no. 25.
- 17 F. Furini, *Maddalena Penitente*, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. no. 193; cf. R. Maffei, in *op. cit.* 2007, pp. 218-219, no. 32 (with preceding bibl.).
- 18 Regarding an example held in Florence at the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, no. 15237 F (for which cf. S. Bellesi, *op. cit.* 2003, p. 120, no. 26) and the other sold at auction *Books, Prints & Drawings*, Sotheby's, Milan, 26 June 2007, no. 54.

10 Giacinto Gimignani

Pistoia 1606 - 1681 Rome

Alpheus and Arethusa

Pen, brown ink, grey wash, heightened with white on prepared laid paper
130 x 178 mm (5 1/8 x 7 in.)

Inscriptions: on the right edge of the sheet autograph inscription in brown ink *fuggendo Aretusa e non trovando cui scamp[are] invocò Diana.*

Having received his early artistic training probably from his father Alessio, also a painter, Giacinto Gimignani moved from Tuscany to Rome when he was still young. Here, where his presence is documented from the 1630s, he worked for almost his whole life¹. Under the supervision of Pietro da Cortona, who inspired his approach particularly in his youth, Giacinto Gimignani executed his first well-known work, the lunette depicting the *Rest on the flight into Egypt*, a fresco painting, in the chapel of the palazzo Barberini at the Quattro Fontane (1632). Amongst many works executed in Rome by Gimignani it is worth recalling the most famous in which, alongside clear stylistic hallmarks of Cortonesque origins, elements taken from the art of Poussin and Domenichino are introduced during the course of his long career: the decoration of the *Sala delle donne illustri* (1648) and that of *Roman Histories* in the Palazzo Pamphili in Piazza Navona, the many works carried out under the direction of Gian Lorenzo Bernini (amongst which the canvas with *Elisha purifying the waters of Jericho* in the Fonseca chapel in San Lorenzo in Lucina (1664) and the *Glory of St. Thomas of Villanova* in the Berninian church of Castelgandolfo (1661)), and the frescoes in the courthouse of Santa Maria ai Monti (1675).

The creator of numerous paintings of devotional nature, Giacinto Gimignani often tackled classic mythology which he sketched taking particular inspiration from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*². This is the case of our drawing, whose subject is taken from Ovid's text and presented here for the first time. As can be read from the artist's inscription along the right edge of the sheet ("fuggendo Aretusa e non trovando cui scamp[are] invocò Diana" - "Arethusa fled and didn't find a way to escape, so she prayed to Diana"), the drawing illustrates the fable of Alpheus and Arethusa (*Metamorphoses*, V, 572 and ff.): son of the Ocean god, Alpheus, personification of

the river of the same name, is in love with the nymph Arethusa, who, in order to escape the persistence of the lover, takes refuge in Sicily, near Syracuse. Here, thanks to the intervention of the goddess Artemis, the young woman was transformed into a fountain of water. In the sheet, Gimignani decided to illustrate the decisive moment in the Ovidian tale, that is, the intervention of the goddess in favour of the nymph. Alpheus appears on the left, disorientated by the disappearance of the young woman, who is hidden from his view by the blanket of clouds upon which the goddess Artemis sits, who has descended from heaven to save her from her aggressor.

The Ovidian subject, like other tales narrated in the *Metamorphoses*, enjoyed moderate success in the seventeenth century. Indeed, several versions of the subject are known, amongst which one of the most famous examples by Filippo Lauri (Rome 1623 – 1694) held today at the Galleria Pallavicini in Rome³, and one by Carlo Maratta (Camerano, 1625 – Rome, 1713) which recently appeared on the market⁴. The story of Alpheus and Arethusa owes its popularity not only to the distinctly erotic shades of the tale, but also to the moralistic interpretation attributed to it: the fable was in fact an invitation to men to control their desire for women, which if left uncontrolled would lead to the loss of their loved one and to ruin.

Our sheet is a preparatory drawing for the painting held today at the Museo Clemente Rospigliosi in Pistoia, where it is kept along with several of the series of twenty-five canvases executed by Gimignani during his stay in Tuscany in the 1650s for the family of his protégé, Giulio Rospigliosi⁵. The series, carried out in sequence, as indicated by the similarity of the subjects, the frames and the style, together makes up, in the words of Angela Negro, «ricordi romani (da Raffaello, dalla Galleria Farnese, dallo stesso Cortona)



actual size

aggiornandoli con il gusto morbido e decorato della pittura fiorentina del momento, con infusioni di ombre e arredi preziosi, in una dimensione larvatamente sensuale che richiama la cultura di Francesco Furini, ma anche l'astrazione idealizzante di Dolci»⁶.

For the Rospigliosi paintings the critic has proposed a dating of around the first half of the sixth decade (1652-1654), a time frame around which therefore our preparatory study can be located. It was carried out as a project to be submitted for the approval of the patron, as demonstrated by the composed character of the drawing. In the sheet, Giacinto Gimignani marks the edge of the canvas using a faint line and pauses to define some details: he draws the topography of the background landscape with precision, and traces with accuracy the surfaces touched by the light.

The drawing, through its technique, style and composition, reveals itself as a typical work of Gimignani as a draughtsman. The compositional arrangement of the sculptural figures, the horizontal layout of the image, similar to a bas-relief, are characteristic of the work of the Pistoiese painter, and so are the attention paid to the colouristic and painted effects in the drawing. Indeed Gimignani always demonstrated in his compositional drawings a certain inclination for tinted paper or coloured with paste on which he drew mostly with inks mixed with lead white, which was used in abundance to create chromatic contrast effects.

If one wants to find a stylistic comparison for our drawing amongst the almost 160 sheets attributed to the painter, a large number of which are held in Rome at the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica, in Lipsia, in Düsseldorf and in Paris, one could mention *Erminia amongst the shepherds* in the Ashmolean Museum of Oxford, also datable to the start of the 1650s⁷. This is a preparatory study for the painting of the same subject (signed and dated 1651), today in a private collection and datable very closely to Rospigliosi's *Alpheus and Arethusa*. The English drawing, which is more finished in execution, is similar to ours in that it pays the same attention to chromatic effects and has the same decisive and confident hand, which reminds us, for the fluidity of the line, of the style of Pietro da Cortona, Gimignani's first source of inspiration.

- 1 For a full perspective on Giacinto Gimignani see: G. Di Domenico Cortese, *Percorso di G. G.*, in "Commentarii", XVII, 1967, pp. 186-206; U. V. Fischer Pace, *Les oeuvres de Giacinto Gimignani dans les collections publiques françaises*, in "La Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France", XVIII, 1978, 5-6, pp. 343-358; U. V. Fischer Pace, *Disegni di Giacinto e Ludovico Gimignani nella collezione del Gabinetto nazionale delle stampe*, catalogue by U. V. Fischer Pace, Rome, 1979; A. Negro, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, ad vocem "Giacinto Gimignani", vol. 54, 2000.
- 2 In 1637 Gimignani painted a canvas for a ceiling in the Villa Medici in Rome with *Hero and Leander*; cf. A. Negro, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, ad vocem "Giacinto Gimignani", vol. 54, 2000.
The lost series of twelve paintings with mythological and allegorical subjects, which are recorded as being in the possession of Prince Mattias de' Medici in a 1659 inventory must have likewise been inspired by the fables of Ovid. The commission was perhaps procured thanks to a letter sent by the painter to the prince in 1654 with which he enclosed a drawing depicting *Acis and Galatea*. Cf. A. Negro, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, ad vocem "Giacinto Gimignani", vol. 54, 2000.
- 3 Rome, Galleria Pallavicini, Inv. 259; cf. F. Zeri, *Galleria Pallavicini in Roma. Catalogo dei dipinti*, Rome, 1959, p. 151.
- 4 The painting was recently presented on the antiques market at Christie's (cf. Christie's, London, 4th December 2013, lot 171).
- 5 The Rospigliosi paintings, currently split between the Museo Clemente Rospigliosi and the Collezione della Cassa di Risparmio di Pistoia, are mentioned and discussed in: U. V. Fischer, *Giacinto Gimignani (1606-1681). Eine Studie zur römischen Malerei des Seicento*, Doctorate thesis, Freiburg, 1973, pp. 50, 153-156. The painting with *Alpheus and Arethusa* is remembered in the same volume on p. 156, cat. 54. With regards to the Rospigliosi paintings see also A. Negro, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, ad vocem "Giacinto Gimignani", vol. 54, 2000 (with preceding bibliography); F. Baldassarri, *Quattro favole inedite di Giacinto Gimignani*, Florence, 2010, pp. 12 and ff.
- 6 A. Negro, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, ad vocem "Giacinto Gimignani", vol. 54, 2000 (with preceding bibliography).
- 7 Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, inv. WA1953.154, red chalk, red stone, heightened with white, on prepared paper, 385 x 523 mm.



11 Carlo Maratta

Camerano, Ancona 1625 - 1713 Rome

Recto: *Full figure of a draped man in profile and two hand studies*
Black and red chalk on watermarked laid paper

Verso: *Male head, turned three-quarters to the right and six hand studies*
Red chalk on watermarked laid paper

413 x 251 mm (16 ¼ x 9 ⅞ in.)

Inscriptions: bottom right in an 18th century hand in ink *Il Maratti fece*; on the verso to the centre in ink *Aless. Maggiori comprò a Roma nel 1808*.

Provenance: A. Maggiori (L. 3005 b).

According to Giovan Pietro Bellori, his biographer and friend, Carlo Maratta arrived in Rome at the early age of eleven and in 1636 joined the *bottega* of Andrea Sacchi. He spent his first years in Rome studying the works of the great Renaissance artists. He was particularly inspired by the work of Raphael, whose strain of Classicism had a great influence on his work. At the outset of his career Maratta was also strongly influenced by Sacchi. This is evident in the style of the frescoes (based on his master's cartoons) he executed for the Baptistery of San Giovanni in Laterano (prior to 1650) and in the *Adoration of the Shepherds* in the church of San Giuseppe dei Falegnami (1650-1651), the latter being his first religious work in Rome. Following these, Maratta executed the decorations of the chapels of San Giuseppe and of the Crocifisso in Sant'Isidoro (1653-1656) and in 1657 he contributed to the fresco cycle of the Galleria of Alessandro VII, working under the guidance of Pietro da Cortona. Following Sacchi's death in 1661 and Berrettini's in 1669, Maratta became the dominant artistic figure in Rome. It was during this period that he produced one of his most significant works: the *Allegory of Clemency*, executed in 1673-75 for the Salone delle Udienze in Palazzo Altieri, and commissioned by Pope Clement X. In 1686 he was commissioned by Cardinal Alderano Cybo to paint the fresco for the main altar of Santa Maria del Popolo, which was followed by the *Death of the Virgin* for Villa Albani. Towards the end of his career he produced the drawings for the statues of the *Apostles* in San Giovanni in Laterano and the restorations of Raphael's frescoes at the Farnesina and in the Vatican Stanze. The main

nucleus of Maratta's drawings belong to the collections of the Kunstmuseum in Düsseldorf, the Accademia of San Fernando in Madrid and the Cabinet des Dessins of the Louvre in Paris. A careful study of his oeuvre - a detailed monograph has yet to be published - reveals that Maratta was a tireless and prolific draughtsman who employed an incredible variety of styles and techniques in his work. The surviving examples range from the somewhat convulsive rapid sketches used to define a general composition (often traced in pen), to the fine studies of details often outlined in red or black chalk, a medium he employed throughout his career. If one compares the drawings which can be dated with security - whether of figures, draperies, anatomical elements (heads, arms, hands, legs or feet) - then it can be noticed that Maratta's graphic style evolved and transformed radically. He substituted the precision and clarity of line, the gentle and soft rendering of volumes with the use of *chiaroscuro*, typical of the years prior to the 1660s with a more dynamic and sharp line and a greater use of parallel hatching to define shadows.

The inscription in pen on the verso proves that this sheet was purchased in Rome in 1808 by Count Alessandro Maggiori (1764 - 1834), an art scholar and critic from Fermo in the Marche region. He had lived in the papal city since 1798, where over time he gathered a vast collection of high quality old master drawings which went missing after his death and which only in part found its way into the fund in his name in 1990 at the Palazzo Buonafede in Monte San Giusto.¹ The attribution of the studies on the present sheet to Carlo Maratti, proven *ab antiquo* by the inscription



Recto



Verso



St. Moratti-fel



Ugg. scappioli compivò a Roma nel 1404.



on the recto which dates prior to the purchase by Maggiori, is confirmed by the style details which in no uncertain terms refer to the mature style of the artist, the undisputed leader of Roman painting at European level between the 17th and 18th centuries, and as such, the subject of the very recent International convention held in Rome on the occasion of the anniversary of the third century after his death (1713-2013).²

The head on the verso, finely outlined in red, without doubt belongs to the male model portrayed from life, from whom Maratti inferred the resemblance of Stanislao Kostka in a study of his face, again in sanguine, today in the Kunstmuseum of Düsseldorf and a preparatory study for the altarpiece dedicated to the Polish saint completed in 1687 for the Church of St. Andrew at the Quirinal in Rome.³ The use of the same facial features and the corresponding similarities of the graphical stroke encourage us to assume a close temporal proximity between the execution of our piece and that of the cited German drawing, which certainly hails from halfway through the ninth decade of the 17th century and which can therefore be connected to Carlo Maratti's most successful period professionally, when he was engaged in Rome in several projects simultaneously and created highly prestigious pictorial compositions which were widely acclaimed in Europe.⁴ Indeed, during 1686, just a year after completing some cartoons for the mosaics on the Presentation chapel in St. Peter's, Maratti had already set to work on the altarpiece commissioned to him by the banker Francesco Montioni in Santa Maria in Montesanto (delivered the following year) and had simultaneously completed the well-known *Dispute over the Immaculate Conception* in the renovated family chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo commissioned by the Genoese Cardinal Alderano Cybo of the dukes of Massa (1613-1700);⁵ a picture which was immediately translated into an etching by the French artist Nicolas Dorigny (1658-1746)⁶ and to which I propose to connect, as preparatory studies, a large number of the partial studies in red and black chalk on the recto and verso of the sheet in question.

The difficulties linked to a strict view of the theme relating to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, disseminated by Alexander VII in 1661 with the significant support of the same cardinal Cybo, as also to the decision to paint in oils directly on to the wall (a technique which did not allow for changes to be made during the course of the work) restricted Maratti to subjecting himself to a real *tour de force*, aimed at creating a composed installation based on two

superimposed narrative registers; at the top, sitting on the clouds and surrounded by cherubs, is the Virgin Mary crowned with twelve stars and with her feet resting on the crescent moon, as St. John the Evangelist appears (*Apocalypse* 12, 1), represented in turn, in the lower register, in the act of revealing the Marian mystery to three church doctors, the saints Gregory Magnus, Augustine, and John Chrysostom.⁷

The numerous studies from the collection prepared by Maratti in view of the final outcome (there are at least nine shared between New York, Düsseldorf, Madrid and Windsor Castle) allow us to retrace the graphical creation of the Cybo composition; from the idea to the embryonic state documented by a sheet in the Metropolitan Museum⁸ and finally to the very advanced sketch from the Madrid collection which gives a preview of the scene to be transferred into paint.⁹ At an intermediate stage of this intense creative process, in order to highlight the key role played by St. John in the theological dispute (the conceptual connection between the otherworldly viewpoint and the fatherly assembly underneath) belongs to another study in red chalk in the Metropolitan Museum¹⁰ in which one can see the sudden switching from right to left of the standing figure of the Evangelist, portrayed in profile with his torso slightly leaning forwards and the index finger of his right hand pointing into the book which St. Gregory, sitting in front of him and about to write, has open on his lap.

The moment when the artist passes from this intermediate stage to the graphical conception of that much more evolved stage shown in the two similar studies from the collection held in Düsseldorf¹¹ and at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York¹² can be identified in my opinion on the recto of the sheet in question, and more precisely, in the male standing character in black chalk, equipped with a book and with his right hand raised, which is connected to the study in red chalk visible next to it, in relation to the right hand pointing upwards. This draped figure, similar to St. John in the sheet in the Metropolitan Museum due to the bent left leg and the foot resting on a step, appears to be a further meditation on the Evangelist in the Cybo altarpiece; which, both in the later drawings and in the pictorial edition maintains the upright position taken for the first time in our sheet, indicates St. Gregory's book with his left hand and points to the sky with his right, thus creating a visual and conceptual link between the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception explained to the Church doctors and the Virgin Mary in glory above.

The two studies of hands in red chalk on the verso of the present sheet, relating to the right hand grasping the pen and to the left holding the book on his knee are connected to the figure of St. Augustine dressed in his episcopal gown which moved during the drawing process from the background to the very front, sitting on the ground about to write. Both these partial studies should be considered connected to the first version of St. Augustine (subjected to changes in the journey to the end painting) seen in the advanced drawing project in the Pierpont Morgan Library, which the head of the man examined previously and the study of hands underneath appear to be connected to, and which are both preparatory studies for the representation of the Madonna originally portrayed by Maratti with her hands crossed over her chest. One should not be surprised by the use of male models; even in the definitive fine tuning of the Virgin Mary with her arms open, which appears in the Cybo altarpiece, the artist instructed one of the young men from his studio to pose as shown in the study in red and black chalk held in Düsseldorf.¹³

Maria Cecilia Fabbri

- 1 For a biographical profile of Alessandro Maggiori and the events linked to his collection of drawings see G. Angelucci, *Il fondo Maggiori a Monte San Giusto. I disegni*, Monte San Giusto, 2005 (with preceding bibl.).
- 2 Cf. *Maratti e l'Europa, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi su Carlo Maratti nel terzo centenario dalla morte (Roma, Palazzo Altieri e Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, 11-12 Novembre 2013)* by L. Barroero, S. Prosperi Valenti Rodinò and S. Schülzke, Rome, 2015.
- 3 Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast, Inv. KA (FP) 14022; cf. E. Schaar, in A. Sutherland Harris – E. Schaar, *Die Handzeichnungen von Andrea Sacchi und Carlo Maratta*, Düsseldorf, 1967, p. 128, no. 349. For more about the altarpiece and the dating of it, see J. K. Westin - R. H. Westin, *Carlo Maratti and his Contemporaries. Figurative Drawings from the Roman Baroque*, exhibition catalogue (University Park, The Museum of Art, The Pennsylvania State University, 19 January – 16 March 1975), Philadelphia, 1975, pp. 59-61.
- 4 Maratti's legacy in England, Spain, France and North Europe was analysed in very recent contributions by Stella Rudolph, Manuela B. Mena Marqués, Stéphane Loire and Ursula Fischer Pace published in *Maratti e L'Europa*, cit. 2015, pp. 127-143, 145-166, 167-185, 187-194.
- 5 For more on the Cybo Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo, renovated by the architect Carlo Fontana between 1679 and 1684, please refer to S. Carbonara Pompei, *L'apparato decorativo della Cappella Cybo, in Santa Maria del Popolo. Storia e restauri*, by I. Miarelli Mariani and M. Richielli, 2 vols., Rome, 2009, II, pp. 661-672 (with preceding bibliography).
- 6 For more on this and other etchings by Nicolas Dorigny taken from Maratti paintings, who lived in Rome between 1687 and 1711, see E. Borea, *Maratti e i suoi incisori a Roma nel suo tempo*, in *Maratti e l'Europa*, cit. 2015, pp. 256-257, fig. 11.
- 7 For more on the iconography on the Cybo altarpiece see the writings of Stella Rudolph in *L'idea del Bello. Viaggio per Roma nel Seicento con Giovanni Pietro Bellori*, exhibition catalogue (Rome, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 29 March – 26 June 2000) by E. Borea and C. Gasparri, 2 vols., Rome, 2000, II, pp. 471-472 and, previously, by J. K. Westin - R. H. Westin, *op. cit.* 1975, pp. 53-57.
- 8 New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Inv. Rogers Fund no. 64.295.2, cf. J. K. Westin - R. H. Westin, *op. cit.* 1975, pp. 53, 56, no. 29, fig. 32.
- 9 Madrid, Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Cat. Alcaide no. 23; cf. V. M. Nieto Alcaide, *Carlo Maratti: cuarenta y tres dibujos de tema religioso*, exhibition catalogue (Madrid, Real Academia de San Fernando), Madrid, 1965, p. 13, no. 23, table 14.
- 10 New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Inv. Rogers Fund no. 62.137; cf. J. K. Westin - R. H. Westin, *op. cit.* 1975, pp. 55-57, fig. 36; J. Bean, *17th Century Italian Drawings in the Metropolitan Museum*, New York, 1979, p. 212, no. 278.
- 11 Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast, Inv. KA (FP) 1131; cf. E. Schaar, in A. Sutherland Harris – E. Schaar, *op. cit.* 1967, p. 127, no. 342, fig. 85; S. Rudolph, in *L'idea del Bello*, cit. 2000, II, pp. 471-472, no. 17.
- 12 New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, IV 183; cf. J. K. Westin - R. H. Westin, *op. cit.* 1975, pp. 53, 57, no. 32, fig. 35.
- 13 Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast, Inv. KA (FP) 1318; cf. E. Schaar, in A. Sutherland Harris – E. Schaar, *op. cit.* 1967, p. 128, no. 346, fig. 86.

12 Luigi Vanvitelli

Naples 1700 - 1773 Caserta

Recto: *Study for section (rib) of umbrella vault*

Verso: *Study for half ceiling with two pendentives*

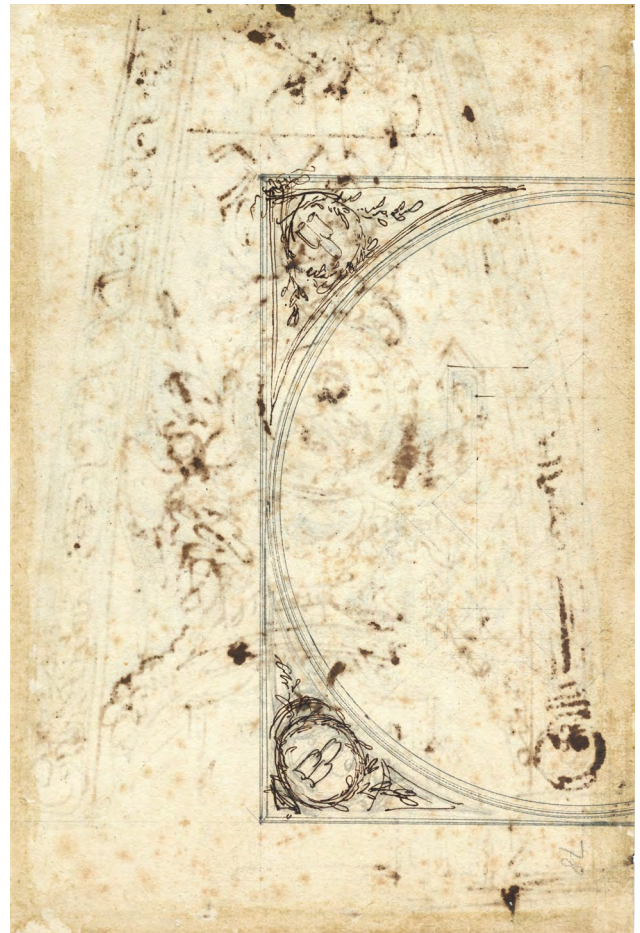
Pen, brown ink, grey washes and black chalk on laid paper
245 x 164 mm (9 5/8 x 6 1/2 in.)

Inscriptions: bottom right corner in ink *Vanvitelli*; on the verso top right corner in pencil 78.

Provenance: private collection, Milan.

Luigi Vanvitelli, son of Dutch-born Gaspar Van Wittel, the most famous *vedutista* of the seventeenth century who lived and worked his whole life in Rome, was an important protagonist of the Late Italian Baroque. Though born in Naples, he was raised in the *Urbe* by his father and maternal grandfather who was also an artist¹. Luigi, who started drawing when he was only a child, was introduced early on to the cultural and artistic environment that his father frequented who even helped him with his paintings. However, he decided to focus on architecture in the early 1730s. His first important commission was the restoration of the Renaissance-style palace Albani in Urbino (1728), after being nominated architect of the Reverend Apostolic Chamber, to which other important commissions followed. Clement XII commissioned him to restore the port and the hospital of Ancona (1733), where he also built the Cappella delle Reliquie in the Cathedral of San Ciriaco (1739), he worked on the Chiesa del Gesù (1743), as well as on other buildings. He also worked in Macerata, Pesaro, Loreto and Perugia where he built the church and the convent of the Olivetani (1739). In Rome, where Luigi was nominated architect of the *Fabbrica* of St. Peter, he was also entrusted with other important commissions, such as to strengthen Michelangelo's dome in the Basilica di San Pietro (1742), decorate Palazzo Sciarra (1743), build the Convent of St. Augustin (1746), and restore Santa Maria degli Angeli (1748). In 1751 and until his death, Luigi worked on the planning and designing of the Royal Palace of Caserta upon the request of Charles of Bourbon, all the while still working on the other assignments he was entrusted with in Rome, as well as in Naples, Capua and Benevento. Luigi Vanvitelli's hundreds of designs, mostly preserved at the Royal Palace of Caserta, bear witness to the numerous activities he carried out as architect, designer,

decorator and scenographer: landscapes, figure studies, illustrations for the publishing sector, stage and theatre studies, architectural and decorative studies, some of which allow us to make precise reference to documented works or works still in existence today.



Verso



The drawing, here the object of examination, which can be attributed with certainty to Vanvitelli as per the inscription, appears on the front wall decoration of part of an umbrella vault. Starting from the bottom, it shows a rectangular frame, which seems to be a coat of arms under a well-rounded arch; above the arch, two winged angels hold a round medallion depicting the portrait of a person. Above them, two small angels carry a crown (of victory), and the palm (of martyrdom) on a diamond-shaped coffered background. Above them, the drawings (maybe flying angels) are hard to decipher. Two ribs flank the vault, one on each side, and are decorated with a ribbon-like motif. The drawing on the verso shows half of a flat ceiling with two pendentives decorated with the coat of arms of the Albani family between garlands.

Claudio Marinelli explained the artist's *modus operandi*: «Luigi Vanvitelli, come disegnatore, abitualmente fissa la prima idea in schizzi via via sempre più elaborati e, per fasi successive di autostilizzazione, arriva al progetto; con lui si raggiungono vertici qualitativi che suscitano meraviglia: incredibile è la padronanza con cui si serve del disegno a inchiostro acquarellato, tanto che, se pure questa tecnica ha origine in ambienti romani e precisamente nel circolo del Cardinal Albani e in particolare in Carlo Fontana, risulta in lui come rivitalizzato»². Being the key protagonist of the artistic panorama of the eighteenth century, Luigi Vanvitelli modernised Baroque style, thanks to his modern way of seeing and conceiving a space, something he learned from his *vedutista* father and which he expressed throughout his activities, where «architettura e decorazione interagiscono in una forma di dipendenza reciproca»³, a fundamental aspect of how he conceived a drawing. The drawing here represents a preliminary sketch by Vanvitelli, a fresh and instant idea expressed through loose strokes, a very expressive *ductus*, enriched by the use of watercolours that highlight the light/dark contrasts on white paper. The drawing of the diamond-shaped coffered ceiling is inspired by the white and golden stucco cover and with the same decorative motif and rosettes inscribed in the hexagons, as seen in the dome vault of the church of Sant'Andrea al Quirinale by Bernini. The angels and small angels are also inspired by Bernini models, most probably envisioned in stucco.

It seems that the drawing calls to mind an early drawing of Vanvitelli, *Study of a chapel* on the recto and on the verso *Figurative and architectonic sketches*⁴ drawn with the same technique and with similar decorative motifs, stylistically speaking similar to this drawing. In particular, it also has a coffered ceiling on the front and flying cherubs bearing an oval form on the back. Another useful comparison

can be made with the⁵ *Study for the stucco of the Tribune* made on the verso of a sheet held in the image collection of Caserta. The latter was identified as being the project made for one of the domes on the sides of the choir of Basilica di San Pietro. The three circular medallions supported by angels are almost identical to the one represented in our drawing, just as the figures around it. With regards to this drawing, Jörg Garms suggested that though the dome's decoration was executed between 1752 and 1757, it may have represented a preliminary study Vanvitelli made in the early 1730s⁶. Because there are no other elements, it is not possible to compare the study drawn on the verso of the sheet to the one made on the recto. It most probably refers to a patron, Albani, as it bears the coat of arms of that family. Just like with Luigi's father, Gaspar, who had maintained artistic relations with the cardinals Alessandro and Annibale, nephews of Pope Clement XI, they entrusted Luigi too with prestigious commissions ever since he started his career as an architect. So, in summary, the drawing here, after having compared it stylistically-speaking with other drawings of Vanvitelli, represents a preliminary sketch of a project that has not yet been found but, according to the verso of the drawing, may refer to a part of a vault dedicated to a martyred saint while the recto refers to a commission ordered by Albani. Therefore, we suggest dating the drawing to somewhere in the early 1730s.

Luisa Berretti

- 1 For a complete monograph regarding Vanvitelli, please see: C. De Seta, *Luigi Vanvitelli*, Naples, 1998.
- 2 C. Marinelli, *L'esercizio del disegno. I Vanvitelli*, in *L'esercizio del disegno. I Vanvitelli. Catalogo generale del fondo dei disegni della Reggia di Caserta*, exhibition catalogue by C. Marinelli, Rome, 1991, p. 13.
- 3 A. Pampalone, in C. Marinelli, *op. cit.*, 1991, p. 70.
- 4 Caserta, Royal Palace, Prints and Drawings, inv. 1689. A. Pampalone, in C. Marinelli, *op. cit.*, 1991, p. 91, No. 187.
- 5 Caserta, Royal Palace, Prints and Drawings, inv. 1670. A. Pampalone, in C. Marinelli, *op. cit.*, 1991, p. 110-111, No. 253.
- 6 *Disegni di Luigi Vanvitelli nelle collezioni pubbliche di Napoli e di Caserta*, exhibition catalogue (Naples, Royal Palace), by J. Garms, Naples, 1973, p. 67, No. 68.



13 Fedele Fischetti

Naples 1732 - 1792

Fame and the Virtues prevail over the Vices

Black chalk, polychrome wash heightened with white on prepared paper
654 x 473 mm (25 ¾ x 18 ⅝ in.)

Inscriptions: bottom left corner, in an old hand, traces of writing in ink *il Decoro e [...]*; on the verso, upper left in ink *la Dignità, la Pace, l'Equità e l'Innocenza [...]* *la Malvagità e l'Inganno.*

Born into a family of painters, Fedele Fischetti learned the rudiments of painting in the studio of Gennaro Borrelli, steeped in the post-Solimenian tradition. His early painting was carried out above all in the religious sphere with work executed in the Neapolitan Spirito Santo, Santa Maria in Portico and Santa Maria la Nova churches. Evident here, his leaning towards Roman classicism with a Batonian bent can be explained by a presumed study stay in the papal city. Specialising in fresco painting and having a close artistic partnership with Luigi Vanvitelli, Fischetti decorated the interiors of aristocratic buildings in Naples and the principal royal residences outside of the city that the architect worked on, like the Palazzo Casacalenda (c. 1770), Villa Campolieto in Herculaneum (1772-1773), the Royal Palace of Caserta (1778-1781), the Palazzo Doria d'Angri (1784) and the Palazzo Cellamare (c. 1789). In the frescoes, carried out from 1780 almost until his death in 1792, Fischetti became an increasing devotee of neo-classical principles, creating a happy synthesis between the local *rocaille* solutions and the contemporary examples of Classicism linked to the Neapolitan works of Anton Raphael Mengs and Angelika Kauffmann, the latter residing in Naples from 1782 to 1786.

The highly finished composition and the obsessive attention to detail, the extremely careful rendering of the light and shade and the studied harmony of the chromatic values are all elements which qualify this *Allegory of the Virtues prevailing over the Vices* by Fedele Fischetti as a true and authentic *modello*, made to prefigure the final result to be submitted to the client. The iconographic framework which regulates this symbolic representation appears likewise highly studied and complex to decipher. It is a framework which shows itself to be so learned and well-orchestrated

that it suggests the presence, at the painter's side, of an expert in iconology.

The scene – to be read from the bottom to the top – expresses the eternal battle between Good and Evil, the former personified by the triumphant Virtues arranged on the clouds in an orderly fashion, and the latter by the Vices portrayed in the act of plummeting from the clouds, agitated and screaming, succumbing to the violent whip lashes inflicted on them by a young winged man. These, as can be inferred from the *Iconology* by Cesare Ripa, represent the *Love of Virtue*, whilst *Deceit* with the serpent's tail, *Fraud* with the eagles talons, holding in his hands two hearts and a mask, and *Theft* equipped with a bag and a knife should be recognized in the Vices¹. The *Love of Virtue*, having undertaken the task of battling and annihilating everything that causes a diversion from the right path, rises to the defence of the three allegorical personifications behind them: *Equity*, furnished with scales and a cornucopia, *Innocence* – «*young virgin dressed in white, with a garland of flowers on her head, and a Lamb in her arms*» – and *Virtue* portrayed as a young winged girl «*crowned with la aurel, and holding an oak branch*»². The message is clear: only through a heroic and virtuous being, immune from sin and led by the sentiments of justice and of equity is it possible to obtain that *Authority* in social assembly – the matron seated in the act of pointing to the symbols of power at her feet (a crown, a cardinal's hat, a sword and a book) – and that *Decorum* – «*A youth of handsome and honest appearance, wearing a lion skin*» – which allows one to ascend to Fame, and through this, to the Empirical supreme, evoked here along the upper margin of the sheet by a circular temple³. This dialectic of themes is not solely metaphoric but is also expressed in the physical space on the sheet through the counterposition of the groups in the lower section.



The clarity of the structure, the classically balanced composition and the nobility of the figures, not entirely devoid of a *rocaille verve*, has led to the temporal placing of the execution of this model in the central stage of the artistic journey of Fischetti, or rather around the start of the ninth decade of the 1700's at the time of his closest adhesion to the neoclassical influence of Angelika Kauffmann. In support of this dating are comparisons with other important works carried out by the painter during this time: together with the frescoes in the Doria d'Angri palace, executed between 1783 and 1784, above all it reminds one of the coeval canvas of *Allegory of Love* (Naples, Gambardella collection)⁴ and the series of allegorical paintings, also dating from the same years, completed by Fischetti for the bedroom of Charles de Bourbon's son in the Madrid Royal Palace (today at El Pardo, Palacio Real)⁵. Both in the Gambardella canvas and in the *Allegories of Peace and Prosperity* in El Pardo, the feminine figure personifying *Authority* in our *modello*, appears almost identical, indicating a plausible temporal proximity.

Maria Cecilia Fabbri



- 1 Cf. C. Ripa, *Iconologia*, Venice, ed. 1645, pp. 25-26; 231-232; 235-236; 281.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 178; 286-287; 672.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71; 133-134.
- 4 Cf. N. Spinosa, *Pittura napoletana del Settecento dal Rococò al Classicismo*, Naples, 1987, tab. 49.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 140, n. 217, figs. 287-290.



14 Venetian Artist - 19th century

The Porticos of Palazzo Ducale

Pen and ink with squaring and numbering in chalk, with framing lines, on smooth tissue paper
230 x 324 mm (9 x 12 ¾ in.)

Inscriptions: top centre in ink *Notte con Luna*, bottom centre in ink *Portici del Palazzo Ducale*.

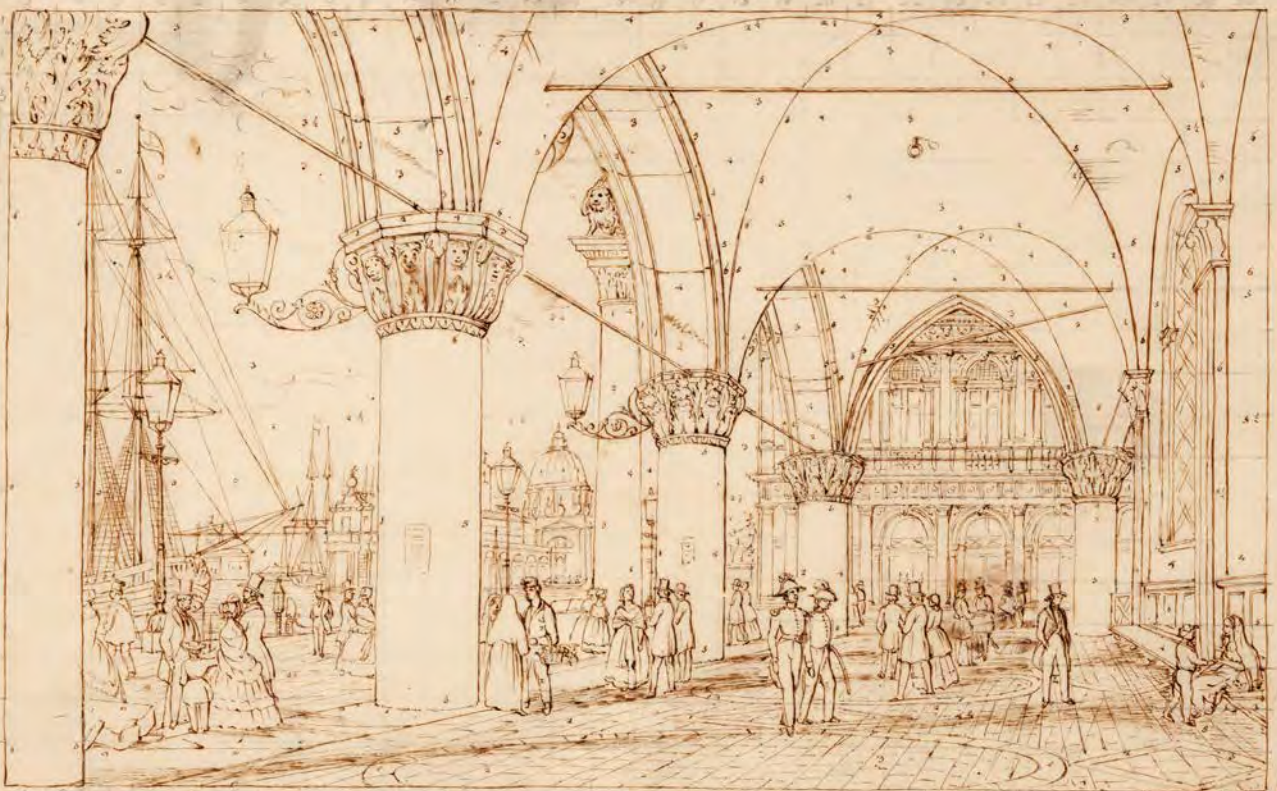
This beautiful drawing represents an extremely accurate study of the porticoes on the water-side facade of the Doge's Palace in Venice (fig. 1), at the southern corner of Saint Mark's Piazzetta. In the background is the Library complex, planned and built in the 1540s-1550s by Jacopo Sansovino and completed by Vincenzo Scamozzi between 1583 and 1588. On the left rises the monolithic shaft of red and grey granite, the column on which the bronze lion of Saint Mark is sat. The sculpture itself is thought to be of Persian origin, dating from the Sassanid period, and was originally created as a 'chimera'. In a later era it was adapted to become the symbol of Saint Mark by the addition of wings. The French removed the lion in 1797, returning it only in 1815 by which point it was so damaged that significant restoration was required including partial recasting. Behind the column, and beyond the watery area in front of the tip of the Zecca, is the imposing baroque form of the church of La Salute, which signals the entrance to the Grand Canal along with the Punta della Dogana. A large sailing boat docked on the water-front closes the scene on the far left, its network of ropes creating the effect of curtains at the side of a stage. The rhythm of the columns in the porticade, with their strength and solidity, is rendered gracefully and elegantly;

and the level of attention paid to detail reveals the artist's training in the landscape genre. However, although the work offers a harmonious perspectival view of the scene, the representation is in fact rather more imaginary than objective. It would seem that the artist made use of several vantage points; indeed, in reality it is impossible to find a single spot from which to make out all the different parts of the drawing at the scale at which they are shown. For example, if one were to stand alongside the fourth pilaster one could make out the column of Saint Mark as it is shown in the drawing; however, the church of La Salute and the Punta della Dogana are not visible from that spot. We can therefore suppose that this extremely elegant drawing represents the final result of multiple sketches made on site from different vantage points. The sketches would later have been juxtaposed to create a harmonious and stage-set-like scene. This was, after all, the technique deployed by Canaletto, and later adopted by a large proportion of the Venetian '*vedute*' painters: not, therefore, a slavishly copied 'photographic' image of Venice, but a hypothetical image, poetically transposed into the illusion of reality. Along its edges the drawing is completely subdivided into millimetres and is marked with an unknown numbering system - from 0 to 6 - the significance of which is not clear. It may, however, refer to the drawing's tonal range as a means of potentially turning it into a painting. The figures' dress would suggest the work dates from the 1840s or 1850s. This is particularly evident in the female figure to the left in the drawing who is seen from behind, as well as in the man beside her and in the solitary figure to the right, gazing towards the woman and child seated on the bench. Whilst the work is thought to date from around the 1840s, the street lamps depicted along the waterfront and along the side of the Doge's Palace offer a vital clue in determining one of the parameters of the timeframe. On July 9th 1839 the Venetian municipality, then under Austrian occupation, made an agreement with the Compagnie du Gaz to install gas lamps in the city.



1. Porticoes of the Doge's Palace in Venice.

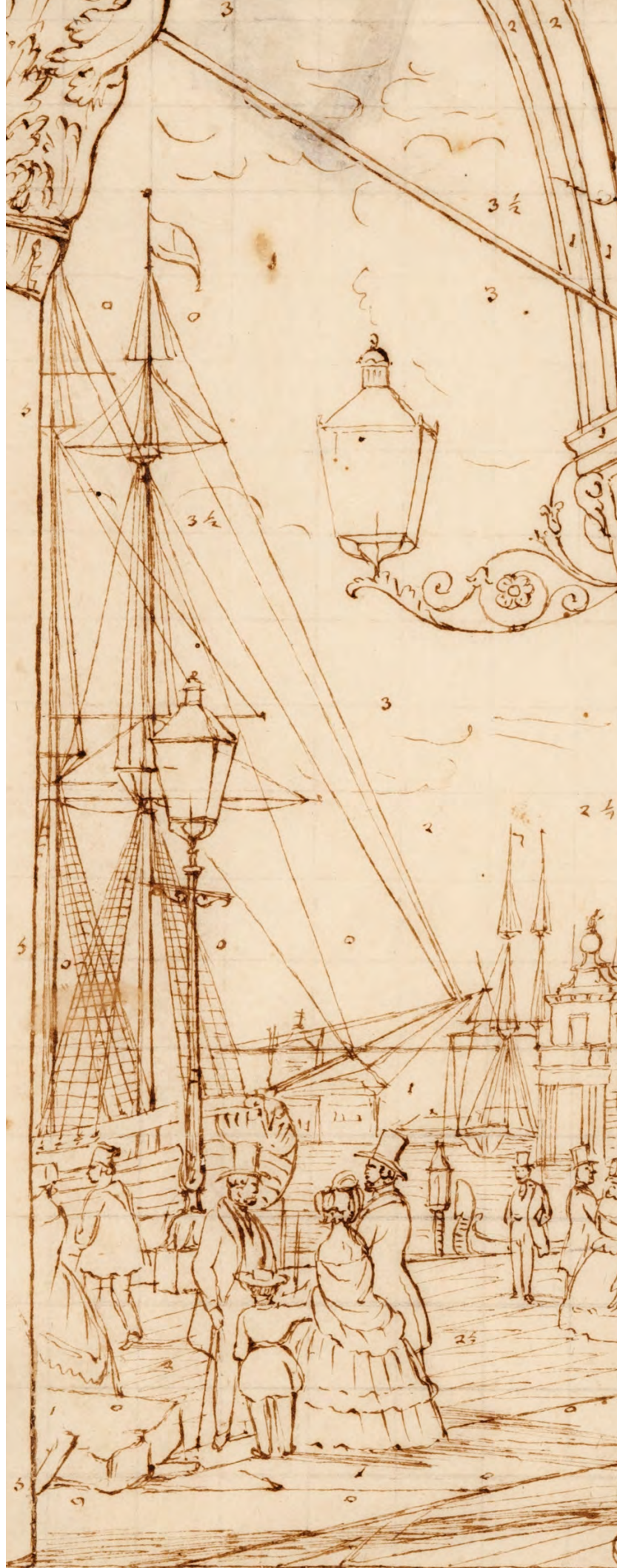
Nota con l'anno



Basilica del Palazzo Ducale

After a first trial in the area around the Convent of Saint Catherine in Cannaregio, from March 13th 1843 the service was limited to the area around St. Mark's Square with the installation of 128 gas lamps along the length of the Piazza and the Piazzetta, as well as 49 alongside the Procuratie buildings. Similar lamps also appear in paintings by Carlo Canella, Federico Moja and Ippolito Caffi, created after 1843. A very interesting stylistic parallel can be drawn with a painting by Giuseppe Bernardino Bison, which came onto the market in 1996, depicting the *Entrance to the Library of Saint Mark's*. The painting features a depiction of the elegant arched facade similar to that in the drawing, and the conception of the architectural complex is similar too, as if the artist had 'zoomed-in' on an area of the drawing and adjusted it slightly to the right to focus on one fascinating detail. There are no lamps in the painting, and it must be acknowledged that Bison had left the Veneto region in 1831 for Lombardy. Despite these intriguing hypotheses, we are nonetheless faced with an incongruent chronology which is difficult to resolve.

Annalisa Scarpa





15 Giuseppe Bernardino Bison

Palmanova 1762 - 1844 Milan

Idyll with Spinner

Pen, brown ink, wash and black chalk on laid paper
179 x 254 mm (7 x 10 in.)

Inscriptions: signed bottom right in ink *Bison*; on the verso upper left corner in pencil *Bison: Due Filatrici*, at the centre in pencil *GB*, bottom right corner in pencil *62*.

Provenance: O. Basilio collection, Trieste; private collection, Trieste.

Exhibited: *Cento disegni del Bison*, exhibition catalogue by A. Rizzi, Udine, 1962.

The role of Drawing in the artistic journey of the Friuli-born Giuseppe Bernardino Bison was fundamental over the whole span of his long and prolific career. After having studied the “elements of figure” with a pupil of Tiepolo, Costantino Cedini, Bison applied himself with particular interest to the study of perspective at the *Accademia* in Venice. Ever since the first years of his training, Bison pitched the first bases for his production as an easel painter, decorator and *vedutista* and today he is recognised as one of the greatest representatives of Venetian *vedutismo*. It was thanks to his collaboration with the architect Giannantonio Selva that Bison worked in Ferrara in Palazzo Bottoni (1787), and then in Treviso, in the Casino Soderini (1796). Finally he moved to Trieste, where he spent thirty years of his life. Here he obtained unprecedented success and decorated some of the most prestigious private and public buildings of the city, including the famous Teatro Nuovo¹, without ever neglecting his tireless production of easel works. After a brief stay in Venice around 1800, Bison moved to Trieste, working as a set designer. In his later life, he visited Florence and Rome, which he depicted in some of his most striking painted city views. At the age of sixty-nine he finally moved to Milan, where he died in 1844. Within Bison’s graphic *oeuvre*, it is hard to find a preparatory drawing for a painting, whether this be a *veduta*, a landscape, a countryside scene or a painting with a mythological or sacred subject. Each invention finds its origin in the creative force of the artist and is born of the recomposition of fragments of his personal visual memory, sometimes authentic acts of homage to Tiepolo, both father and son, or to Francesco Guardi, Canaletto, Marco Ricci and Francesco Zuccarelli.

Our drawing is an exquisite example of this aspect of Bison’s graphic output, where his pen strokes are immediate, his line pure, slight and delicate, and where the brown wash imbues the composition with a subtle painterly effect. *Idyll with Spinner* may thus be considered a self-contained, finished work probably intended for sale as an autonomous picture, and thus signed for that reason. This masterpiece met the taste of the times and even today has a bewitching quality which succeeds in capturing the observer’s gaze. We are looking at a «splendid drawing, worthy of Goya. The energetically expressive realism, the product of a vigour at once rhythmic and linear, critical and psychological, marks a leap forward into the future in relation to iconographic and aesthetic standards that were only just beginning to take root in Italian culture. The graphic litany, purged of its traditional dross, is wholly Romantic in feel».² That was how Aldo Rizzi described our drawing in the exhibition catalogue *Cento Disegni del Bison* (Udine, 1962), when it was chosen for the poster advertising the exhibition on the grounds that perfectly encapsulated the artist’s imagination and creative talent.

1 Bison had already undertaken many commissions independently before arriving in Trieste. For example the decorations for the Teatro Nuovo and Degli Obizzi in Ferrara (around 1790) and the many works in the Treviso region. Cf. F. Magani, *Giuseppe Bernardino Bison*, Soncino (CR), 1993, pp. 9-12.

2 Cf. *Cento disegni del Bison*, exhibition catalogue by A. Rizzi, Udine, 1962, p. 56.



16 Umberto Brunelleschi

Montemurlo 1879 - 1949 Paris

The war puppeteer

Pen, ink and traces of black chalk heightened with tempera
380 x 301 mm (15 x 11 7/8 in.)

Inscriptions: signed bottom right corner in ink *Brunelleschi*.

Born in Montemurlo, Tuscany, in 1879, Umberto Brunelleschi studied painting and sculpture at the Accademia di Belle Arti, Florence. When he moved to Paris in 1901, the French capital was swimming with advertising posters - an art form that had found a new lease of life with the advent of colour and Japanese printing techniques. Humorous fliers abounded, amongst which "Le Rire" particularly stood out. A long-standing collaboration with Toulouse-Lautrec made this periodical the most famous of its kind. Using the pseudonym Aroun-al-Rascid, Brunelleschi became one of the leading contributors of "Le Rire" and signed his famous illustrations for "L'Assiette au Beurre"¹. In Paris he participated to the *Salon d'Automne* and the *Salon des Indépendants*, that guaranteed him a prestigious position in the Parisian art scene. His studio on Rue Boissonnade became a meeting place for friends and colleagues, including some of the major Parisian artists of the time: Kees Van Dongen, Giovanni Boldini, Amedeo Modigliani, Pablo Picasso, André Derain, and Chaïm Soutine.

When around 1912 he began to work for some of the most important Parisian fashion magazines as the "Gazette du Bon Ton", the "Journal des Dames et des Modes" and "Fémina Noël", Brunelleschi started to attract the attention of the critics, who praised his skills as a set designer² and illustrator. It was during these years of intense activity that Brunelleschi published some of his most significant masterpieces, including the *Contes du Temps Jadis* (1912), *La Nuit Vénitienne* (1913) and *Les Masques et les Personages de la Comédie Italienne* (1914), a large-format limited-edition album of twelve tempera and watercolour engravings which was to prove immensely popular and which sold out almost at once. Leaving France for one of his now customary holidays in Tuscany in July 1914, Brunelleschi ended up staying for longer than usual, and when Italy joined the war in May 1915 he enlisted as a volunteer. He was initially assigned to air defence in Venice but he was later moved

to the 49th Infantry's Second Battalion command post at the front.

Throughout the war, however, he never missed a single opportunity to work, and in 1918 he was commissioned by the Duke of Aosta to cooperate with the Third Army's famous trench magazine "La Tradotta". We may surmise that our drawing, *The War Puppeteer* - a preparatory study for an illustration, most probably for a magazine cover, maybe for "La Tradotta" itself - dates back to precisely this three-years period. Italy in fact joined the war on the Allies' side against the so-called central empires, Germany, the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman Empire, to which the three puppets dressed up in their respective uniforms at the feet of an imposing young woman clearly allude. The beautiful, enigmatic and elegant female figure in the form of a large arabesque combines an almost oriental grace with a distant echo of 18th century Venice and France. The figure's purity of line and supple lightness hark back in part to Art Nouveau (in its references to such illustrators as Georges de Feure and Alphonse Mucha), and in part to the elegance of Aubrey Beardsley's work.

The two-dimensional feel achieved through the use of black and white enables Brunelleschi to display the decorative independence of his own clear, firm mastery of line, offering us a work which exemplifies to perfection both his art, almost heralding the motifs of Art Déco, and his thought: irony is there, but it lurks only in the caricatural features of the three uniformed puppets, and the warning, though veiled, leaves little to the imagination.

1 See G. Ercoli, *Umberto Brunelleschi - Liberty e Art Déco nell'opera grafica di un artista italiano a Parigi*, Florence, 1978, pp. 3-25.

2 The critic of the "Petit Parisien" wrote: «The *Comédie italienne*, based on the designs of the painter Brunelleschi, is without doubt the most beautiful and bold production the theatre has put on since the famous Bakst designs». See C. Nuzzi, *Umberto Brunelleschi illustrazione, moda e teatro (1879-1949)*, Milan, 1979, p. 16.



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15. Giuseppe Bernardino Bison

C. Piperata, *Giuseppe Bernardino Bison (1762 – 1844)*, Padova, 1940; A. Rizzi, *Cento disegni del Bison*, Udine, 1962-1963; F. Zava Boccazzi, *Per la grafica del Bison*, in «Arte Veneta», XXVII, 1973, pp. 236-249; A. Rizzi, *Disegni del Bison*, Udine, 1976; F. Magani, *Giuseppe Bernardino Bison*, Soncino (CR), 1993; *Giuseppe Bernardino Bison pittore e disegnatore*, exhibition catalogue by G. Bergamini, F. Magani, G. Pavanello, Milan, 1997; G. Pavanello, A. Craievich, D. D'Anza, *Giuseppe Bernardino Bison*, Trieste, 2012.

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Peace

