

COLNAGHI

Est. 1760



Paolo Domenico Finoglio
(Orta di Atella or Naples, c. 1590
- 1645 Conversano)

*The marriage of Saint Joseph
and the Virgin Mary*

oil on canvas

199 x 155 cm.;

78 3/8 x 61 1/8 in.

Provenance

Private collection, Madrid.

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This recently discovered canvas is a thought-provoking addition to Paolo Domenico Finoglio's *oeuvre*. The artist approached the same subject in another painting for the church of Santa Maria di Piedigrofia in Naples (fig. 1): Nicola Spinosa dates that work to the years following 1626, while Brigitte Daprà suggests a period of 1630 – 1635.¹

Though our painting differs in format to the one in Naples – with ours being vertical and that picture horizontal – many of its other characteristics are highly comparable. The two compositions have been arranged in largely the same way: Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary stand towards the centre of both canvases clasping each other's hands. A high priest is positioned just behind them who is clearly blessing the marriage, as suggested by his glance towards the heavens. Even more similar is Finoglio's depiction of Saint Anne across the two canvases: both figures stand behind Mary staring upwards, and appear to have been based on the same model for an older woman.

Such naturalistic portrayals of human beings remind us that although Finoglio first trained under Ippolito Borghese, he subsequently embarked on the modernization of his master's late mannerist style in the studio of Battistello Caracciolo (1578 – 1635), thereby becoming one of the exponents of Neapolitan post-Caravaggism.

For over two decades Finoglio worked for the principal religious institutions in Naples: the Certosa di San Martino, San Lorenzo Maggiore and San Paolo Maggiore. He probably moved to Conversano in 1635, where he became court painter to the powerful Acquaviva d'Aragona family. In their Castello di Conversano he painted the frescoes in the nuptial chambers of Count Gian Girolamo II Acquaviva, and also the series of ten vast canvases representing *Episodes from Gerusalemme Liberata* preserved today in the Pinacoteca Comunale del Castello at Conversano. Finoglio certainly achieved international acclaim as is demonstrated by his being commissioned to produce one of four paintings, each by a different Neapolitan master, for the decoration of the Palacio del Buen Retiro, Madrid.

¹ *Paolo Finoglio e il suo tempo: Un pittore napoletano alla corte degli Acquaviva*, Naples 2000, p. 152, cat. no. 18, reproduced on p. 101.

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Figure 1. Paolo Domenico Finoglio, *The marriage of Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary*. Santa Maria di Piedigrofia, Naples