

COLNAGHI ELLIOTT

MASTER DRAWINGS

Orazio Samacchini
(Bologna, 1532 – 1577)

The Flight of Daedalus and Icarus

Black chalk, heightened with white on blue paper, partially squared in black chalk. With inscriptions 55 and *del/Francesco Salviati* in pen and brown ink on the recto of the mount and *Expertius vacuum. Aedalus aera/ Pennis non homini datis. Hor. Lib. I Ode 3.v.34* on the verso of the mount.

222 x 387 mm. (83/4 x 151/4 in.)

Provenance:

J. Richardson Sen. (1667 – 1745), L.2183;

C. Rogers, L.624;

His sale, London, Th. Philipe, 15 – 23 April 1799, part of lot 593 (as 'Francesco Salviati, Rebecca at the Well, bistre, heightened and Daedalus and Icarus, black chalk, heightened, both on blue paper');

V. Ezekiel (Sotheby & Co.);

From whom acquired by P. & D. Colnaghi, London, on 1 February 1956 (originally as Francesco Salviati, but the attribution was later changed to Camillo Procaccini);

From whom acquired by X. L. Givaudan, Geneva, on 31 May 1956;

By whom sold, London, Christie's, 3 July 2007, lot 28 (as Orazio Samacchini), where acquired by the present owner.

Literature:

A. W. A. Boschloo, *Il fregio dipinto a Bologna da Nicolo dell'Abate ai Carracci*, Bologna 1984, p. 78;

J. Winkelmann, 'Orazio Samacchini', in *Pittura Bolognese del '500*, (ed.) V. Fortunati Pietrantonio, Bologna 1986, vol. II, p. 643;

T. Mullaly, 'Art in Bologna', *Apollo*, vol. 136, no. 366, August 1992, pp. 124-5;

M. Faetti, in *Un siècle de dessin à Bologne: 1480-1580. De la Renaissance à la réforme tridentine*, exh. cat., Paris 2001, p. 170, under cat. no. 50;

M. Faetti, *Il Cinquecento a Bologna. Disegni dal Louvre e dipinti a confronto*, exh. cat., Bologna 2002, pp. 300 and 304, under cat. nos. 82 and 84.

Exhibited:

London, P. & D. Colnaghi, *Exhibition of Old Master Drawings*, 10 May – 14 June 1956, no. 15 (as Francesco Salviati);

London, Courtauld Institute Galleries, *Drawing in Bologna 1500 – 1600*, 18 June – 31 August 1992, no. 57.



Jürgen Winkelmann cites early documents mentioning Ercole Procaccini as Orazio Samacchini's master;¹ however, his career is more often said to have begun under the tutelage of Pellegrino Tibaldi. Tibaldi played a pivotal role in the diffusion of Michelangelo's monumental style in Bologna: a figural vocabulary that Samacchini therefore absorbed during his early career and reinforced during his c. 1563-64 stay in Rome. In those years, Samacchini was called to the Eternal City as part of a large team of artists chosen by Pius IV to decorate the Sala Regia of the Vatican. Working alongside Vasari, Marco Pino, Girolamo Siciolante, the Zuccari and his friend and compatriot Lorenzo Sabatini,² this project likewise exposed Samacchini to all of the sophisticated techniques and Manneristic developments of the Tusco-Roman school. After this Roman sojourn, Samacchini worked in Città di Castello with Prospero Fontana, in the Duomo of Parma, and then extensively in Bologna where, in 1572, he was made director of the Guild of Painters.

In 1968, Philip Pouncey first identified this large and impressive sheet as a preparatory study for Samacchini's fresco of *Daedalus and Icarus* in the Palazzo Vizzani, Bologna (fig. 1).³ The figure of Daedalus in the drawing has been transposed almost exactly onto the fresco, whereas the figure of Icarus is reversed, and the Zodiac signs in the fresco are larger in relation to the figures. These relatively minor differences notwithstanding, both drawing and fresco demonstrate the same perfection of form and Samacchini's refined approach to the human figure. The echoes of Michelangelo are hard to miss, particularly in the monumental and anatomically accurate depiction of Daedalus' body, which twists athletically as he looks over his shoulder to see Icarus plunging to his death. Samacchini's intelligent use of cross hatching to here delineate Daedalus' muscles using shadow, as can be best observed on his torso and thighs, as well as the subtle employment of white highlights to imitate rays of sunlight shining in from the left (in line with the Greek mythological story), both attest to his skill as a draughtsman. As Terence Mullaly said in his review of the Courtauld Institute exhibition, *Drawing in Bologna*, the present sheet 'is one of Samacchini's key drawings'.⁴

In his essay on 16th-century fresco cycles in Bologna, Anton W. A. Boschloo dated the *Daedalus and Icarus* in the Palazzo Vizzani to the early 1560s,⁵ whereas Jürgen Winkelmann considered the execution of this ceiling decoration to be a decade later.⁶ More recently, Marzia Faietti confirmed Boschloo's early dating,⁷ and compared the present work with another fine drawing in black chalk by Samacchini, now in the Louvre, showing *Diligence Rebuffing Enmity and Chaining Hate* (fig. 2, inv. 10565).⁸ Faietti further observes that the latter drawing may also be related to the decoration of the Palazzo Vizzani and, noting

¹ J. Winkelmann, 'Orazio Samacchini', in *Pittura Bolognese del '500*, (ed.) V. Fortunati Pietrantonio, Bologna 1986, vol. II, p. 632.

² 'Together the Tweedledum and Tweedledee of Bolognese drawings', as Hugo Chapman so memorably put it in his review of 'Un siècle de dessin a Bologne', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 143, no. 1180, July 2001, p. 441.

³ Winkelmann 1986, p. 681.

⁴ T. Mullaly, 'Art in Bologna', *Apollo*, vol. 136, no. 366, August 1992, p. 125.

⁵ A. W. A. Boschloo, *Il fregio dipinto a Bologna da Nicolo dell'Abate ai Carracci*, Bologna 1984, p. 78. The palazzo, now called the Palazzo Vizzani Sanguinetti, is in the via Santo Stefano, no. 43.

⁶ Winkelmann 1986, p. 643.

⁷ Winkelmann 1986, p. 643.

⁸ M. Faietti, *Il Cinquecento a Bologna. Disegni dal Louvre e dipinti a confronto*, exh. cat., Bologna 2002, under cat. no. 84, p. 304.

stylistic similarities between these two studies and Samacchini's decorative scheme of about 1560 in the Castello di Troilo Rossi in San Secondo, dates them to the same period. To support her earlier dating further, Faetti points out that among the Castello dei Rossi decorations, another depiction of *Daedalus and Icarus* showing indubitable similarities with the Palazzo Vizzani scene can be found.

The learned note, written by the artist and prolific drawings collector Jonathan Richardson Snr. (1667 – 1745), on the back of the mount (fig. 3) connects this depiction of *Daedalus and Icarus* with lines from an ode by the Roman poet Horace, specifically Book 1, Ode 3, verse 34. Richardson's attribution to Francesco Salviati (1510 – 1563) is less accurate, though entirely understandable, given the refinement and perfection of this quintessential sixteenth-century drawing. Indeed, this was the name attached to the drawing until at least 1956, when it was exhibited at P. & D. Colnaghi, London. Intriguingly though, at this point the *Daedalus and Icarus* fresco was already identified as Samacchini's work by Cesare Malvasia, who described it as '*la ben intesa Caduta d'Icaro del Samacchini*'.⁹

Malvasia's account of Samacchini's life in *Felsina pittrice* was, in fact, largely unenthusiastic, which almost certainly resulted in the painter's unjust exclusion from the pantheon of Bolognese artists. As such, it was not until more recently that Samacchini was recognized as one of the protagonists of the artistic scene in Bologna, and even though his painting *oeuvre* has today been extensively illustrated, the corpus of his drawings awaits further study. The present sheet not only speaks to Samacchini's talent as a draughtsman, but should also act as a cornerstone in understanding the artist's drawing practice in the years to come.

⁹ C. C. Malvasia, *Le Pitture di Bologna*, 1686, (ed). A. Emiliani, Bologna 1969, p. 194, 286-8.



Fig. 1, Orazio Samacchini, *Daedalus and Icarus*. Palazzo Vizzani, Bologna



Fig. 2, Orazio Samacchini, *Diligence Rebuffing Enmity and Chaining Hate*.
Louvre Museum, Paris

Expertus vacuum Scdulus aera
Pennis non homini datus. Hor. Lib. I. Ode 3. v. 34.

Fig. 3, Note written on the back of the mount by Jonathan Richardson Snr.