

BARTOLOMMEO BANDINELLI called BACCIO BANDINELLI
(1488 -1560)

A standing male nude, surrounded by two male nude figures

Pen and brown ink on paper

28,8 x 21,8 cm

Bears two inscriptions in pen and brown ink top right « 8 » and top left « 65 »

Provenance:

Giuseppe Vallardi (1784-1863) (L. 1223) et (L. 1223a);

Unidentified collection mark, close to Lugt L. 87 (Alfred Coppenrath);

Private collection, France.



One of the leading sculptors in Cinquecento Florence, Baccio Bandinelli was profoundly influenced by Michelangelo's work, whose fame he sought to emulate and who was to become his rival throughout his career. He was a prolific draughtsman, and more studies by him survive than by any other 16th century sculptor save Michelangelo. Indeed, drawing was the foundation of Bandinelli's art. Certainly, the artist valued his drawings highly. He seems to have not parted with many, and insisted that his heirs retain them after his death.

Bandinelli's claim to fame rests on his drawings, as was already recognized by his contemporaries (and proved correctly by the great popularity of his drawings with subsequent generations of

collectors). Bandinelli himself, never shy when promoting his own greatness, put it simply: « All my concentration was fixed on drawing in the judgement of Michelangelo... it is above all in that activity that I have prevailed »¹. It was Girolamo Vasari (1551-1574), his pupil in the 1520s and later his critical biographer, who confirmed that it was precisely Bandinelli's facility as a draughtsman that made up for all his other faults: « but since his disegno, to which it is evident that he gave his attention more than to any other thing, was of such excellence that it superseded all his natural defects, distinguishing him as a rare man in this art, we therefore not only consider him among the greatest craftsmen, but also have always paid respect to his work... »².

Our study of Male nude surrounded by two male nude figures belongs to a type of drawing with which Bandinelli has become particularly associated. In fact, he made a speciality of such studies, mostly of male figures standing, alone or grouped together, and usually shown in highly transitory moments: fighting, moving and turning. Drawn both from life and from memory and executed in his characteristic pen and brown ink technique without washes, these drawings employ a tight system of cross hatching to build up the forms, and the light and shadow. Their degree of finish varies. Generally, they served as a drawing exercise, but at times they were also made in preparation for Bandinelli's multi-figures designs for prints or works of sculpture. Above all, however, they reflect Bandinelli's great imagination when it came to inventing complicated poses and attitudes.

In this sheet, we see in the foreground the very typical male studies, characterised by a precision, which are so familiar in Baccio Bandinelli's oeuvre, combined with rather more freely drawn figures behind. « The strength of Bandinelli's draftsmanship is based above all on his formidable mastery of pen and ink using an extensive network of crosshatching – the technique of a sculptor rather than a painter and one at which he was so skilled that it also made him one of the most important designers of prints in the sixteenth century. »³ Bandinelli executed a number of studies of standing male nudes and figures in movement throughout his career which, as Françoise Viatte remarks, makes this type of drawing difficult to date.

Though not easy to date precisely, our sheet would appear to date from circa 1530s-1540s. Close in type and style are several studies in the Louvre: *Two male nudes: one tied to a tree, the other on his knees*, 1529, pen and brown ink on grey-beige paper, 28,5 x 21 cm, bears an inscription in pen and brown ink lower left: « [B]andinello »; collections : Crozat, Pierre (1665-1740) - Saint-Morys, INV 101.



¹ A. Colassanti, « *Il memoriale di Baccio Bandinelli* », in *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, 28, 1905, p. 433

² Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, Florence 1568, II, p. 309

³ C. Monbeig Goguel, 'Workshop Continuity through the Generations: Bandinelli versus Francesco Salviati', *Master Drawings*, vol XLIII, no. 3, 2005, p. 316

In our male nudes study and in the Louvre sheet, the bold use of line and contouring of muscles using a highly structured system of crosshatching are similar reflecting the artist's main activity as a sculptor.



Positioned in a typical contrapposto, the three figures on this sheet should be compared to the Study of male nudes, pen and brown ink, 29 x 22,2 cm, INV 135.



These Louvre drawings are similar to our sheet in its treatment of lines and hatching and in the nudes that are represented; and another Louvre drawings is comparable in details as the treatment of hair: Virgin and Child with the Infant Saint John Baptist, pen and brown ink, 29,2 x 21,5 cm, collections : Jabach, Everhard - Cabinet du Roi - Isle, J. Ch. Garnier, INV 96.



Last example in the Louvre collection which can be linked to the present study, the *Three men heads turned to the left*, pen and brown ink, 16,5 x 21 cm, bears an inscription in pen and brown ink lower right: « [...]6 », collections : Crozat, Pierre (1665-1740) - Mariette, Pierre-Jean - Jabach, Everhard ? - Saint-Morys, INV 88. The treatment of the parallel hatching of the background is identical.



Within the artist's surviving oeuvre, in addition to the sheets of the Louvre seen above, we know of a number of drawings where Bandinelli has studied male nudes, most notably, in terms of comparison with the present drawing, the sheets in the Chatsworth collection not dissimilar to the figures of this composition.



Our sheet is a strong example of Bandinelli's distinctive technique in pen and ink. It reveals the practices of an early Renaissance artist but first and foremost it reveals the traits of a sculptor. Although the sheet seems to have been trimmed on all sides, affecting our judgement of the composition, it remains a very sculptural image, and may well be a design for a relief.

One of the leading sculptors of the Cinquecento in Italy, Baccio Bandinelli was profoundly influenced by the work of Michelangelo, a lifelong rival whose fame he sought to emulate throughout his career. Although he received several important Roman commissions, he worked in Florence for much of his life, where he enjoyed the patronage of the Medici. There his major public sculptural commissions included a statue of Saint Peter for the facade of the Duomo, the Hercules and Cacus for the Piazza della Signoria and the monument to Giovanni delle Bande Nere for the church of San Lorenzo. He also sculpted a figure of Orpheus for the courtyard of the Palazzo Medici, as well as sculptures for the *Sala dei Cinquecento* in the Palazzo Vecchio and the high altar of the Duomo.

Bandinelli's contemporary fame was based as much on his drawings as on his sculpture, and Vasari notes of him that he was « *allora disegnatore molto stimato* ». He was a prolific draughtsman, and more studies by him survive than by any other 16th century sculptor save Michelangelo. Indeed, drawing was the foundation of his art. Bandinelli's drawings continued to be admired by collectors long after the artist's death, as evidenced by a comment in the 1775 sale catalogue of drawings from the collection of Pierre-Jean Mariette; « Baccio's manner of drawing is very erudite: he understood perfectly the structure of the human body as well as all its movements... ». The largest single collection of drawings by Bandinelli is today in the Uffizi, and other significant groups are in the Louvre and the British Museum.

The present drawing bears the collector marks of Giuseppe Vallardi: Lugt L.1223 and Lugt L. 1223a. Giuseppe Vallardi was dealer in prints, drawings and books, publisher of prints, in Milan. The drawings sold by him bear his stamps.



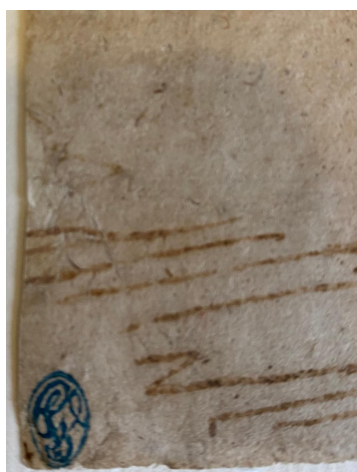
Giuseppe Vallardi (the name of Vallardi is attached to a dictionary of engravers published in 1821 under the title: *Catalogo dei piu celebri intagliatori*, etc.), was artistic adviser to the Ambrosian Library in Milan and honorary curator of the Cabinet Archinto, of the same city. In 1856, he sold to the Louvre Museum, at the price of 35,000 fr., a very important volume containing 378 drawings which were then believed to be almost all by Leonardo da Vinci, but nowadays given to Pisanello; these drawings came from the collections Anguisciola, Resta, Monti and Stef. M. Pezzoni.

The beginning of the Vallardi house, merchant and publisher of prints and books, begins with Francesco Cesare Vallardi (1736-1799). He had inherited from his uncle Giulio Scaccia a bookshop which he actively developed. His sons Pietro (1770-1819) and Giuseppe considerably increase the print publishing activity. They were installed in Milan in the Contrada di S. Margherita num. 110 with the sign of the golden star (Stella d'Oro).

Around 1814 they opened a branch in Paris, Boulevard Poissonnière, No. 5; in 1826 they moved to boulevard Montmartre, no. 10 and, in 1829, to quai Malaquais, no. 15. From 1814 until 1830 engravings and lithographs published in Paris and published in Milan but imported into France by Vallardi are mentioned in the Bibliography of France. They published regularly with their Parisian colleagues like Engelmann, Chaillou-Potrelle (L.619) and Hautecoeur-Martinet.

The two brothers used a stamp to mark the prints sold by them, Fratelli Vallardi (L.2478), but on the drawings sold we find the stamp described here with the letters GV, which suggests that this last activity developed after the Peter's death. There is also a second stamp of smaller format, used on the drawings, L.1223a.

It happens that one finds on the same drawing not only the mark L.1223, but also the L.1223a. We do not know how to explain the presence of the two marks, for example on the drawing by Ghirlandaio, *Seated Man* and, on verso, *Seated Woman* (Rotterdam, Boymans Van Beuningen Museum, inv. I 493, with the mark of the Franz Koenigs collection, L.1023a) and on our drawing by Baccio Bandinelli.



The present sheet also bears an unidentified collection stamp, close to Lugt L. 87: Alfred Coppenrath (1830-1887), bookseller and art dealer, Regensburg - old prints and drawings -.

Alfred Coppenrath was educated at the secondary school in his hometown, Münster in Westphalia. In 1847 he joined the J. G. Manz publishing house in Regensburg, married the latter's daughter in 1854, and the following year took over, for his own account, the bookshop of Montag and Weiss, which he continued later under his name. Coppenrath acquired a great knowledge in art, especially in prints. He began to collect the works of Ridinger and Wierix, then the little German masters, Dürer, Schongauer, and finally the Dutch and Italian masters.

