

GIOVAN FRANCESCO PENNI CIRCLE OF

(Florence, 1488/1496 – Naples, 1528)

Study for a fresco

Pen and brown ink, brown wash heightened with white on prepared paper
14 x 12 cm

On the mount, handwriting inscription «*Francesco Penni dit le Fattore* ».

On the back, handwriting with ink «*Acheté à F.../ P. Collin* ».

Provenance:

P. Collin, Lugt L. 454 ;

Private collection.



The present drawing proceeds from Penni's graphic elegance. Born in Florence to a family of weavers, Penni entered Raphael's workshop very early in his life, and collaborated with him on several works, including the famous Rooms of the Vatican Palace, as well as the frescoes of Villa Farnesina, both in Rome. After the premature death of Raphael, Penni collaborated with Giulio Romano to the completion of works such as the Hall of Constantine, the Transfiguration, the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin (1525) in Monteluce, and the Palazzo Te of Mantua. Penni also provided designs for the tapestries of the life of Christ for Clement VII for the decoration of the Sala del Concistoro in the Vatican.

In 1526, he left Rome and joined back up with Giulio Romano, who had arrived in Mantua in 1524. According to Vasari, he was not well received in Mantua (though he did work with Romano on the frescoes at the Palazzo Te) and so soon began a long journey to Naples via Lombardy and Rome. He died in Naples in 1528.

See for instance *Jacob's dream* by Penni, 1516-19, pen and brown ink, with brown wash, heightened with white, over black chalk, squared for transfer, 19,7 x 26,2 cm, British Museum, London ;



and *Statue of Apollo*, pen and brown ink, brown wash heightened with white, 13,8 x 6,8 cm, Louvre, RF 553.



The manner of Giovan Francesco Penni undeniably influenced the author of this drawing.

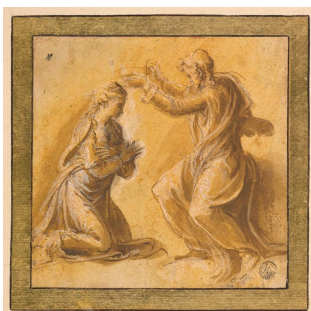
This charming drawing is also typical of the Pupini's technique - Biagio Pupini was a master of the use of wash and white heightening. His interest in works of classical antiquity is reflected in the subject of both male and female figures and their pose. They are seated on a plinth on either side of a carved console and holding a frieze of foliage, which suggests that it might have been inspired by a decor, but no exact parallel can be identified. His graphic style is very recognisable and characterised by the use not only of white heightening but also of coloured backgrounds.

Pupini's drawings have often been wrongly attributed to Polidoro da Caravaggio or to Giovan Francesco Penni. The technique of energetic pen work and wash heightened with white, often on coloured paper, demonstrates the artist's debt to Polidoro da Caravaggio, whose works he frequently copied.

Our drawing is closer in style and in scale to the *Copy after the figure on the right in Naason's telescope, Cappella Sistina*, black chalk and brown wash heightened with white on beige paper, 14,6 x 15,4 cm, INV 776, Louvre.



The technique and the features of the figures of the present drawing are comparable to that of drawings in the museum of Louvre: *Woman seated, holding a medallion*, pen and brown ink, brown wash heightened with white on beige paper, 18,3 x 12,9 cm, INV 6531; the *Holy Family with St John the Baptist infant*, pen and brown ink, brown wash heightened with white on yellow ochre paper, 13 x 11 cm, INV 6110 ; and *Christ crowning a saint*, pen and brown ink, brown wash heightened with white on yellow ochre paper, 14 x 14 cm, INV 8861 ; and in the Museo del Prado, Madrid as well with *Two Barbarian Prisoners with Triumphal Spoil behind*, circa 1524, pen and brown ink, brown wash heightened with white on paper.



For the drapes, see for instance *Vulcan kneeling forging the features of Love*, pen and brown ink, brown wash heightened with white on beige paper, 22 x 19 cm, INV 4309, Louvre ; and *Judith and her maid*, pen and brown ink, brown wash heightened with white on yellow ochre paper, 14,7 x 19,2 cm, INV 7102, Louvre.



These mannerist naturalist details of the architectural decor or furniture appear in our drawing and in the *An ancient sacrifice*, pen and brown ink, brown wash heightened with white on brown paper, 23 x 20 cm, INV 6081, Louvre.



In view of these comparisons with works by this artist, it appears possible to attribute our drawing to Pupini. The style and technique of this sheet are characteristic of his distinctive draughtsmanship.

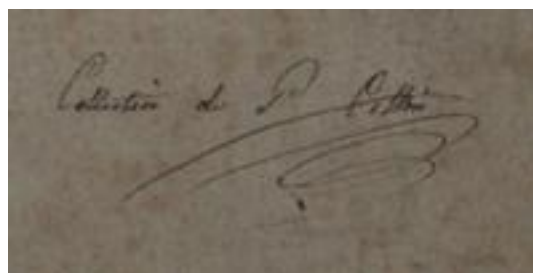
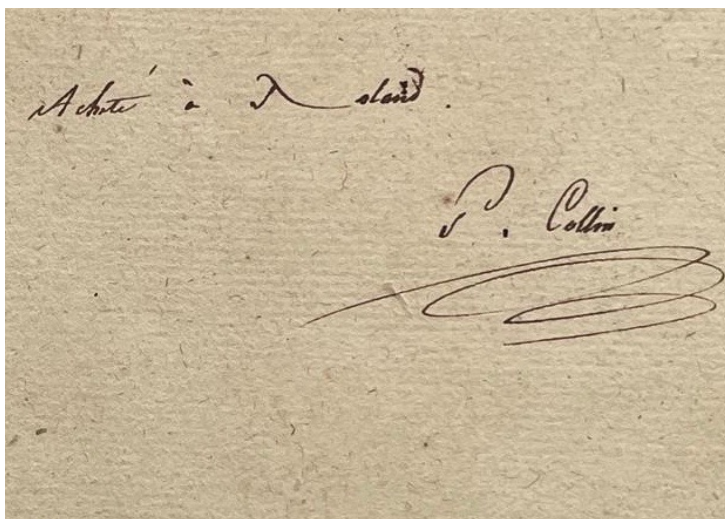
Relatively little is known of the career of Biagio Pupini, who is mentioned only incidentally by Giorgio Vasari in the life of Bartolomeo Ramenghi, called Bagnacavallo, with whom Pupini often worked in Bologna. Pupini is an artist who moved between Italian cities and absorbed influences from many artists. Although he worked mainly in Bologna, where his early training was with Francia, he also collaborated with Bagnacavallo, with Ferrarese artists and with Girolamo da Carpi.

Thought to have been a pupil of Francesco Francia, Pupini is first documented - already described as magister - working with Bagnacavallo in a church in Faenza in 1511. He must have also spent some time in Rome in the late 1510's or 1520's, where he copied the works of Raphael and Polidoro da Caravaggio, although the exact date of this trip is undocumented. Pupini worked with Bagnacavallo at the church of San Salvatore in Bologna around 1524, and the following year collaborated with Girolamo da Carpi on the fresco decoration of the sacristy of San Michele in Bosco. In 1537 he again worked alongside Girolamo da Carpi on the frescoes of the Sala delle Vigne of the d'Este villa at Belriguardo, southeast of Ferrara. A painting by Pupini of The Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist and Nicholas of Tolentino, painted for the sacristy of the cathedral at Fabriano and now in the Pinacoteca there, is dated 1545. In his biography of the artist published in the *Pitture di Bologna* of 1686, Malvasia lists several paintings by Pupini, almost all of which are now lost or destroyed.

As a result of the rare paintings by Biagio Pupini, his artistic personality is best studied in the many distinctive drawings by him that survive. The Louvre museum presents a large collection of drawings by Biagio Pupini, a large part of which comes from the famous Everhard Jabach collection.

Often on prepared or coloured paper and employing extensive white heightening, these drawings reflect the influence of both the North Italian and Roman traditions, particularly the draughtsmanship of Polidoro da Caravaggio, Parmigianino and Girolamo da Carpi. Pupini drew numerous copies after antique masters, and also several copies after works by Raphael and his followers. Relatively few drawings by Pupini, however, can be related to surviving paintings or frescoes by the artist. The largest extant groups of drawings by Pupini are today in the Louvre and the Uffizi.

On the back, our drawing bears the signature P. Collin (Lugt L. 454): « Acheté à F... / P. Collin.



P. Collin, died in or before 1832 in Paris, was an artist at the *Académie Royale de Musique* and an old masters drawings collector.

It is mentioned in the preface to the sale of Mr. Collin, artist at the Royal Academy of Music, that he formed this collection of drawings in twelve years « *with the savings that an artist responsible for a family could miraculously accumulate* ». The long notes preceding the signature and initials of P. Collin on the back of the drawings indicate that the latter was a true amateur. They mention the painter's attribution and the school, the drawing technique, and the provenance where he purchased them. They are not always exact as we have been able to note: indeed Collin had attributed the monogram DB (L.729) to de Boissieu in one of his annotations written on the back of his drawing by Jan Brueghel the Elder, today located in Rotterdam (Rotterdam, Boijmans-Van Beuningen inv. N.127). This hypothesis had been taken up, wrongly, by the editor of the notice of this monogram in the Supplement of 1956.

Drawings from this collection can be found today in the Louvre Museum (inv. RF 38455 - Federico Zuccaro but attributed by P. Collin to « *Taddéo Zuccherò (Roman School), Taddeo Zuccherò was born in St Agnolo in Vado, in the duchy of Urbino, in 1529. He was a pupil of his father Ottavino Zuccherò, and surpassed him, he perfected himself in Rome, in the various stays that he made there, and was much employed. Pen, wash and heightened with white. Collection of P. f. Collin elder* »); at the Fabre Museum in Montpellier (inv. 870.1.180 - Ercole Procaccini, probably part of no 17 from the 1832 auction); at the Museum of Grenoble (inv. MG D 908 as Salvator Rosa and similarly attributed by P. Collin « *Salvator Rosa. The two soldiers who are the subject of this Study are found in the great Battle of the Salvator which is at the Museum. Bought to Barni* », Probably part of No. 21 of the 1832 auction); at the Museum of Fine Arts and Archeology of Besançon (inv. D.1499 as Anonymous but attributed by P. Collin to « *(Ecole bolonaise), Carrache (Annibale Carracci), painter and engraver, born in Bologna in 1560, died in Rome in 1609. Study or fragment of Landscape. Collection of P. Collin* », probably part of no 4, 5 or 18 of the 1832 auction; inv. 1484 as Anonymous but attributed by P. Collin to « *A. Carracci* », probably part of No. 4, 5 or 18 of the 1832 auction; in the British Museum (inv. 2000.3.25.1 as Francesco Menzocchi but attributed by P. Collin to « *Daniel de Volterra (Daniel Ricciarelli), Painter and Sculptor, died in Rome in 1566. (Florentine school) Maumejan sale. Bought to Barni* », possibly part of No. 15 of the 1832 auction). His initials can still be seen alone on the front (sale 2004, January 21, New York, Sotheby's, no 8 - Lelio Orsi).

An auction sale was organized in 1832, February 20-21, in Paris, with the expert Mr. Paillet and with 68 lots of framed and sheet drawings (Lugt Rép. 12880).

