

## ATTRIBUTED TO VINCENZO DE' ROSSI

(Fiesole 1525 - 1587 Florence)

### **Study after Michelangelo's David**

Pen and brown ink on vegetal paper

40 x 16 cm

Bears an inscription lower right « *Baccio Bandi...* »

Bears the inscription written by Sagredo on the mount « *S.F. n°73* » or Scuola Fiorentina n° 73

### **Provenance:**

Formerly in Zaccaria Sagredo's collection (L. 2103a);

Private collection, France

This study depicts Michelangelo's David (fig.1) seen from behind, masterpiece of Italian Renaissance sculpture, created from 1501 to 1504. With a height of 5.17 meters, the David was the first colossal marble statue made in the early modern period following classical antiquity, a precedent for the 16th century and beyond. David was originally commissioned as one of a series of statues of twelve prophets to be positioned along the roofline of the east end of Florence Cathedral (Duomo di Firenze), but was instead placed in the public square in front of the Palazzo della Signoria, the seat of civic government in Florence, where it was unveiled on 8 September 1504. Michelangelo did without flat chisels in his sculpturing, and brought his pieces to the state of *non finito* almost entirely with toothed chisels. The twist of his body in *contrapposto*, standing with most of its weight on his right foot and the other leg forward, effectively conveys to the viewer a sense of potential energy, the feeling that he is about to move. The statue is a Renaissance interpretation of a common ancient Greek theme of the standing heroic male nude. Michelangelo's David has become one of the most recognized works of Renaissance sculpture; a symbol of strength and youthful beauty. The colossal size of the statue alone impressed Michelangelo's contemporaries. Vasari described it as « *certainly a miracle that Michelangelo was able to raise up one who had died* », and then listed all of the largest and most grand of the ancient statues that he had ever seen, concluding that Michelangelo's work surpassed « *all ancient and modern statues, whether Greek or Latin, that have ever existed.* »

Immediately famous, Michelangelo's David attracted all the master's contemporaries, who drew it as they studied the ancient sculptures. Thus, drawings by Raphael and Bartolomeo Passarotti are known.

Raphael arrived in Florence in 1504 at the age of 21 and eagerly studied the works of two living giants, Leonardo and Michelangelo. The latter's masterpiece, David, had just been placed outside the Palazzo Vecchio and it is thought that Raphael may have had the chance to view it from the rear side prior to its final placement. Regardless, some wonder why Raphael in the closest extant drawing after the sculpture (Fig.2) copied it from the rear: Raphael, *David after Michelangelo*, 1505 - 1508, pen and brown ink, British Museum London. Michelangelo completed his statue of David in 1504. It became immediately famous, as it has remained ever since, and the young Raphael drew it from several angles. Raphael's intention was not to render any kind of accurate reproduction, but to assimilate this new work to his own purposes: he modified the proportions of the head and the hands and altered the pose so as to give more flowing elegance to the line.

In two other sketches by Raphael based on David he looks out over his shoulder with his active arm bent: Raphael, *Figure study after the statue of David*, circa 1505-08, pen and brown ink, British Museum (Fig.3).

Bartolomeo Passarotti was also interested in Michelangelo's David: Bartolomeo Passarotti or attributed to or Studio of, *Study of a male nude after Michelangelo's David*, pen and brown ink over black chalk, 24,2 x 14,4 cm, Collections : Jabach, Everhard - Cabinet du Roi, INV 35435, Louvre Museum Paris (Fig.4).

It would not be surprising for a young sculptor like Vincenzo de' Rossi to also draw the David.

Vincenzo de' Rossi, as noted here, adapted Michelangelo's David for his own purposes. Without reducing the monumental size of the hands, he eliminated the strap on his back.

The artist demonstrates here his great aptitude for drawing...and sculpture. For Vincenzo de' Rossi, the two arts are linked because he thinks of drawing in terms of sculptural relief. This is evidenced by the chiaroscuro of his drawings, often based on fine hatching, identical to those of a sculpture.

In Vincenzo de Rossi's drawing, a particular attention has been given to the musculature of the back. Rossi had learned all of his skills in draughtsmanship from Bandinelli and their styles thus share a number of common features: incisive contours along with a uniform and abundant use of cross-hatching which reveals a sculptor's hand. But Walter Vitzthum drew attention to factors that distinguish Rossi's drawings from those of his master. His strokes of the pen are more curvilinear, and lack the abruptness characteristic of Bandinelli. Indeed in our study, Rossi's hand is less energetic and more controlled. The drawing in question conforms perfectly to Vitzthum's analysis of Rossi's maniera.

Drawings by Vincenzo de' Rossi are comparable to our study of Michelangelo's David, for example: *Preparatory sketch for Hercules and the Lion*, Venice, Accademia (Fig. 5) and a *Life Study*, Private collection, Italy (Fig.6).

The technique employed in this *Study after Michelangelo's David* compares particularly well with that of the drawings above. Short, sharp strokes indicate the musculature of the back. These give way to longer, regular strokes that convey broad areas of shade and curve slightly to imply roundness of form. Moreover, in each case the feet are rapidly summarized in a manner that is identical.

The attribution of this Study after Michelangelo to Rossi is confirmed upon comparison with the *modello* in the Louvre: *Episodes of the life of Hercules: the Labors of Hercules*, black chalk, pen and brown ink, brown wash, 35 x 45 cm, bears an inscription lower right « Vincenzo de ' Rossi » on the mount (Mariette), Collections : Mariette, Pierre-Jean - Saint-Morys, INV 1573, Louvre Museum Paris (Fig.7).

Rossi was mentored by Baccio Bandinelli.

In 1546, considering his apprenticeship completed, he left for Rome where he received his first commission in 1547 for a statue of « *St. Joseph with Christ as a Child* », placed in a chapel of the Pantheon in Rome, at a request from the Pontifical Academy of Fine Arts and letters from virtuosos to the Pantheon, an artists' society similar to the Accademia di San Luca.

Another work from his Roman period is the *Bust of Uberto Strozzi* in the Basilica of Minerva (1553). Many of Rossi's works historically were incorrectly attributed to Michelangelo, such as *Dying Adonis*.

After Bandinelli's death, Vincenzo de Rossi returned to Rome to continue his career as a sculptor.

But he missed Florence and he asked Duke Cosimo I de' Medici to kindly allow him to return to Florence and complete Bandinelli's work in the *room of the Five senses*. Cosimo I de Medici knew the talent of Vincenzo de Rossi and offered to return to Florence in 1561 and offered him the use of a workshop at the Opera of Santa Maria del Fiore where the sculptures of the Duomo were made. In this same workshop there were also unfinished sculptures by Bandinelli.

His main works are kept at the Palazzo Vecchio, the Boboli Gardens, the Bargello Palace and in front of the Villa di Poggio Imperiale. Some of his most famous works were his sculptures of the *Twelve Labors of Hercules*, of which he only completed seven. Six of these sculptures are located in at the Palazzo Vecchio. *The seventh labour, Hercules with Atlas*, is located at the Villa di Poggio Imperiale.

Sculptors' drawing are rare, and this is particularly the case with Vincenzo de' Rossi.

This drawing bears on the mount the inscription « *S.F. n°73* », attesting to the prestigious provenance of Zaccaria Sagredo (Venice 1653 - 1729), Venetian collector.

In 1980, William R. Rearick meticulously described a drawn portrait attributed to Carlo Carletti, held at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, mentioning other drawings by the same artist with inventory numbers preceded by the initials "C.C." or "*Carletto C.*," followed by numbers 48 to 53. This author was, in fact, the first to clearly designate these numbers as belonging to the Sagredo inventory and precisely indicated that the provenance « *Borghese* » suggested by Marignane for this type of numbering, was probably erroneous. Since then, more and more drawing enthusiasts, curators, and collectors have unequivocally accepted that the annotations mentioned above do not come from the « *Borghese* » family or from Padre Resta, but indeed from Zaccaria Sagredo (1653-1729), a renowned Venetian collector.

Several studies on the Sagredo collection now help us outline its reconstruction. According to W.R. Rearick, it was Doge Nicolò Sagredo (1606-1676) who initiated the family collection, with the collection's origins dating back to the mid-17th century. Rearick hypothesizes that Nicolò Sagredo acquired the bulk of the Dal Ponte family's drawing collection in 1651, including the Bassano workshop stock<sup>1</sup>. This collection passed after the doge's death in 1676 into the hands of his brother, Stefano Sagredo (1620-1685), and then to his son, Zaccaria Sagredo. Rearick speculates that it was the latter who enriched the family collection with drawings from the Caliarì stock shortly after 1681.

It is also assumed that Peter Lely (1618-1680) may have purchased some sheets from Nicolò Sagredo or his son, Stefano Sagredo, but we have no further information on this matter (sale 1993, July 2, Monaco, Christie's, p. 6: "Italian drawings from an album « *Sagredo-Borghese* » from the collection of a French amateur,"<sup>2</sup>).

The oldest inventory of the Sagredo collection only mentions paintings and is undated, but it is known to have been drawn up between 1685 and 1698 (see Mazza 2004). Zaccaria Sagredo regularly added to the family's drawing collection. At the time, one of the most prestigious collections of valuable drawings internationally belonged to Bartolomeo Bonfiglioli, heir of Silvestro Bonfiglioli († 1696) from Bologna. Jonathan Richard the Elder (1665-1745) and his son, Jonathan Richardson the Younger (1694-1771), visited the Bonfiglioli palace in Bologna during their stay in Italy.

It was towards the end of 1727, or the beginning of 1728, that Zaccaria Sagredo succeeded in buying the entire collection as a whole, for the sum of 3,000 sequins.

A volume of drawings from the School of Verona appears to have been sold in 1743 to an unknown buyer. That same year, Algarotti, the intermediary responsible for purchasing works in Italy on behalf of the Elector of Saxony, wrote in July 1743 to Count Heinrich von Brühl (1700-1763), suggesting the purchase of the collection as a whole. The previous month, Algarotti had already compiled a list of drawings from the collection, either in volumes or framed and hung. It numbered 4,415 drawings distributed in 50 volumes, and approximately 100 framed drawings. Alice Binion first reproduced this list, titled *Catalogo de libri di Disegni che si trovano nello Studio della Casa Sagredo*, based on the manuscript of Francesco Algarotti preserved in the papers of Count Brühl in Dresden<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> W.R. Rearick, *Il disegno veneziano del Cinquecento*, Milan 2001, s.v. Sagredo, p. 229, note 259

<sup>2</sup> W. R. Rearick, 'More Venetian Drawings from the Sagredo Collection', *Master Drawings*, XXXIII, 1995, 2, pp. 132-143; p. 133, note 5

<sup>3</sup> A. Binion, 'Algarotti's Sagredo Inventory', *Master Drawings*, XXI, 1983, 4, pp. 392-296.

Comparison between the 1743 list and the one from February 1740<sup>4</sup> (Gottardo 2005, p. 251, doc. 2) reveals that seven volumes were missing in 1743 and that drawings had already been taken from other volumes<sup>5</sup>.

Albums of drawings containing the same type of annotations also exist but do not seem to be described in Gherardo Sagredo's inventory.

Ultimately, Cecilia Sagredo did not sell the collection as a whole to the Elector of Saxony in Dresden, and upon her death, the works passed to her two daughters, Catarina Barbarigo and Marina Sagredo Pisani († 1774), and then to the two nieces of the latter, Contarina and Cecelia Barbarigo.

A first inventory of the drawings in volumes, undated, is kept in the archives of Venice<sup>6</sup> (. This document was written before 1762 because it lists the volumes of drawings sold that year to Consul Joseph Smith (1682-1770) and his successor, Consul John Udny (1727-1800). It was probably for these upcoming sales that the heirs turned to the painter Pietro Longhi, who estimated the volumes of drawings on September 14, 1762. According to a note at the bottom of the second document, it was this set of drawings that was sold on October 20, 1762, to Udny.

We do not exactly know what was bought on that day. The four volumes of Castiglione drawings belonging to Smith were sold as a single lot to King George III and are now in the Royal Library at Windsor. A list from September 27, 1762, is kept in the archives of the Correr library. It details the proposed amounts and the prices actually paid by Udny for a group of loose leaf drawings and drawings in volume<sup>7</sup>. The payment record from November 18, 1762, is more specific. The front covers of these volumes bear the Sagredo coat of arms, as mentioned in the sales catalog in London of drawings from four volumes of the Sagredo collection (sale 1883, June 15, London, Christie's, Manson & Woods, Catalogue of the Sunderland Collection of Drawings by Old Masters; comprising Works of the Italian, Flemish, and German Masters, formed originally by the Bonfiglio Family, of Bologna..., p. 3 [Lugt Rép. 43147]).

We still lack some information about the year corresponding to the purchase of drawings from the Sagredo collection by Jacopo Durazzo (1717-1794) in Genoa and two volumes of drawings by Palma the Younger by Count Carrara, now preserved at the Accademia di Carrara in Bergamo (mentioned in the notice of sale 1993, July 2, Monaco, Christie's, p. 6: "Italian drawings from an album « *Sagredo-Borghese* » from the collection of a French amateur"). In both cases, the inscriptions found on the drawings such as « aqueta, » « lapis, » and « paruta » have led several authors to attribute them to Sagredo, but Ballarin remains cautious about this identification.

At present, no volume of drawings has reached us in its original state. However, based on archival documents, we can deduce certain rules that governed their organization. Thus, the majority of volumes contain drawings from different hands in a somewhat inconsistent arrangement, which escapes classification by schools. Some volumes group drawings by subject (marines, animals, botany), while in others, there may be drawings by a single artist.

Inside these volumes, the drawings were fixed to the sheets by small tabs. Placed at the four corners and on the back of the drawing, they were glued directly onto the sheet. The presence of these tabs, often roughly cut from paper as thick as that of the volumes, makes the provenance of these drawings easily recognizable. The sheets of each volume measure approximately 70 x 42 cm, and one or more drawings are mounted on each.

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<sup>4</sup> K. Gottardo, 'Il Gusto collezionistico di un eccentrico personaggio Veneziano. La raccolta di disegni di "Zotto" Sagredo', dans B. Aikema, R. Lauber, M. Seibel (dir.), *Il collezionismo a Venezia e nel Veneto ai tempi della Serenissima*, Venise 2005, pp. 239-258; p. 251, doc. 2

<sup>5</sup> Idem, p. 243

<sup>6</sup> Idem, pp. 253-254, doc. 7

<sup>7</sup> idem p. 251, doc. 4

Often, there are inscriptions in pen on the drawings or on their mounts. These refer to the school ("SO," "SV," etc.), the name of the artist ("Di Paolo"), or the name of their workshop ("B.B" or Bottega dei Bassano), followed by a number. The graphical variations observed between them suggest that they are probably by different hands. However, a tighter handwriting is often visible on the front of the drawings and allows attributions that are still considered, today, as well-founded in most cases.

The number of abbreviations used by Sagredo is significant and goes well beyond the single inscription reproduced by Lugt. In general, these are abbreviations indicating a school, but several of them also represent the initials of an artist. A first list was published by Hubert de Marignane<sup>8</sup>, but the one we present here is more complete and offers the acronyms inventoried so far, without claiming to be exhaustive. The numbers indicated following refer to numbers listed to this day. We provide only two numbers here, the smallest and the largest: "B." or perhaps Borgognone (Jacques Courtois), listed as no. 21 and no. 30; "B.B" or Bottega dei Bassano [Bassano Workshop or Bassanese], no. 1 to no. 97; "C.C." or Carletto Caliari no. 11 to no. 48; "di Paolo" [Caliari, also known as Veronese], no. 80 and no. 98; "D.G.", no. 19; "D.P." or Disegni [di] Paolo or Di [Da] Paolo [Veronese] no. 12 to no. 106; "D.S.", no. 11 and no. 119; "D.T." or Disegni [di] Tiziano, no. 5; "F" or Francese (?), Farinati (?), no. 10 and no. 17; "G.P." or Giacomo [Gruppo ?] Palma no. 14 to no. 343; "I.T." or Jacopo Tintoretto, no. 3 to no. 39; "M.F." or Maestro Fiorentino, no. 3 to no. 88; "O" or Oltramontano (Transalpine); "P" or Paolo Veronese, no. 25 to no. 84; "P.B." or il Ponte di Bassano (?), no. 100; "P.G." or Prete Genovese (Bernardo Strozzi), no. 1 to no. 81; "P.O." or Paesaggio Olandese, no. 3 to no. 176; "S.B." or Scuola Bolognese, no. 19 to no. 128; "S.F." or Scuola Fiorentina, no. 1 to no. 232; "S.G." or Scuola del [Palma] Giovane, no. 23 to no. 77; "S.L." or Scuola Lombardo, no. 40 to no. 83; "S.M." or Scuola Milanese, without number; "S.O." or Scuola Oltramontana (Transalpine), without number; "S.P." or Scuola Piemontese, no. 10 to no. 67; "S.R." or Scuola Romano, no. 9 to no. 201; "S.T." or Scuola di Tiziano, no. 3 to no. 14; "S.V." or Scuola Veneta or Veneziana, no. 3 to no. 194; "T." or Tiziano, no. 1 to no. 6.

This list of abbreviations allows us to recognize the origin of drawings in the Sagredo collection.

Once the drawings were integrated into the volumes, the inscriptions on the back of some of them were no longer visible, suggesting that their classification already existed before their incorporation into volumes, which simplified both identification and tracking. Indeed, the numbering following the initials or the full name of the artists indicated the sequence of the drawings on each sheet inside each volume. This is usually a double numbering: the one affixed to the front of the mount is often lower than the one on the back of the drawing, which suggests that several drawings may have been removed from the volumes. We are not yet able to reconstruct today the original order and recreate a link with the drawings thus removed. Note that several of them are currently in public collections. The second numbering can also argue in favor of a reworking or reclassification of the drawings.

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Zaccaria Sagredo was not only a collector of drawings but also of prints.

This drawing is an important addition to the artist's corpus of drawings.

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<sup>8</sup> Monte Carlo 1966 : Catalogue de l'exposition de dessins italiens du XVe au XVIIIe siècle de la collection H. de Marignane, cat. de G.A. Cavaggioli, Monte Carlo, Palais des Congrès, 1966; p. 13



Michelangelo - David (Fig.1)



Raphael - Study after Michelangelo's David (Fig.2)



Raphael - *Studies after Michelangelo's David* (Fig.3)



Bartolomeo Passarotti - *Study after Michelangelo's David* (Fig.4)



Vincenzo de' Rossi - *Preparatory sketch for Hercules and the Lion* (Fig.5).



Vincenzo de' Rossi - *Life Study* (Fig.6)



Vincenzo de' Rossi - *The Labors of Hercules* (Fig.7)