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Paolo Farinati

The Virgin and Child with Saints Catherine of Alexandria and John the Baptist, with Two Donors Below

PAOLO FARINATI
(Verona 1524 – 1606 Verona)

THE VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH SAINTS CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA AND JOHN THE BAPTIST, WITH TWO DONORS BELOW

Pen and brown ink and brown wash and oil, over traces of an underdrawing in black chalk, on paper laid down on panel and varnished.
46.6 × 34.7 cm; 18 3/8 × 13 5/8 in.

Inscribed *Paolo Veronese* twice on the reverse.
Two red wax seals, each with the initials HA, on the reverse.

Provenance

In the collection of Kurt Bauch (1897 – 1975), Freiburg im Breisgau;
Thence by descent until sold ('Property from the Collection of the Late Professor Kurt Bauch, Freiburg im Breisgau'), London, Sotheby's, 8 July 1998, lot 32.



One of the most important artists working in Verona in the 16th century, Paolo Farinati was active as a painter, printmaker, architect and sculptor. He was the son and pupil of a painter and, according to Giorgio Vasari, also studied with Niccolò Giolfino. Although few documents survive for his life, a chronology of his long career of some fifty years is relatively simple to establish, since many of his surviving paintings are dated and also because, from 1573 until his death in 1606, Farinati recorded his commissions in an account book that survives today. The artist is documented in Verona from 1545 onwards, and one of his first known works is an altarpiece of *Saint Martin and the Beggar* of 1552, commissioned by Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga for the cathedral in Mantua. (At the same time, the Cardinal also commissioned paintings for the cathedral from a number of other leading painters from Verona, including Paolo Veronese, Domenico Brusasorci and Battista Agnolo del Moro.) Between 1556 and 1558 Farinati worked at the church of Santa Maria in Organo in Verona, for which he painted four large canvases that were singled out for praise by Vasari. This commission, along with that for altarpiece in the Duomo in Mantua, served to establish Farinati's reputation.

Farinati was active not only as a painter but occasionally as an engraver, architect and sculptor and continued to work in and around his native city for most of the rest of his career. Frescoes in the Cappella Marogna in the church of San Paolo, painted in 1566, show the influence of Veronese, whose altarpiece in the church was flanked by Farinati's murals. In the early 1570s Farinati painted a cycle of frescoes of mythological and allegorical subjects in the Palazzo Giuliari in Verona, and soon afterwards embarked on an important series of paintings and frescoes for the church of Santi Nazaro e Celso in the same city. His style remained fairly constant throughout his mature career, which was largely spent painting works for churches in Verona, as well as frescoes for villas and palaces in the city and the surrounding countryside. He painted at least fifteen facade decorations for palaces in Verona, although almost all of these have been destroyed by the effects of exposure and pollution. By the last quarter of the 16th century Farinati was firmly established as the leading artist in Verona, heading a large and active workshop whose members included his sons Orazio and Giambattista.

It is as a draughtsman that Paolo Farinati is best known today. He was fairly prolific, and around five hundred drawings by the artist survive, which are typically executed in pen and brown wash on coloured paper, and often enlivened with a liberal use of white heightening. Farinati kept many of his drawings in albums, and his oeuvre includes numerous studies for altarpieces, easel pictures and fresco decorations, as well as a handful of designs for prints and architectural projects. Most of his drawings are highly finished, and many have the appearance of having been executed as autonomous works of art. Many of his finished drawings were, indeed, acquired by local collectors. As Carlo Ridolfi noted of Farinati, 'his drawings are greatly admired,

and are collected by connoisseurs...His drawings, executed on tinted paper with touches of watercolour and white heightening, were so numerous that it would be impossible to recount their subjects, and many more exist in prints, of which a good number have been collected by amateurs [dilettati], and brought to various places, since Farinati in this matter [ie. his draughtsmanship] was appreciated for his boldness and mastery.'[1] Farinati's drawings were also known to have been greatly admired by fellow artists, including Giorgio Vasari and Annibale Carracci – who once noted that 'Of this Farinato I saw a huge drawing made with wash of marvellous beauty as I have never seen before on paper'[2] – as well as Rubens, who owned several of his drawings. One of the largest extant collections of drawings by Paolo Farinati is today in the Louvre, while another significant group, numbering around fifty sheets, is in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle.

As Diana Gisolfi has noted, 'Drawings form a significant part of Farinati's oeuvre, especially his numerous chiaroscuro drawings on tinted paper, which were often used as modelli.'[3] The present sheet is likely to be a study for the type of devotional easel picture, sometimes painted on copper or slate, that Farinati produced for private patrons throughout his career. An interesting feature is the contrast between the highly finished nature of the main part of the composition and the more summary treatment of the donor figures at the bottom of the sheet. Although this large drawing cannot be related to any surviving work by Farinati, some compositional similarities may be noted with a late altarpiece of *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine*, signed and dated 1603, in the Museo del Castelvecchio in Verona[4]. Among stylistically comparable drawings by Farinati are a *Virgin and Child with Angels* formerly in the Lever collection in Port Sunlight[5] and a large drawing of *The Annunciation* which appeared at auction in 2001[6].

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[1] 'si fa molto stima de suoi disegni, che vengono raccolti dagli studiosi...I disegni da lui fatti furono per così due infiniti in carte tinte tocchi d'acquarelli e lumi di biacca, che sarebbe impossibile il raccontarne le inventioni, e molti ancora se ne veggono in istampa, de' quali n'è stato raccolto gran numero da'dilettati, e trasportati in varie parti, essedo il Farinato in questo particolare molto piaciuto a una certa fierezza, e maestria da lui posseduta.'; Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell'arte* (Venice, 1648), ed. Detlev Freiherr von Hadeln (Berlin, 1924), vol. II, p. 132.

[2] Quoted in translation in Eveline Baseggio Omiccioli, 'Paolo Farinati's Design for the Banner of the Confraternity of the Artillerymen in Verona', *Master Drawings* (Autumn 2012), p. 65.

[3] Diana Gisolfi, 'Farinati [Farinato], Paolo', in Jane Turner, ed., *The Dictionary of Art*, vol. 10 (London, 1996), pp. 805–806.

[4] Inv. 862; Lionello Puppi, ed., *Paolo Farinati: Giornale (1573-1606)* (Florence, 1968), fig. 7; Terence Mullaly, 'Paolo Farinati', in Licisco Magagnato, ed., *Cinquant'anni di Pittura Veronese 1580-1630*, exhibition catalogue (Verona, 1974), p. 93, no. 63, fig. 182.

[5] A photograph of this small drawing, which measured 9 x 11 in., is in the Witt Collection at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

[6] Anonymous sale, Sotheby's, New York, 23 January 2001, lot 178 (unsold). The dimensions of the sheet are 547 x 407 mm.

A previous owner of this oil sketch was the German art historian Kurt Bauch (1897-1975), who developed a particular specialization in the work of Rembrandt.

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