

AUCKLAND CITY ART GALLERY

# QUARTERLY

Number Twenty-two



ANDREA SACCHI

Vision of *Saint Romuald*

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## QUARTERLY

NUMBER TWENTY-TWO — 1962

### EDITORIAL

In this issue we have described some more Italian works in the collection. The most notable is the Furini, for which we are indebted once more to the generosity of Mr N. B. Spencer.

### STAFF

Mr L. C. Lloyd, the Gallery's conservator, has departed on a visit to Europe where he is to attend in London a British Council Course on the Conservation of Works of Art. Besides this he will be visiting other countries. A Gulbenkian Trust grant administered by the Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand has made this visit possible.

ANDREA SACCHI (att.) (1599-1661) Roman School  
THE VISION OF ST ROMUALD

Oil on Canvas 63.5 x 43.7 cm

Purchased 1961

This painting was acquired from a New Zealand private collection. By family inheritance it had come from Sir Richard Westmacott, the well known nineteenth century sculptor, or his son, also a sculptor. Both had studied in Rome and the painting was purchased there either in *c.* 1793 or *c.* 1826.

The subject and composition are best known from the large painting by Sacchi in the Vatican Gallery. There are several reasons why the Auckland sketch might be Sacchi's *modello* for the larger work. There are certain differences in the composition which are unlikely to have been made by a copyist: the handling of the paint, certainly, is too free for it to have been copied: the size of the

canvas is very close to the scale Sacchi seems to have used for his sketches — *vide* Graves *Art Sales* and the oil sketch by him (Zeri, *Ld Galleria Pallivicini in Rome* Pl. 445). The brush work in the Auckland work is virtually identical with the Pallivicini sketch.

Expert opinion, based on photographs only, has been favourable, Professor Wittkower being particularly impressed by the detail reproduced here.

However, the alternatives are that it could be a workshop sketch by an assistant or an entirely independent sketch. But the evidence above militates against the latter suggestion.

Andrea Sacchi was the leader of Baroque



SACCHI *Detail*



JACQUES CALLOT 1592-1635 French  
THE TEMPTATION OF SAINT ANTHONY  
Etching on copper 310 x 460 mm  
Purchased 1957

This, the second *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, was Callot's last large plate; he first etched the subject in Florence in 1617 and had returned to it in 1634 after his father's death and the invasion of Lorraine, and during his painful illness.

This later plate is on hard copper, deeply bitten to achieve a 'blackest hell'. It is very different from the first version and is placed by many critics among Callot's best works.

classicism. He was the pupil of Albani, first in Rome and later in Bologna. But in 1621 he returned to Rome for good. His initial influence was Lodovico Carracci. His *Vision of St Romuald* c. 1638 marks his fully individual style.

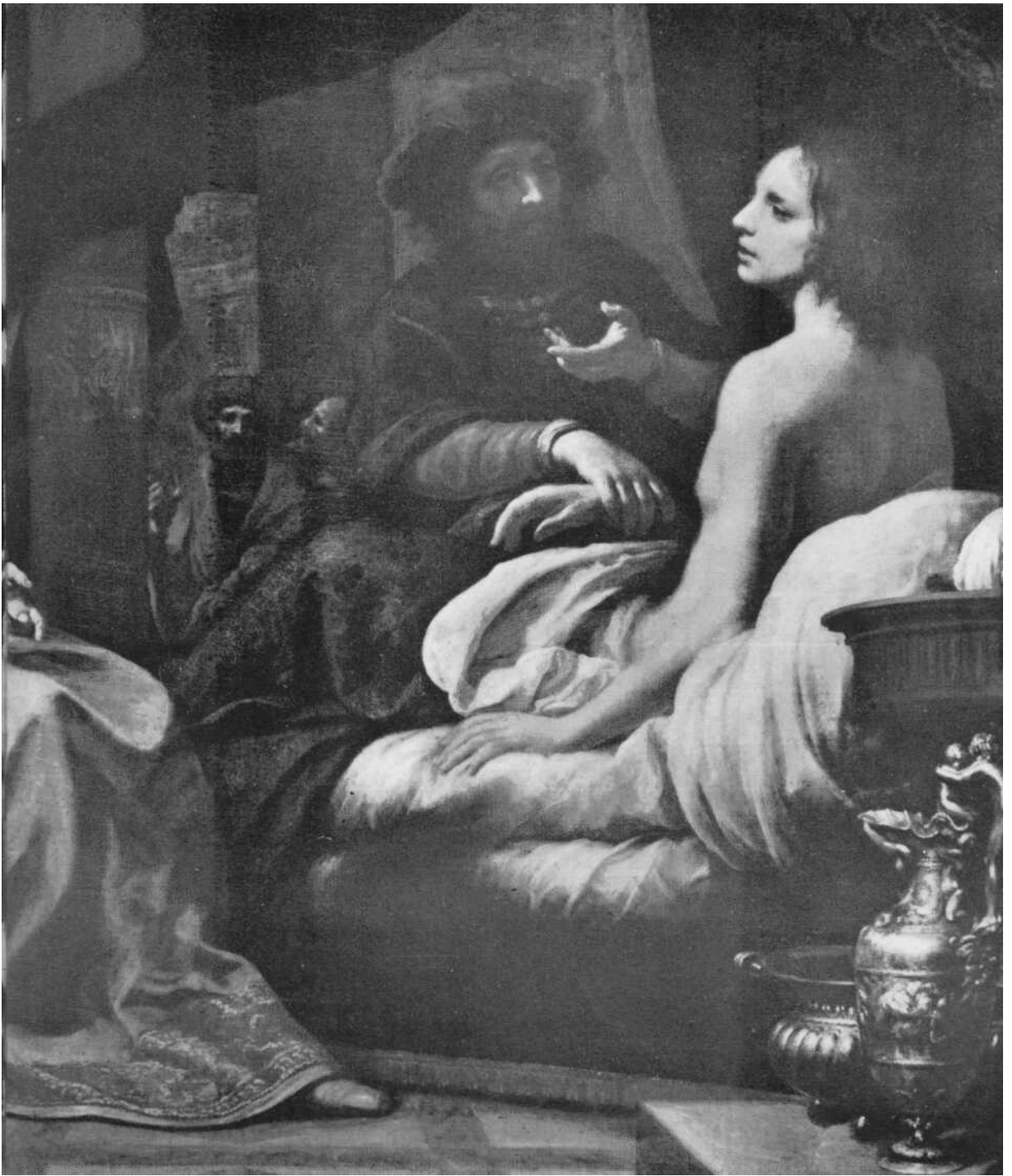
The composition's diablerie, reminiscent of Bosch, mordant humour combined with nightmarish profundity, contrast sharply with the solemn and reticent realism of the small religious series of this period. Callot had always a penchant for the invention of devils; though these, and his felicitous observation of the earthy humour of seventeenth century man, generally remained secondary, if recurring, themes in his work. In the second *Temptation* he has allowed his imagination and humour full licence. As the limitless army of hellish demons hover over the abyss or cavort with musical instruments humorously adapted, they almost obliterate the wretched saint, whose ascetic, terrorised figure is hard to find. When Israel Henriet published this print in Paris in 1635 he thought it necessary to add, with marginal coats of arms and a dedication, Latin verses about the courage of this saint as an inspiring exemplar.

FRANCESCO FURINI 1604-1646 Florentine School  
ANTIOCHUS AND HIS STEPMOTHER STRATONICE  
Oil on Canvas 144.7 x 190.2 cm  
Presented by Mr N. B. Spencer, 1961

This painting was formerly in the collection of the Marquis Antonio Lottaringhi Delia Stufa, Florence. First on public view in 1922 at the important exhibition in the Pitti Palace: *Mostra della Pittura Italiana del Seicento e Settecento* it was published in the catalogue by Ojetti, Dami and Tarchiani as Furini (rep, 133). Some years after it was bought by Charles Loeser the well known collector. It was disposed of after his death and purchased in Florence for Auckland. It is also listed in Pigler, *Barockthemen* Vol II p.349 under Simone Pignoni; one finds it difficult to reconcile this attribution as Pignoni was a weak late follower of Furini; and the quality of the painting does nothing to support the suggestion.

Furini, who was first the pupil of his father, then of Passignano, Bilivert and Roselli, went to Rome, where he sought out Giovanni da San Giovanni, who had been a fellow pupil in the Roselli workshop. In the year of Furini's return to Florence, he had worked with Giovanni on a *Thetis* for the Casino Rospigliosi, the house of Cardinal Bentivoglio. Nothing is known however of Furini's Roman work. In 1623, he was back in Florence as a master of the Academy. Some years later he made a visit to Venice with two of his assistants, which indicates that he had achieved some success by this time. The particular reason for this visit was a commission from a Venetian perfume manufacturer to paint a companion painting: a *Thetis* for a *Rape of Europa* by Guido Reni. It is fairly clear therefore that Reni was a consistent influence on the artist at this time. About 1630 he was back in Florence and in the ten years that followed he produced his finest work. He was ordained as a priest in 1633 and, apart from a visit to Rome in 1646, he remained in Flor-





ence. On his return from Rome in 1646 he contracted a fever from which he died.

With the aid of recent literature (Elena Toesca: *Furini* 1950, and W. Stechow: 'Antiochus and Faire Stratonice', *Art Bulletin* Dec. 1945 p.221ff) it is possible to place the Auckland painting fairly exactly within the Furini oeuvre. Furini had returned from working in Rome to Florence in 1623. A few years later — and before 1630 — he made his six months visit to Venice. In 1616 a play: *La Stratonica*, by Angelita Scaramuccia was published, and presumably still reasonably well-known seven or eight years later; furthermore Pigler (*op. cit.*) records a Veronese of this subject, formerly in the Fonclaco dei Tedeschi, Venice, and now only known through an engraving by Noel Cochin. Presumably the Veronese was inspired by Matteo Bandello's *Novelle* (1st edition 1554) in which appeared the story of Stratonice, based on an earlier version by Petrarch, and others by Appian and Bruni after the original account in Plutarch's *Life of Demetrius*. The story, briefly, is as follows. Antiochus, son of King Seleucus, is dying for love of his young stepmother, Stratonice; the reason for his illness is not known to the king, but the physician, Erasistratus, discovers it by feeling the prince's pulse as Stratonice enters or leaves the room. The physician informs the king, who, in order to save his son's life, cedes his wife. As Stechow points out (*op. cit.*) 'the iconography of the subject reflects, and occasionally even depends upon, its various concurrencies in literature and on the stage'. But one of the important pictorial changes made from Pietro da Cortona (fresco, Pitti Palace, Sala di Venere, 1641-2) onwards is the telescoping of the action: ie the physician and the king are shown beside the sick-bed, simultaneously making their actions of discovery and cession. But it will be noticed that Furini has preserved the literary and dramatic action. The physician feels the prince's pulse and indicates Stratonice as the cause; in the background the king waits, with an attendant. It would seem therefore that Furini fol-

lowed reasonably closely a stage setting. Although the Cochin engraving after Veronese is not known to us, Furini appears to have drawn in other ways on this artist: the bed set on a diagonal and forefronted with the ewer and basin repeats a similar arrangement in Veronese's *Judith* (Caen) where a shield is placed before the bed. The composition in general, with the two columns, also echoes Veronese. However, Stratonice's garments and their colour reveal the more deep-rooted influence of Guido Reni; and the figure of Antiochus, the young prince, is entirely characteristic of Furini, initially developed again from Guido Reni. Furini's painting *Faith* (Pitti, Florence) dated by Wittkower (*Art in Italy — 1600-1750*, pi. 131 b) c. 1635 shows Furini's fully developed style in a similar figure.

The Auckland work therefore represents Furini's brief contact with Venice — others being perhaps the two paintings of the Allegory of the House of the Medici (Toesco, pis. 22, 23) where again one finds, in the left hand panel, a suit of armour against a curtain like that in the Caen Veronese.

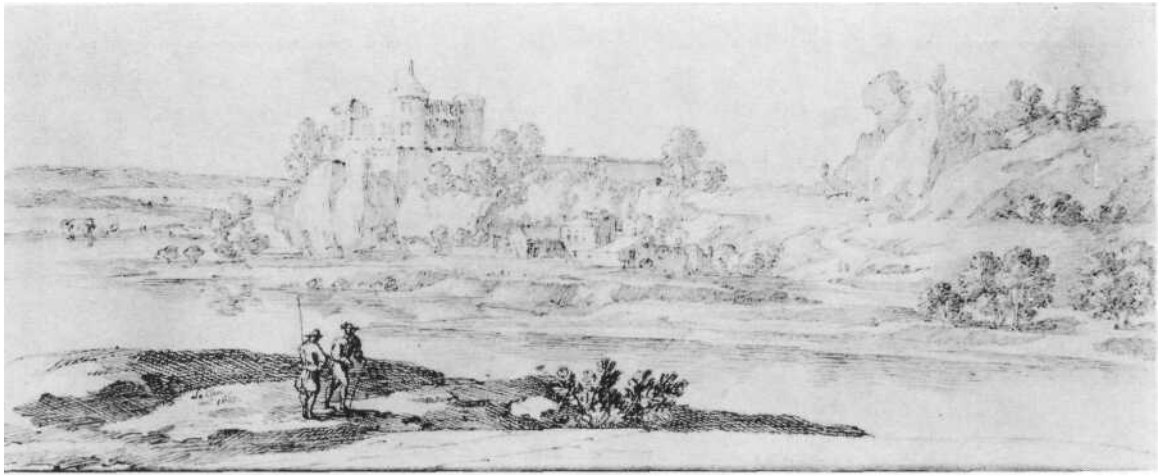
Furini of course is best known for his female nudes, *Ila and the Nymphs* (Pitti) being the *chef d'oeuvre* in this vein.

SEBASTIAN LE, CLERC 1637-1714 French  
LANDSCAPE WITH A CASTLE

Pen and brown ink 101 x 235 mm

The Mackelvie Collection

Sebastian Le Clerc was born in Metz in Lorraine, the son of the goldsmith Laurent Le Clerc, who taught him drawing and engraving. He came to Paris where he occupied himself with the study of geometry and perspective. On the advice of Le Brun he took up engraving and soon gained a considerable reputation in the medium. Few artists have produced as much as Le Clerc in engraving; the catalogue of his work that Jombert compiled has nearly 3400 items (a great part of which, of course, consists of vignettes, titles, frontispieces and other ornaments). Le Clerc treats



all sorts of composition. His style, of a considerable exactness, is perhaps a little dry; he might also be accused of being, in certain pieces, too much influenced by Callot. Le Clerc was made academician in 1672 and became professor of perspective at the Academy; on the death of Claude Mellan he succeeded him as engraver to the king.

Our drawing — of a high castle by a river, with two figures on the nearer bank — is undoubtedly a study for an etching; it has been inscribed by a later hand: *La Clerc (sic) invt. 1672, in grey ink.*

STEFANO DELLA BELLA 1610-1664 Italian

VIEW OF THE CASTLE OF SANT'ANGELO

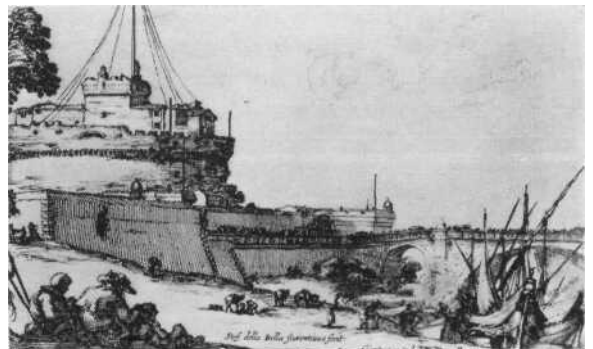
Etching 104 x 156 mm

Presented by Dr W. S. Auburn, 1958

Stefano della Bella, the most individual artist among the followers of Callot — the "Little Etchers" — was born in Florence in 1610. His father and his uncle were sculptors working in the studio of Giovanni Bologna, and Stefano was first trained as a goldsmith. At an early age he showed great skill in copying the etchings of Callot, which were to form the basis of his style for many years. For a short time he studied painting, but soon became settled in a career as draughtsman and engraver. In 1633, Lorenzo de' Medici, brother of the

Grand Duke sent him to Rome where he spent the greater part of the following six years. The style of his work executed in the Roman period is strongly influenced by Callot and the Florentine designers of court festivals, such as Giulio Parigi and Remigio Cantagallina. However, though his general compositions — the poses and the technique — are close to Callot, his drawings lack the peculiar tension which enlivens the master's sketches. They are softer, more decorative, and in some cases show an interest in the descriptive rendering of rather fantastic forms which is more northern than Italian.

This view of the Castle of Sant'Angelo (Hadrian's Tomb) and Sant'Angelo Bridge (V. 818), dates from Della Bella's second Roman visit, in 1649.



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exhibition calendar

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