

Daniel Katz Gallery

ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY



Francesco Fanelli (1577 -)

Saint George and the dragon; and A Turkish Horseman attacked by a lion

the first 23 x 16.5 cm; the second 21.5 x 18.5 cm

Charles I became aware of the somewhat backward nature of contemporary English sculpture during his trip to Paris and Madrid in 1623, and this resulted in his employing three foreign sculptors—Hubert Le Sueur, François Dieussart and Francesco Fanelli. Apparently Fanelli attracted the attention of the King by carving an ivory statuette of Pygmalion, the mythical sculptor of antiquity; he was also the only one of the three sculptors who was able to model and cast small bronzes in the internationally popular tradition of Gianbologna. In 1635 he is recorded as having received sixty pounds for his services from the King on 8th May and a further sum of thirty pounds on 20th November.

These two groups are known in various casts as being by Fanelli. The St. George appears in an inventory drawn up by Abraham van der Doort in about 1640 of the sculpture in the Cabinet Room at Whitehall: "Done by th' /afore-said/ one eyed Italian ffrancisco:item a little S. George on horseback wth a -/dragon by, beeing of brass upon a black -/ ebbone wooden Peddistall". The motive derives from the painting by Raphael in Washington (see National Gallery of Art, Preliminary Catalogue, 1941, p. 165, no. 26) engraved in reverse by Vosterman in 1627, formerly in the collection of the Earl of Pembroke, and then owned by Charles I. Other casts exist, but without gilding: in the collection of the Duke of Portland at Welbeck Abbey, in the Victoria and Albert Museum (A5- 1953), in the collection of the late Sir Leon Bagrit, in the Poldi-Pezzoli Museum, Milan, and in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (54. 315).

The Turk Hunting a Lion broadly derives from paintings by Rubens (see H. Weihrauch, *Europiische Bronzestatuetten*, Braunschweig, 1967, p. 237) and another cast is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (A4-1953).

Fanelli presumably left England for France at the outbreak of Civil War and possibly settled in Paris, to be near his clients-in-exile. It is not known whether he returned to England but in his *Varie Architetture* published in Paris in 1661, he refers to himself as 'Sculptore de Re della Gran Bretagne'; this must refer to Charles II. He still seems to have been alive in 1662 when he is mentioned by Cornelius de Bie (*Het Gulden Cabinet*, Antwerp, 1662, p. 548) and was dead by 1675, when his work was appraised by Sandrart (*Teutsche Akademie*, Nurnberg, 1675, I, p. 350).

