Daniel Katz Gallery

ANTIQUITY TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Francesco Fanelli (1577 - 1641)

Turkish Horseman being Attacked by a Lion

Circa: Second quarter 17th century

Second quarter 17th century
Silver
20.75 x 19.5 cm (8 1/2 x 7 5/8 inches)

Fanelli, a Florentine by birth, had arrived at King Charles I's court in London by 1632 and he remained in the king's employ until at least 1639. That Fanelli was using silver during his stay in England is clear from the existence of a small bust of Charles I's son which uses silver for the face and neck and bronze to complete the portrait. It should be remembered that Fanelli had long been collaborating with silversmiths: for example, in 1619 (during his time in Genoa) Fanelli had made models of figurines for Francesco Carrega to cast in silver as ornaments on a chest for Giacomo Filippo Durazzo - and Fanelli's own sons would later be active as silversmiths in Italy. The inspiration for Fanelli's hunting groups of a Turkish Horseman being Attacked by a Lion and St. George and the Dragon, likely hail from the creative output of Peter Paul Rubens. Other groups of this model by Fanelli are known in both bronze and gilt bronze, showing his versatility as court sculptor.

George Vertue (1684-1756), the English diarist and engraver, recorded in one of his notebooks that Fanelli had worked in silver under Christiaen van Vianen (1600-1667) during the latter's sojourn at Charles I's court 1632-1643, i.e. Van Vianen and Fanelli were both working in London for several years during the 1630s. Vertue's entry of 1717-1718 reads:

Fannelli Statuary to K Charles 1st. several horses & small brass. figures done by him. he was a Disciple of Christian Van Viannen the famous Chaser. at that time in England. who wrought much silver Plate for King Charles

The English origin of the composition itself is also established by Vertue. “A Turk on horseback” is one of ten small equestrian bronzes by Fanelli which George Vertue saw in 1727 at Welbeck Abbey in the collection of his friend and patron Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford.[iv] However, Vertue states that these bronzes had originally belonged to William Cavendishe (1592-1676), 1st Duke of Newcastle, the great-grandfather of Lord Oxford’s wife. Cavendishe was such a favourite of Charles I’s that he was appointed governor to the king’s son in 1638. In all probability, the present group was cast in silver by Fanelli in London under the auspices of Christiaen van Vianen during the latter years of the 1630s.

Provenance

Daniel Katz Ltd, London, where acquired on 31 January, 2006 by;

The H. Rodes Sr. and Patricia Hart Collection, to 2026

Literature:

The dictionary of art, ed. by Jane Turner, Macmillan 1996, and rev. ed. online, www.groveart.com, entry on Christiaen van Vianen by Timothy Schroder.

Oxford dictionary of national biography, ed. by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, 2004, entry on Fanelli by Simon Stock.

The encyclopedia of sculpture, 3 vols., ed. by Antonia Boström, Fitzroy Dearborn 2004, pp. 542-544, entry on Fanelli by Eike Schmidt.