

GIOVANNI BATTISTA NALDINI

(Fiesole, c. 1537 - Florence, 1591)

Fishermen on a river, possibly the Arno, Florence
unidentified collector's mark (verso): L.4181

inscribed in grey pencil (verso): *Naldini*; inscribed in blue ink (verso); *propriété de […]*

black chalk, pen and brown ink, brown wash

275 x 170 mm

Provenance:

Private collection, France

This drawing of fishermen on a river is indicative of the vibrant artistic dialogue of mid-to late 16th century Florence, fostered by Giorgio Vasari and the members of the newly founded Accademia del Disegno. Although the penwork is distinctly Naldini's, the image itself is closely related to the fishing and hunting scenes of Jan van der Straet, Stradanus.

Like Naldini, Stradanus was an artist of the Medici court who worked under Vasari for the project of Francesco I's Studiolo at the Palazzo Vecchio. Stradanus was also commissioned to produce a series of tapestry designs of hunting and fishing scenes for the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano. In 1578 the

drawings for these tapestries were transformed by Philips Galle into a series of prints and then expanded into a larger series entitled *Venationes, ferarum, arium, piscium* in 1596. The present composition was undoubtedly informed by these fishing scenes, and in particular plate 98 of the series. Galle's engraving contains a similar pictorial arrangement with figures fishing in the foreground, a river receding into the distance, and a bridge at back right with buildings behind that. Two miniature figures carrying staffs can be seen crossing the bridge in both images. The comparable orientation of the drawing and the print, and the correlation between the hat-wearing figure at centre right plunging a pole into the river may suggest that Naldini drew his inspiration directly from the print rather than Stradanus' preparatory drawing, which is now at the Getty Museum, New York. The Getty drawing confirms scene's location as the Arno in Florence and the print series provides a terminus post quem of 1578 for the drawing.

We are grateful to Dr Elizabeth Pilliod for her confirmation of the attribution.

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