



Attributed to Donato Arsenio Mascagni
(Florence 1579 - 1637)

Allegory of the Treaty of Angoulême

Pen and brown ink, brown wash over red chalk sketch

Dimensions : 6 ³/₈ " x 8 ¹/₂ " (162 x 217 mm) - Framed: 9 ¹/₂ " x 11 ³/₄ " (24 x 30 cm)

Annotated "Mola" lower right

Louis XIII period carved and gilded wood frame with floral motifs

Price on request

We would like to thank Mrs. Ursula Verena Fischer Pace for suggesting the attribution to Donato Arsenio Mascagni.

We were immediately seduced by the rich tonalities of this allegory executed in brown ink wash. A comparison with a drawing in the Louvre also previously attributed to Mola suggests an attribution to Donato Mascagni, an early 17th-century Florentine artist with an international career.

The composition of the scene leads us to make an iconographic proposal, suggesting that it is a celebration of the Treaty of Angoulême, which on April 30, 1619 sealed the reconciliation between the young King Louis XIII and his tumultuous mother, Queen Marie de Médicis, depicted here paying homage to Minerva, under the aegis (literally and figuratively) of a cardinal.

1. Attribution Proposal

Our drawing, executed in pen and ink wash over red chalk, features characteristic nervous lines, exploiting the spaces left in reserve and the chromatic variations of the wash to chisel out the various figures. Its style seems perfectly consistent with an attribution to the Florentine or Sienese school of the early 17th century.



Attributed to Donato Mascagni - *A holy Monk healing a Child* - (INV 14300) Musée du Louvre

This distinctive workmanship can be compared with a drawing in the Louvre, also formerly attributed to Mola, which has recently been reattributed to Mascagni and depicts a holy monk healing a child.

The Musée du Louvre holds another drawing by Mascagni, which is probably more insolate, making comparison with our sheet less immediate. Mascagni's corpus is still very small, since these two drawings are practically the only ones attributed to him to date... but the comparison with the sheet formerly attributed to Mola seems particularly enlightening.



Donato Mascagni - *Discovery of the miraculous Image of the SS Annunziata* - (INV 1320) Musée du Louvre

2. Donato Mascagni, a painter and traveller in Medici Florence

Born in Florence in 1579, Donato Mascagni entered the studio of the great Counter-Reformation painter Jacopo Ligozzi (1547-1627). Ligozzi had been appointed *capomaestro* of the Florentine grand-ducal art studio, superintendent of the Medici gallery and first court painter in 1574, following Vasari's death. Mascagni's talent was quickly recognized and, in 1593, the young artist was admitted to the prestigious Accademia del Disegno, after which he began to work more independently.

Over the following years, Mascagni completed several important projects for the monks of the Camaldolese order, including a prestigious commission for the lunettes in the cloister of Santa Maria dei Angeli in Florence (1598). In 1605, Mascagni pronounced his vows in the Servite order, taking the name "Fra Arsenio"; he then lived in the monastery of Monte Senario, some twenty kilometers north of Florence, until 1609, when he obtained a papal dispensation to move to the Santissima Annunziata in the city center.

Mascagni's artistic career continued to flourish in Tuscany, and he eventually won commissions abroad, which took him as far as Spain (Valladolid in 1615) and Austria (Innsbruck in 1612, Salzburg from 1616 to 1619 and in 1624). He may also have traveled to Rome, where some suggest he worked with Guido Reni. In 1632, Mascagni moved back to Florence, to the Santissima Annunziata, where he remained until his death in 1637.

3. Iconographic proposal

The scene depicted in our drawing is both rich and complex: a sovereign, characterized by her crown and ermine coat, pays homage to Minerva, the goddess of Reason and War, who holds in her hands her shield on which is painted the portrait of a cardinal. A young man with a broad moustache attends the scene and stands behind the sovereign.

By placing this scene in a Florentine context of glorification of the members of the Medici family, one hypothesis seems interesting: to recognize in the sovereign the Queen of France Marie de Médicis and in the young man her son the young King Louis XIII, and to link this allegory to the signing of the Treaty of Angoulême, which sealed the reconciliation between Marie de Médicis (1575 - 1642) and her son on April 30, 1619.



Peter Paul Rubens - *The Treaty of Angoulême* (INV 1786 ; MR 977) Musée du Louvre

This episode was depicted by Rubens in one of the paintings in the gallery commissioned by the Queen and executed around 1622-1625. In March 1619, the Queen had escaped from the Château de Blois, where she had been exiled by her son the King after he ordered the assassination of Concino Concini, and she had taken refuge in Angoulême. Louis XIII preferred negotiation to confrontation, and called on Richelieu, a protégé of the Queen Mother, to negotiate a reconciliation. This was made official with the signing of the Treaty of Angoulême on April 30, 1619, by which the King ceded the towns of Angers, Chinon and Les Ponts-de-Cé to his mother, but forbade her to return to the Council.

In Rubens' painting, the Queen is seated on a throne adorned with the statue of Minerva, with Vigilance at her side. She welcomes Mercury, who has descended from Olympus to hand her an olive branch as a sign of peace. Two cardinals advise her: on Mercury's right, Cardinal François de La Rochefoucauld, with a positive attitude; on the left, Cardinal Louis de Nogaret de La Valette or Cardinal de Guise (but not Richelieu, who did not become a cardinal until 1622 and was not present at the signing of the Treaty), with a rather reserved, wait-and-see attitude.

Our scene, probably executed several years after the event, brings together a number of elements that bring it closer to Rubens' allegory: the Queen is shown kneeling before the statue of Minerva (which adorned the right side of the throne in Rubens' painting) and the shield held in Minerva's hand (the aegis) is adorned with the portrait of a cardinal. This could be either Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld or Richelieu (now a cardinal). Two other busts of cardinals appear on a pedestal to the left of our drawing, and could represent Cardinal de la Valette and Cardinal de Guise.

The group of five figures on the right is also very interesting. The main figure with the long moustache could represent the young Louis XIII, if we accept that this long moustache was inspired more by a later portrait of the king than by those contemporary with the Treaty.



Franz Pourbus le Jeune - Portrait of Louis XIII circa 1620 Musée de Chambéry



Philippe de Champaigne - Portrait of Louis XIII in 1635 Prado Museum (Madrid)

The woman in the center of the female group on the left could be Queen Anne of Austria, who married Louis XIII in 1615. Interestingly, the portraits of the courtiers surrounding the two sovereigns are executed with great vivacity, particularly that of the elderly bearded man behind the sovereign (perhaps Charles d'Albert (1578-1621), appointed Duc de Luynes in 1619, who had advised him to call on Richelieu).



Attributed to Donato Arsenio Mascagni - *Allegory of the Treaty of Angouleme* (detail)

The international nature of Donato Mascagni's career argues in favor of the possible commission, either by one of the Queen's contacts in Florence, or by Ferdinand II de' Medici (Grand Duke of Tuscany from 1621), of an episode celebrating one of the most eminent members of the family at the time. Queen Marie de' Medici, like her aunt Catherine de' Medici, appears with her descendants in the frescoes of the Medicean Fastes painted by Volterrano at Villa La Petraia between 1636 and 1646.



Baldassare Franceschini (known as Volterrano) - *Queen Marie de Medici and her Descendants* - Villa La Petraia

4. Framing

To frame this drawing, we have chosen a Louis XIII period frame with floral motifs, whose delicate carving harmonizes with the decorative richness of this allegory.



Attributed to Donato Arsenio Mascagni - *Allegory of the Treaty of Angouleme* (detail)