

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



16th Century ITALIAN SCHOOL

Five Studies of Birds

Circa: 1700

Oil on paper, over an underdrawing in pen and ink visible on the verso.

The corners of the sheet cut and the whole sheet backed.

262 x 174 mm. (10 3/8 x 6 7/8 in.)

The five birds may be tentatively identified as a barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), which is depicted both at rest and in flight, as well as a European turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) and what may be an abnormally coloured Eurasian blue tit (*Parus caeruleus*), together with what appears to be a wagtail (*Motacilla*).

A number of comparable studies of birds, dating from the late 16th century in Italy, were once part of the Museo Cartaceo, or Paper Museum, of Cassiano dal Pozzo. One such example, a drawing in watercolour and gouache of a Great tit (*Parus major*) formerly in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle and today in a private collection, is closely related to a sheet of studies of birds in the Uffizi in Florence. Other 16th century drawings of birds from Cassiano dal Pozzo's collection can also be related to similar drawings in the Uffizi, which holds a number of studies of birds of this type, attributed to an anonymous Venetian artist of the mid 16th century. As Henrietta McBurney has noted, these drawings 'form a group that has been attributed most commonly to Giovanni da Udine, but also to Pordenone and to the "sixteenth-century Venetian school."'