

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Ippolito ANDREASI (Mantua 1548 - Mantua 1608)

Two Putti Flanking the Gonzaga Coat of Arms

Pen and brown ink and brown wash, heightened with white, over traces of an underdrawing in black chalk.

Inscribed FIDES at the upper centre, below the crown.

Squared for transfer in black chalk.

133 x 168 mm. (5 1/4 x 6 5/8 in.)

Formerly attributed to Bernardino Campi, the correct attribution of this drawing to Ippolito Andreasi was first suggested by Mario di Giampaolo. The drawing may be compared stylistically with a number of other studies by Andreasi, such as a drawing of Charity in the Biblioteca Reale in Turin.

The coat of arms depicted in this drawing is that of the Gonzaga duchy of Mantua. Visible at the top of the shield is a mountain, representative of Mount Olympus, with a spiral road leading up to the summit, on which an altar or temple may be seen.

This particular impresa was first used by Francesco II, 4th Marchese of Mantua (1466-1519) and adopted by his successor Federico II Gonzaga, 5th Marquis and 1st Duke of Mantua (1500-1540). The word FIDES ('faith') had been added to the impresa by the early 1520's, and the Mount Olympus impresa as a whole was incorporated into the Gonzaga coat of arms in 1530, when the Marquisate of Mantua was raised to a Duchy by the Emperor Charles V. The device was used extensively by Federico, and appears on several Mantuan coins and medals, as well as throughout the decoration of the Palazzo Te. It is found, for example, in the frescoes on the east wall of the Camera delle Imprese in the Palazzo Te, where the motif is similarly depicted on a shield flanked by putti, as well as in stucco on the vaults of the Loggie delle Muse, the Camera dei Venti and the Camera dei Imperatori.

Provenance:

Lorna Lowe, London, in 1974

Timothy Clifford, Manchester and Edinburgh (his collector's mark on the mount)

His sale, London, Sotheby's, 3 July 1989, lot 24.

Exhibitions

London, Lorna Lowe at Christopher Drake Ltd., Old Master Drawings, 1974, no.7 (as attributed to Bernardino Campi); Kendal, Abbot Hall Art Gallery, 16th and 17th Century Italian Drawings, 1981, no.34

(as attributed to Bernardino Campi).

Literature:

Mario di Giampaolo, 'Mostre: Italienische Zeichnungen des 16. Jahrhundert aus Eigenem Besitz' [exhibition review], *Antichità Viva*, 1977, No.4, p.45, fig.3, p.47, note 6; reprinted in Cristiana Garofalo, ed., *Mario Di Giampaolo: Scritti sul disegno italiano 1971-2008*, Florence, 2010, p.373, fig.3, also illustrated in colour p.448, pl.16; Richard Harprath, 'Ippolito Andreasi as a Draughtsman', *Master Drawings*, Spring 1984, p.21, no.95 (not illustrated).

Artist description:

Although sometimes described as a pupil of Giulio Romano, Ippolito Andreasi was born in Mantua two years after the death of Giulio, and was instead probably trained by one of the master's local followers, possibly Lorenzo Costa the Younger. One of his first commissions was for a series of drawings recording the appearance and interior decoration of Giulio Romano's buildings in Mantua, produced for the architect and collector Jacopo Strada around 1568. Andreasi soon rose to become one of the foremost exponents of the Mantuan maniera, and among the leading artists working in the city in the last quarter of the 16th century.

His first documented paintings were fresco decorations in several rooms of the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua, executed between 1577 and 1580 and, like much of his painted work, now lost. He painted allegorical frescoes for the now-destroyed ducal castle of Goito in 1586 and 1587, together with scenes depicting the history and achievements of the Gonzaga family. Further important ecclesiastical commissions in Mantua followed; for the churches of Sant'Andrea, Ognissanti, the Duomo and elsewhere. Andreasi may also have worked as an architect, as he was appointed 'prefetto delle fabbriche' at the Gonzaga court, but nothing is known of his efforts in this field. He produced several cartoons for tapestries, designed theatre sets and scenery, made designs for engravings and provided illustrations for an edition of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. Among his last important works were an altarpiece of the Annunciation for the church of Santa Maria in Cestello in Viadana, followed by the decoration of the cupola of the Duomo in Mantua, completed in 1605. Andreasi died in 1608 at the age of sixty, murdered by his wife's lover; a fact that may have contributed to the decline of his reputation after his death.

The largest surviving group of drawings by Andreasi is a collection of some eighty sheets - copies after the architecture, frescoes and decorations of the Palazzo Te and the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua, commissioned by Jacopo Strada - in the Museum Kunst Palast in Düsseldorf. A smaller but equally significant group of drawings by Andreasi is in the Louvre, and other sheets are in the British Museum, the Kunstbibliothek in Berlin, the Albertina in Vienna, the Uffizi in Florence, the Biblioteca Reale in Turin and elsewhere.