Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



Remigio CANTAGALLINA (Borgo San Sepolcro 1575 - Florence 1656)

A Tuscan Landscape with Figures by a River

Pen and brown ink and brown wash, over traces of an underdrawing in black chalk, with framing lines in brown ink.
260 x 407 mm. (10 1/4 x 16 in.)

This large, finished landscape drawing is a typical example of the work for which Remigio Cantagallina is best known, and for which he was praised by Baldinucci. Almost certainly intended as an autonomous work of art, it is likely to have come from an album of over a hundred landscape drawings, formerly in the collection of the scholar and antiquary Dr. Henry Wellesley (1791-1866), nephew of the Duke of Wellington, that appeared at auction in London in 1954. Although inscribed 'Vedute di Toscana d'Jacopo Ligozzi', the album was in fact largely made up of highly finished drawings by Cantagallina of various dates, several of which were signed. The album was acquired by the dealer Hans Calmann and the drawings were dispersed over the next several years; examples are today in the Fondation Custodia (Frits Lugt Collection) in Paris, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, the Princeton University Art Museum, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere.

Provenance:

Possibly from an album of 105 drawings of Tuscan views, mostly by Cantagallina, inscribed 'Vedute di Toscana d'Jacopo Ligozzi', and with provenance as follows:
The Rev. Dr. Henry Wellesley, Oxford
His posthumous sale, London, Sotheby's, 25 June 1866 onwards, lot 954 ('A Portfolio with leaves, containing 105 drawings in Pen and Sepia, Views in Tuscany, by Jacopo Ligozzi')
Sir David Kelly, London
His sale, London, Hodgson's, 26 November 1954, lot 596 ('Original Sepia and Wash Drawings of Scenery, Antiquities, Buildings etc. of Tuscany by Jacopo Ligozzi, Remigio Cantagallina and others')
Hans M. Calmann, London
Anonymous sale, London, Sotheby's, 4 July 1985, lot 45
Private collection, England, until 2008.

Artist description:

Said to be a pupil of Giulio Parigi, Remigio Cantagallina produced his earliest known works, a series of landscape etchings, in 1603. Relatively little is known of his life and career, which was spent mostly in

Florence, although a trip to Flanders between 1611 and 1613 is documented by a number of drawings in a sketchbook today in the Musée Royale des Beaux-Arts in Brussels. Described by Filippo Baldinucci as ‘famous for his landscape drawings in pen’ (‘celebre in disegnar paesi a penna’), Cantagallina was particularly influenced by the work of such Northern artists as Paul Bril. He was, in turn, to be an important influence on the later generation of landscape draughtsmen working in Florence, including Ercole Bazzicaluva, Baccio del Bianco and Jacques Callot, whom Cantagallina seems to have befriended on his arrival in Florence in the early years of the 17th century, and may have helped to train. Among the few pubic works commissioned from the artist were the ephemeral decorations to celebrate the wedding in Florence of the Grand Duke Cosimo II de’ Medici to Maria-Maddalena of Austria, executed in collaboration with Parigi in 1508. Only one painting by Cantagallina is known, however; a very large Last Supper painted with his brother Antonio in 1604, intended for a monastery in his native town of Sansepolcro and now in the Museo Civico there.

A prolific artist, Cantagallina produced a large number of highly finished topographical views of Florence and other sites in Tuscany, drawn with warm brown washes, that are among his finest achievements. Many of these drawings, such as a remarkable large View of Siena in the Uffizi, were almost certainly intended as independent works of art. His draughtsmanship was closely related to his work as a printmaker, and he produced over sixty etchings, mostly of pastoral landscapes and festival scenes. The largest collection of landscape drawings by Cantagallina, numbering more than two hundred sheets, is in the Uffizi in Florence; one of these, a drawing dated 1655, is the artist’s last known dated work.