

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Andrea BOSCOLI (Florence 1560 - Florence 1608)

Sacra Conversazione with Saints Jerome, Romuald(?) and other Hermit Saints, after Girolamo Muziano

Pen and brown ink and brown wash, laid down on a 17th century (Resta) mount.

A very faint study or offset of a composition with the Virgin(?) with figures and putti in black chalk on the reverse of the mount.

Inscribed Muziano in S. Pietro at the lower left.

Inscribed (by Resta) Andrea Boscoli da MUTIANO in S. Pietro ridotto à suo stile. in the lower margin.

Part of an inscription cut off at the bottom of the mount.

Further inscribed S. Maria degli Angeli a Roma on the reverse of the old mount.

267 x 175 mm. (10 1/2 x 6 7/8 in.) [sheet]

292 x 203 mm. (11 1/2 x 8 in.) [including mount]

This drawing is a late work, and may be dated to Andrea Boscoli's final stay in Rome, between 1606 and 1608. It is a copy after an altarpiece by Girolamo Muziano (1532-1592), intended for the Gregorian Chapel in St. Peter's in Rome. Commissioned from Muziano by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582, the large canvas of six hermit saints was left unfinished at the artist's death ten years later, and was eventually completed by his pupil Cesare Nebbia (c.1536-1614). In the 18th century, the painting was transferred to the Roman church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, where it remains today.

This is a fine and typical example of Andrea Boscoli's draughtsmanship near the end of his career. As Julian Brooks has noted, 'A distinctive style is apparent in Boscoli's late copies...Typically they are of a relatively small scale, and are drawn in a broad dark brown wash over a few ink lines, sometimes over red chalk underdrawing; they reduce the composition to a pattern of light and shade, and introduce a dramatic chiaroscuro where there was often none before.' Another, somewhat weaker version of this composition by Boscoli, which appears to have been reworked by another hand, is in the Uffizi in Florence.

The inscription on the old mount of the present sheet is in the distinctive hand of the Oratorian priest Padre Sebastiano Resta (1635-1714). One of the leading collectors of drawings in Italy in the 17th century, Resta assembled a large and significant group of some 3,500 sheets, gathered into about thirty albums.

Provenance:

Padre Sebastiano Resta, Rome (Lugt 2992 and 2992a)
Anonymous sale, London, Sotheby's, 8 December 1972, lot 32
Anonymous sale, London, Christie's, 8 December 1976, lot 2
Yvonne Tan Bunzl, London, in 1978
Private collection, New York.

Exhibitions

London, Yvonne Tan Bunzl at Somerville & Simpson Ltd., Old Master Drawings, 1978, no.14.

Literature:

Julian Brooks, *The Drawings of Andrea Boscoli* (c.1560-1608), unpublished Ph.D dissertation, University of Oxford, 1999, Vol.I, p.199 and p.355; Heiko Damm and Henning Hoesch, ed., *galleria portatile: Italienische Handzeichnungen aus der Sammlung Hoesch*, Vol.II, Petersberg, 2022, pp.106-109, no.21 (entry by Heiko Damm).

Artist description:

Andrea Boscoli trained in the Florentine studio of Santi di Tito and was admitted into the Accademia del Disegno in 1584. He visited Rome as a young man in the early 1580's and, like many artists before him, avidly copied the frescoes of Polidoro da Caravaggio that decorated the facades of several palaces there. Between 1582 and 1600 Boscoli worked primarily in Florence, with brief stays in Siena and Pisa. His earliest known painting is the Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew, painted in 1587 for the cloister of the Florentine church of San Pier Maggiore. He was also involved in the decorations for the apparati celebrating the marriage of the Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici to Christina of Lorraine in 1589.

In 1592 Boscoli completed a fresco cycle for the Villa di Corliano at San Giuliano Terme, near Pisa, and the following year painted an altarpiece of The Annunciation for the Chiesa del Carmine in Pisa. In 1597 Boscoli painted a Visitation for the Florentine church of Sant' Ambrogio, followed two years later by a Crucifixion for SS. Apostoli, now lost, and an altarpiece of The Preaching of Saint John the Baptist in the church of San Giovanni Battista in Rimini, signed and dated 1599. Between 1600 and 1605 Boscoli worked mainly in the Marches, painting frescoes and altarpieces for patrons and churches in Fano, Fabriano, Macerata, Fermo and elsewhere, while the last years of his career were spent between Florence and Rome.

Relatively few paintings by Boscoli survive today, and it is as a draughtsman that he is best known. His

drawings were highly praised by his biographer Filippo Baldinucci (who noted that 'he drew so well...without lacking a boldness and an extraordinarily skillful touch') and were avidly collected. Some six hundred drawings by Boscoli are known, with significant groups of drawings in the Uffizi in Florence (many of which were once part of the extensive collection formed by Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici), the Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica in Rome and the Louvre.