# Stephen Ongpin Fine Art



**Théodore VALERIO (Herserange 1819 - Vichy 1879)**

**Three Studies of an Italian Peasant Woman**

Pencil, brush and brown ink and brown wash, with touches of watercolour and heightened with white gouache, on light brown paper.
Stamped with the Valerio vente stamp (Lugt 2476) at the lower left.
285 x 427 mm. (11 1/4 x 16 3/4 in.)

As one modern scholar has written of Théodore Valério's drawings, 'En même temps qu'un type, chacun de ses personnages est une portrait. La main est légère, les formes harmonieuses, la ligne pure autant que la touche franche et spirituelle. C'est une riche moisson pour la grâce comme pour l'étrangeté, avec la saveur piquante de l'inconnu.' An important group of drawings by Valério - views of Hungary executed in 1851-1852, numbering around one hundred pencil drawings and eighty watercolours - was purchased by the State at the Exposition Universelle of 1855 and is today in the collection of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

An exhibition of some seventy drawings by Valério, many drawn in Brittany, was shown at the Galerie Pierre Gaubert in Paris in 1980. Among these was a study of a seated Italian peasant, which is very close in style to the present sheet.

**Provenance:**

Among the contents of the artist's studio at the time of his death
The Valerio studio sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot [Pillet], 12-14 February 1880 (lot number unidentified).

**Artist description:**

Of Italian origins, Théodore Valério was born in the Moselle region of eastern France, not far from the border with Luxembourg, and entered the Parisian studio of Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet in 1834. The two artists soon became friends, and in 1836 travelled together on a sketching tour of Germany, Switzerland and Italy. Valério made his public debut in 1838, at the age of nineteen, at the Salon des Artistes Vivants. He continued to exhibit at the Salons until his death, winning a third-class medal in the category of engraving in 1859. A painter, engraver and draughtsman, he produced landscapes, genre scenes and military subjects. He was an inveterate traveller, and in the 1840s and 1850s made extensive tours of Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Romania, as well as the Balkans and Turkey. During the Crimean War Valério was attached to the Ottoman army commanded by Omar Pasha, and produced drawings and watercolours of the conflict, notably the siege of Sebastopol, as well as of the multitude of soldiers and civilians from across the Ottoman Empire who made up the Sultan's army.

Valério made numerous drawings and studies of the exotic costumes and features of the peoples that he saw on his travels, particularly in the countries of Eastern Europe and the Austro-Hungarian empire. He was far, however, from being a pampered tourist. Travelling either on foot or horseback, and venturing far from major cities, the artist lived and dined among the rural peasantry and nomadic peoples of the region, of which he produced many insightful and sympathetic drawn portraits. These documentary works were praised by the critic Théophile Gautier, who saw Valério as an artist-ethnographer, and a large group of drawings and watercolours by the artist – mainly portraits executed on trips to Hungary and the Balkans between 1851 and 1854 - were exhibited at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1855, to considerable acclaim, and were purchased by the State; these are today in the collection of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Many of Valério's drawings and genre scenes were also reproduced in the form of albums of lithographs or etchings, notably Les Populations des provinces danubiennes en 1854, published in Paris around 1855. Valério also published an account of his travels, entitled 'Essais ethnographiques sur les populations hongroises', in the magazine L'Artiste in 1858. The artist spent much of his later years in Brittany, which he had first visited in 1843, and also spent some time in England before his death in 1879. The following year, a sale of some of the contents of his studio, including sixty paintings and numerous drawings, was held in Paris.