

Giovanni Battista CAPPELLO (17th Century -)

A Bird in an Extensive Landscape, in a Decorated Surround

Pen and brown ink on vellum.

Inscribed Nunquam and Offuscabitur in cartouches at the left and right edges.

Signed and dated A Ioanne Baptista Cappello, hec delineatio & Inventio A.D. 1670 in a ribbon at the bottom.

199 x 188 mm. (7 3/4 x 7 3/8 in.)

Nothing is known about the artist of the present sheet, whose name - Giovanni Battista Cappello - is inscribed in Latin in a ribbon at the bottom of the composition, alongside the date of 1670. It has been suggested, however, that the artist is likely have been Netherlandish rather than Italian in origin, and has here chosen to sign his name in Latin in an Italianate manner.

The Latin inscriptions in the cartouches at the left and right sides of the circular frame can be roughly translated to ‘never darken.’ ('Nunquam' means never, and 'Offuscabitur' is likely derived from obfuscation, which means to darken.) The bird could be a nightingale or an ortolan; a variety of finch common to Europe. Both are songbirds, the symbolic message of the present sheet encourages its viewer to never quiet or darken their song.