

Astolfo PETRAZZI (Siena 1580 - Siena 1663)

The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes

Pen and brown ink and brown wash, with framing lines in brown ink.

Inscribed Nasini on the verso.

170 x 376 mm. (6 3/4 x 14 3/4 in.)

Philip Pouncey noted that the present sheet, which is a design for an overdoor painting or fresco, may be contemporary with two similar drawings by Petrazzi, depicting A Franciscan Monk Preaching and Figures Praying before a Tomb, both now in the Louvre. Also stylistically comparable is a drawing of Christ in Limbo, in a private collection in Portugal, and a study of a Standing Figure Placing a Scapular(?) on a Kneeling Figure in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Exhibitions

New York and London, Colnaghi, An Exhibition of Master Drawings, 1992, no.28.

Literature:

Philip Pouncey, 'Trois nouveaux dessins de Rutilio Manetti et une hypothèse sur Astolfo Petrazzi', Revue de l'Art, 1971, p.71, note 20, fig.18; New York and London, Colnaghi, Master Drawings, exhibition catalogue, 1992, unpaginated, no.28; Mario di Giampaolo, ed., Philip Pouncey: Raccolta di scritti (1937-1985), Rimini, 1994, p.133, note 20, illustrated p.138, fig.18.

Artist description:

The Sienese artist Astolfo Petrazzi was a student of Ventura Salimbeni, and his early paintings, such as the Martyrdom of Saint Crispin of 1608 in the church of San Crispino in Siena, display the influence of this local Baroccesque master. According to the biographer Filippo Baldinucci, Petrazzi also studied with two other Sienese painters, Francesco Vanni and Pietro Sorri. After a period of about ten years in Rome, where he painted an altarpiece for the church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, Petrazzi returned to Siena in 1631, inspired by the Bolognese classicism of the Carracci and their followers. Among his important paintings of this period are The Last Communion of Saint Jerome of 1631, in the Sienese church of Sant'Agostino, which is his first known dated work, and The Mysteries of the Rosary, painted the following year for the church of Santo Spirito. He also painted a number of historical subjects as mural paintings for the interior of the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena. Petrazzi operated a busy workshop in

Siena, and is also known to have established a drawing academy in his studio. Later projects included frescoes for the Oratory of Saints Gherardo and Ludovico, completed in 1635, and the decoration of the vault of the Oratory of San Rocco, which is signed and dated 1648. Petrazzi was also a gifted painter of still life subjects, executed in a combination of a Caravaggesque and Northern manner, and genre scenes.

The essential characteristics of Petrazzi's draughtsmanship were established in a pioneering article published by the scholar Philip Pouncey in 1971, when he grouped a number of previously anonymous drawings under the name of the artist, on the basis of a drawing of The Martyrdom of a Saint, signed 'Astolfo Petrucci Sanese', in the Albertina in Vienna. Only a few of the artist's extant drawings, however, can be related to finished paintings or frescoes. Among the relatively small corpus of drawings by Petrazzi are sheets in the Louvre, the British Museum, Christ Church in Oxford, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and elsewhere.