

Sigismondo COCCAPANI (Florence 1583 - Florence 1643)

Susanna and the Elders

Pen and brown ink and brown wash, over an underdrawing in black chalk.

Squared for transfer in red chalk, with framing lines in brown ink.

Extensively inscribed with a letter written by the artist on the verso.

Inscribed Del Cigoli on a piece of paper pasted onto the backing sheet, below the drawing.

256 x 193 mm. (10 1/8 x 7 5/8 in.)

273 x 201 mm. (10 3/4 x 7 7/8 in.) [with backing sheet]

Like several drawings by Sigismondo Coccapani, the present sheet was once attributed to his teacher Ludovico Cigoli, as can be seen in the inscription 'Del Cigoli' formerly on the old mount; identical inscriptions appear on the 17th or 18th century mounts of a number of drawings by both Cigoli and Coccapani. The close relationship between the drawing styles of the two artists has only recently been made clearer. As Miles Chappell has noted, 'the connections between Cigoli and Coccapani as draughtsmen are general in that the pupil shows affinities with the manner of his teacher and specific in that there are often complex historical circumstances that relate particular drawings to the name of Cigoli…Through relationships in drawings…it also becomes clear that Cigoli's great influence on Florentine art of the Seicento was effected as much through his draughtsmanship as through his painting.' Many of the most Cigolesque drawings by Coccapani date from the early part of his career, when he was working with Cigoli in Rome, and again at the start of his independent career in Florence.

Although squared for transfer, the present sheet cannot be related to any surviving painting or fresco by

Coccapani. Elisa Acanfora has dated this drawing to the early 1620s and has further noted some correspondence with Coccapani's painting of The Toilet of Bathsheba in a Florentine private collection, which is set in a similar loggia and includes the same fountain with a putto holding a dolphin that is seen at the left of the present sheet. Miles Chappell has likened this drawing stylistically to a drawing of The Assumption of the Virgin of c.1612 in a private collection and also notes the two old men are similar to those in a drawing of Figures Meeting at the Entrance to a Cityin the Louvre. He has further recently pointed out that the letter on the verso of the present sheet is in Coccapani's hand and, at least in part, seems to relate to the subject of the drawing on the recto.

This drawing bears a drystamp (Lugt 2729), which denotes it as being part of a collection of 17th century Florentine drawings assembled by Sigismondo Coccapani and, possibly, his brother and fellow painter Giovanni Coccapani. (The family collection of drawings and prints was, however, apparently begun by their father, the goldsmith Regolo Francesco Coccapani.) Over a hundred drawings which bear this stamp are known, most of which are by Cigoli, with the bulk of the remainder by the brothers Coccapani and some of their contemporaries in Cigoli's studio and circle, including Jacopo da Empoli and Matteo Rosselli. Most of the drawings with the Coccapani mark are in the Uffizi in Florence, and must have entered the museum's collection as part of the Fondo Mediceo-Lorenese in the second half of the 17th century. Other drawings with the Coccapani drystamp are today in the collections of the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh, the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lille, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, the Fondation Custodia and the Musée du Louvre in Paris, the Pierpont Morgan Library and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica in Rome, and elsewhere.

The art historian Sir John Pope-Hennessy (1913-1994) assembled a small but choice group of Italian drawings. The present sheet was, however, inherited by him from his mother, the noted historian and biographer Dame Una Pope-Hennessy (1875-1949).

Literature:

Miles L. Chappell, 'Proposals for Coccapani', Paradigma, June 1990, p.190, fig.108 (as Circle of Cigoli; Sigismondo Coccapani?); London, Christie's, Old Master Drawings, including 17th Century Italian Drawings from the Ferretti Di Castelferreto Collection, 2 July 1996, p.23, under lot 12; Miles Chappell, 'The Assumption of the Virgin and the Holy Family in Joseph's Workshop by Sigismondo Coccapani', Notes in the History of Art, Summer 2004, p.19; Linda Wolk-Simon and Carmen C. Bambach, An Italian Journey. Drawings from the Tobey Collection: Correggio to Tiepolo, exhibition catalogue, New York, 2010, p.144, under no.43, note 5; Emmanuelle Brugerolles, ed., Le Baroque à Florence, exhibition catalogue, Paris, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, 2015, pp.61-62, under no.15, fig.2 (entry by Emmanuelle Brugerolles and Constance Guigui); Elisa Acanfora, Sigismondo Coccapani. Ricomposizione del catalogo, Florence, 2017, p.61, p.148, under no.18, p.215, no.D154, illustrated p.62, fig.103 and p.234, pl.153.

Artist description:

The son of a goldsmith, Sigismondo Coccapani studied with the architect Bernardo Buontalenti and the painter Ludovico Cardi, known as Cigoli. He was one of Cigoli's last pupils, and was the only Florentine apprentice working closely with the master on his late Roman commissions. Indeed, as Miles Chappell has noted, Coccapani 'could be described as the most dedicated and also the most dependent of Cigoli's disciples.' Between 1610 and 1612 he assisted Cigoli on the fresco decoration of the dome of the Cappella Paolina in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. On his return to Florence, Coccapani began his independent practice and in fact seems to have worked almost exclusively in and around the city for the remainder of his career, painting frescoes, devotional works and mythological

pictures. His earliest known independent commission was for a lunette fresco in the large cloister (the chiostro dei morti) of the church of Santissima Annunziata in Florence, painted in 1613. Four years later he completed a painting of Michelangelo Crowned by the Arts for the Casa Buonarroti in Florence, soon followed by an Adoration of the Magi for the church of Santa Maria in Castello in Signa, outside the city. His last known work is the decoration of the Cappella Martelli in the Florentine church of Santi Michele e Gaetano, completed in 1642.

Coccapani's paintings show his debt to the manner of his master Cigoli, an influence that may also be seen in the relatively few surviving drawings by the younger artist that are known, of which the largest group, numbering around ninety sheets, is today in the Uffizi in Florence. That many more drawings by Coccapani must once have existed, however, is shown by the comments of the Florentine collector and biographer Francesco Maria Niccolò Gabburri, who knew of an album of drawings by the artist that had been sold abroad: 'un grosso libro, nel quale disegnò ogni sorta di animali, che riuscì cosa di gran pregio, il quale poi fù mandato oltre ai monti.' The use of blue wash in many of his drawings is a characteristic feature of Coccapani's draughtsmanship which he adopted from the late compositional studies of Cigoli. Indeed, many of his drawings were once attributed to the elder artist, and many of the most Cigolesque drawings by Coccapani date from the early part of his career, when he was working with his master in Rome, and again at the start of his independent career in Florence.