Giulio CAMPI (Cremona 1508 - Cremona 1573)

Design for an all'antica Military Trophy

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

163 x 112 mm. (6 3/8 x 4 3/8 in.)

This small but highly finished pen and ink sketch may have been created by Giulio Campi in preparation for a part of the extensive program of ephemeral decorations – in the form of monumental triumphal arches decorated with statues - executed for the route of the ceremonial entry of Emperor Charles V into the city of Cremona on 18 August 1541. Designed by Campi and Camillo Bocaccino, the elaborate decorations were later described by the former's younger brother Antonio Campi in his book Cremona fedelissima città et nobilissima colonia de' Romani, published in 1585.

The present sheet can be compared, on stylistic grounds, with a number of pen and ink drawings by Giulio Campi for the 1541 decorations, such as two studies of kneeling captives in the British Museum. Also similar are two closely-related grisaille drawings for decorative friezes; one with two kneeling satyrs flanking a trophy of arms and armour, in the Szépmüvészeti Múzeum in Budapest, and another of a military trophy flanked by chained prisoners, in the British Museum. Two stylistically comparable pen and ink drawings, each depicting a frieze of putti, are in the Uffizi and at Christ Church in Oxford, both of which seem to be related to a frieze painted in the church of San Sigismondo in Cremona. A drawing of a frieze with a lion and a putto among acanthus leaves, in the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence, is also comparable. Like the present sheet, all of these drawings are largely monochromatic, the better to

imitate sculpted reliefs.

Artist description:

One of a Cremonese family of painters, alongside his younger brothers Antonio and Vincenzo, Giulio Campi probably received his initial artistic training with his father Galeazzo Campi. His first signed and dated painting was an altarpiece executed in 1527 for the Cremonese church of SS. Nazaro e Celso, and for the remainder of his career he worked mainly as a fresco painter in the churches of his native town. His chief works include scenes from the life of Saint Agatha in the church of Sant'Agata, completed in 1537, and a series of frescoes in the transepts of the monastic church of San Sigismondo, painted between 1539 and 1542. At San Sigismondo he worked alongside Camillo Boccaccino, and the two artists also collaborated on the temporary decorations to celebrate the entrance of the Emperor Charles V into Cremona in 1541. Campi also worked as an architect, and as such was involved in the rebuilding and decoration of Santa Margherita in Cremona in 1547.

Both Giulio and Antonio Campi received a number of significant commissions beyond Cremona, notably in Milan - where their work was to have an influence on the young Caravaggio - and in Brescia, where they painted a number of canvases for the Palazzo della Loggia from 1549 onwards. Giulio is likely to have made a trip to Rome in the middle of the 1550's, and in 1557 undertook the fresco decoration of the first bay of San Sigismondo, for which he also painted an altarpiece in 1565. Near the end of his career he painted a several works for the Duomo in Cremona, notably the large organ shutters, and worked in the church of Santa Maria di Campagna in Piacenza.