Stephen Ongpin Fine Art

Lorenzo SABATINI (Bologna c.1530 - Rome 1576)

The Virgin and Child with a Bishop Saint (Petronius?)

Black chalk and grey wash, squared for transfer in black chalk, on buff paper.

A drawing of The Adoration of the Shepherds, by a different hand, on the verso, executed in pen and brown ink and brown wash, with the head of the Christ Child partly squared for transfer in black chalk, and with framing lines in brown ink.

Faintly inscribed and. del sarto(?) at the lower right.

381 x 244 mm. (15 x 9 5/8 in.)

Relatively few drawings by Lorenzo Sabatini are known, and his oeuvre as a draughtsman remains little studied. The present sheet may be a first idea for Sabatini's large altarpiece of The Madonna and Child with Saints Petronius, Catherine of Alexandra, Apollonia and Dominic, painted in c.1568-1570 for the Bolognese church of Santa Lucia and today in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin.

The facial type of the Virgin in this large drawing recurs throughout much of Sabatini's painted oeuvre, as well as in such drawings as that of the head of a woman in the British Museum. Among stylistically comparable drawings by Sabatini is a Circumcision in the Louvre, which is a study for a large altarpiece of c.1564, and a Saint John the Evangelist in a private collection in Florence4, which is a preparatory study for a figure in a ceiling fresco the Malvasia chapel in San Giacomo Maggiore in Bologna, executed in 1564.

The present sheet appears to show the Virgin and Child seated on a crescent moon, and as such can be likened to a drawing by Sabatini of a similar subject, albeit without the attendant saint, in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. That drawing is in turn related to two engravings, one by Agostino Carracci and the other by Domenico Tibaldi, which are both derived from the same original design by Sabatini.

Exhibitions

New York, Mia N. Weiner, Old Master Drawings, 1988, no.11.