

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Circle of JOHANN MATTHIAS KAGER (Munich 1575 - Augsburg 1634)

A Bishop Saint Seated in Front of a Grotto

Pen and black ink and grey wash, with framing lines in black ink, squared for transfer in red chalk.

Laid down.

Inscribed Fr. Vanni on the backing sheet.

136 x 203 mm. (5 3/8 x 8 in.)

This drawing may be associated with a closely-related study, by the same hand, of a bishop saint distributing alms, also with an arched top and undoubtedly from the same series, that is with Monroe Warshaw in New York. Both drawings are squared for transfer, and are likely to have been intended as lunette decorations for a church.

Tilman Falk has suggested that these drawings may be the work of the Augsburg painter Caspar Strauss (c.1595-1663), who may be claimed as Johann Matthias Kager's only significant follower. Little is known of Strauss's training, but by 1620 he was working in Kager's studio, and he seems to have continued to assist him after gaining his independence as an artist. In the 1620s Strauss worked with Kager on the decoration of the monastery church in Zwiefalten, and around 1630 succeeded him as the city painter, or stadtmaler, of Augsburg.

Only a handful of paintings and less than twenty drawings by Caspar Strauss are known today, including sheets in the Kunsthalle in Bremen, the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and elsewhere.