

STEPHEN ONGPIN FINE ART



Attributed to ASTOLFO PETRAZZI (Siena 1580 - Siena 1653)

A Figure Kneeling Before a Man Seated on a Throne (The Ordination of a Monk?)

Red chalk and red wash, squared for transfer in black chalk, with framing lines in brown ink.

176 x 127 mm. (6 7/8 x 5 in.)

Watermark: Fragmentary.

A pen and ink drawing by Astolfo Petrazzi of a closely related subject – a study of Obeisance Before a Monarch – is in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan. A number of drawings by the artist are executed in the distinctive and attractive combination of red chalk and red wash seen in the present sheet, including a stylistically comparable study of The Presentation of Christ in the Temple in the British Museum. Other drawings in this technique by or attributed to Petrazzi include a drawing with two compositional studies for an Adoration of the Magi in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.

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 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.