



Girolamo Pennacchi, called GIROLAMO DA TREVISO (Treviso 1497(?) - Boulogne 1544)

Apollo as a Musician

Pen and brown ink and brown wash, heightened with white, over an underdrawing in black chalk, on paper washed a light brown.

Inscribed Semino(?) at the lower right.

Further inscribed Giu Romano / 177 on the verso.

242 x 197 mm. (9 1/2 x 7 3/4 in.)

Only a handful of drawings may be securely attributed to Girolamo da Treviso, whose idiosyncratic draughtsmanship is characterized by a thorough application of white heightening and the use of prepared paper. A closely related drawing by the artist of a woman playing a cittern, of similar technique and identical dimensions, was formerly in the Jean Bonna collection in Geneva and is now in a private collection in Belgium. (The ex-Bonna drawing was independently attributed to Girolamo da Treviso by both W. Roger Rearick and Mario di Giampaolo in 2002.) Similar in size, both works are tentatively connected to Girolamo's now-lost fresco decoration of the palazzo of Andrea Odoni in Venice, where he painted the façade and courtyard between 1531 and 1532. Highly praised by Vasari and other early sources, the sophisticated fresco cycle for Odoni was later described by Carlo Ridolfi, in his *Le maraviglie dell'arte*, published in 1648. Ridolfi explicitly mentions figures of Apollo, Pallas and other figures painted 'in chiaro-scuro' in the area of the 'pergolato', which is likely to have been an internal balcony or courtyard within the palace.

Although the Odoni decorations no longer exist, what may be a similar scheme can be found in the ceiling of the Camera dei Venti of the Palazzo Te in Mantua, executed by Girolamo a few years earlier, in 1527-1528, under the supervision of Giulio Romano. The vault of the Sala dei Venti features a series of individual figures contained in separate compartments in the coffered ceiling.

In stylistic and technical terms, this drawing may be compared with a *Sacra Conversazione* in the British Museum, which is a preparatory study for a painting of 1531 in the church of San Salvatore in Venice, painted, as well as a drawing of The Archangel Gabriel in the Albertina in Vienna.

Literature:

Nathalie Strasser, *Dessins italiens de la Renaissance au siècle des lumières*: Collection Jean Bonna, Geneva, 2010, p.92, under no.36; Paris, Galerie de Bayser, *Catalogue Beaux-Arts*, 2011, no.1; Paolo Ervas, *Girolamo da Treviso*, Saonara, 2014, p.192, no.9 (as not by Girolamo da Treviso); London, Christie's, *Old Master and British Drawings and Watercolours, Including Works from the Collection of Jean Bonna*, 2 July 2019, p.12, under lot 9, fig.1.

Artist description:

Very little is known of the early career of Girolamo Pennacchi, known as Girolamo da Treviso. Giorgio Vasari writes that he worked in Treviso and Venice – where he designed prints for the publisher Bernardino Benali - before arriving in Bologna, where he is recorded by November 1523 as having painted an altarpiece for the Confraternity of Santa Maria dei Servi. One of his first known works is a *Noli Me Tangere* in the church of San Giovanni in Monte in Bologna, which shows the influence of Francesco Francia and Lorenzo Costa. Early in his career Girolamo also worked as a sculptor, carving marble reliefs of the story of Joseph for the facade of the Bolognese church of San Petronio in 1524. Two years later, for the Guidotti chapel in the same church, he completed a series of eight monochrome scenes depicting the miracles of Saint Anthony of Padua. In 1528 he was in Genoa, where he contributed a fresco to the facade of the Palazzo Doria.

Girolamo is also known to have collaborated with Giulio Romano on the decoration of the Palazzo Te in Mantua, and in 1533 painted a fresco of *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints* for the church of the Commenda in Faenza. He was back in Bologna between 1534 and 1538, when he painted one of his few surviving works in the city, a *Presentation of the Virgin with Saint Thomas of Canterbury* for the English chapel in the church of San Salvatore. Perhaps as a result of this commission, Girolamo was invited by King Henry VIII to England, where he settled in 1538 and where, according to Vasari, his work was greatly admired. He worked primarily as a military engineer for King Henry VIII, although he also seems to have produced a handful of paintings, notably an anti-papal Allegory now in the Royal Collection at Hampton Court. The artist died during the English siege of Boulogne in September 1544.