



FILIPPO NAPOLETANO

(Rome, c. 1587 - Rome, 1629)

Tratta di schiavi (the slave trade)

black chalk, pen and brown ink, brown wash

166 x 276 mm

executed 1626

Provenance:

With Yvonne Tan Bunzl, London

Lord Weidenfeld, London, by 1983

Literature:

Marco Chiarini, "Teodoro Filippo di Liagno detto Filippo Napoletano 1589 - 1629, vita e opere", 2007 [Firenze: Centro Di], no. 394, pp. 464 - 465, illustrated

This extraordinary drawing, attributed to Napoletano by Philip Pouncey, is almost unique in its subject matter, though it is not easy from the composition to gather a precise subject.

In his catalogue raisonné, Marco Chiarini tentatively but persuasively titled the drawing 'Tratta di schiavi' (The slave trade). If read as such, the scene on the right is showing female captives being led away by soldiers while one of their male counterparts is being examined and sold to foreigners in the central foreground. On the left we see the final stage of the narrative, the slaves toiling the land.

The style of the sheet led Chiarini and Pouncey to date it to 1622 – 1629, during the last few years of the artist's short career, perhaps even more precisely 1626.