PIER FRANCESCO MOLA

(Coldrerio, 1612 - Rome, 1666)

A young man wearing a fur-trimmed cap

inscribed in brown ink with Resta-Somers Lansdowne mark, lower right (recto): *d 108* [L.2981]; inscribed in black ink by Richardson Sr (recto of mount): *Mola* [L.2995]; 'shelf marks' in brown ink by Ricardson Sr (verso of mount): *GG. 13.* [L.2893]

black and red chalks

259 x 197

Provenance:

Padre Sebastiano Resta (1635–1714), Rome

possibly Giovanni Matteo Marchetti, Bishop of Arezzo (1647–1704), Arezzo

John, Lord Somers (1650–1716), London [L.2981]

possibly Johnathan Richardson, Senior (1667–1745), London [L.2983; L.2995]

Sir Anthony Westcombe, Bart. (c.1708–1752), Llanover

by descent to his cousin, Bernard Granville, Llanover

by descent to his heirs

their sale, Puttick & Simpson, London: 22 December 1857, lot 45 (as "MOLA (P.) five drawings, one large and very fine")

where acquired by "Nell" or "Dell" for £0.13

Barent Ten Eyck (1902–1969), and Mrs Barent Ten Eyck (d. c. 1971), New York

her sale: Sotheby's, London: 25 November 1971, lot 94

with Baskett & Day, London

Sally Sample Aall

with Baskett & Day, London

where acquired by the present owner in April 1991

Literature:

Lansdowne MS. 802, D. 108

Exhibited:

London, Baskett & Day, *Exhibition of Drawings*, 1972, no. 10

Pier Francesco Mola had a particular talent for making head studies and portraits, a “goût pour les études de têtes”. Although the majority of these head studies were produced in oils, Mola also produced a small number in pastel and in chalk. The present work is a rare example of the latter kind, drawn predominately in black chalk, with red used to liven the sitter’s face and hat. The drawing does not appear to be related to any known painting by the artist and may have been created as an independent work of art. Another chalk study of a man’s head is in the Royal Collection, Windsor, and pastel studies can be found in the Katrin Bellinger Collection, London, the Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Weimar, the Uffizi, Florence, and formerly in the Adrien collection, Paris.

The attribution to Mola is that of Padre Sebastiano Resta (1635-1714), the drawing’s first recorded owner and a personal friend of the artist. Resta’s transcribed catalogue entry for the drawing, which is listed in the Landsdowne manuscript in the British Library under ‘d 108’, recalls a visit paid by the collector to Mola’s studio in the company of P. Abate Castillione of S. Croce and two other Fathers. The men studied the design of a painting which was eventually carried out by Raffaello Vanni. Resta then records how Mola was feeling unwell on that occasion and the entry trails off.

Sold