



DOMENICO MARIA CANUTI

(Bologna, 1620 - Bologna, 1684)

Dido on her pyre, with a subsidiary study of her head
inscribed (verso): *Canuto*

pen and brown ink, brown wash

139 x 178 mm

Provenance:

Giuseppe Storck (1766-1836), Milan [L.2318], 1800

Giuseppe Vallardi (1784-1861), Milan [L. 1223], K 487

Christie's, London: 11–13 December 1985, Lot 258

with Baskett & Day, London

where acquired by the present owner in December 1985

This drawing of Dido on her pyre is a spirited example of Domenico Maria Canuti's draughtsmanship. The fluent penwork, bold application of wash and foreshortening of the figure's arms are all characteristic of the artist, as is the subject given that Canuti produced a large number of drawings with literary or mythological themes. During his lifetime he was celebrated for his inventive compositions, most of which do not seem to have been intended as studies for paintings and may have been produced as finished works for sale to collectors. Indeed, no painting of this subject by Canuti is known today.

The drawing does however bear interesting points of comparison with an etching by Canuti's disciple, Giuseppe Rolli, after a lost mythological painting by Canuti, whose subject is the tragic suicide of another heroine, Lucretia. The lost painting was likely produced during Canuti's second Roman stay, during the 1670s, and in addition to the thematic correlation between the etching and the present drawing, the central figure is posed in a similarly fashion, collapsed with her legs splayed to the right and her head receding over her shoulder to the left.

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