



GIOVANNI AMBROGIO FIGINO

(Milan, 1548 - Milan, 1608)

Study of a right leg, after Michelangelo

black chalk heightened with white on blue paper

405 x 225 mm (shaped at lower right)

Provenance:

Private collection, UK

This large, sculptural study of a right leg derives from the prophet Jonah in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling. It is one of several large-scale studies after the ceiling made in situ during the artist's stay in Rome from 1587 to 1588. Six of these, also on blue paper heightened with white, can be found in the Royal Collection at Windsor. They are executed with an unusual degree of finish, carefully exploring the sculptural qualities of the figure and the interplay of light and shadow.

During Figino's visit to Rome, he also recorded the works of Raphael and antique sculptures in the Vatican Belvedere. Two surviving albums bear witness to his studious activity, the larger of which originates from the collection of Giuseppe Bossi and is now in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice. It

contains approximately 201 sheets, around 180 of which are considered autograph. A second album, which originates from the collection of Consul Joseph Smith, is that in the Royal Collection at Windsor, comprising some 121 sheets.

At least 21 drawings from the Windsor album are copies after the Sistine Chapel frescoes, with a similar number found in the Venice album. Many of them consist of multiple, small-scale figures covering a page, either made in black chalk and brown ink or black chalk on blue paper. His Sistine Chapel models were chiefly selected from the lower parts of the Last Judgment fresco—those areas more accessible to a copyist working from below—such as the right arm of the figure above St. Catherine, in Windsor. The present drawing belongs to a smaller group derived from Michelangelo's earlier work on the ceiling vault and is the only known drawing associated with the figure of Jonah. Due to its imposing scale and prime position directly above the High Altar, Jonah served as a lynchpin between the two fresco projects and was more prominent than most other figures, accounting for the fidelity of this drawing. A similar drawing on blue paper in the Accademia is the right arm of the Eritrean Sibyl.

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