

BALDASSARE PERUZZI
(Siena 1481-1536 Rome)

The Assassination of the Emperor Caligula

Pen and brown ink, brown wash on paper

18.4 x 26 cm

Bears on verso the collector's mark of Baron Adolphe Augustin Rey de Villette (Lugt L.2200a)

Provenance:

Collection of Baron Adolphe Augustin Rey de Villette (1864-1934);

Private collection.



The present drawing shows the *Assassination of the Emperor Caligula*. The influence of the contemporary theater is evident: the figures appear on a stage with an architectural background. This pleads for the authorship of an artist mastering both a creative technique and the mastery of architectural representation. Baldassarre Peruzzi responds to these two qualities: Peruzzi was an Italian painter, draughtsman and architect of the High Renaissance, a pupil of Bramante, in « competition » with Raphael, who was also a specialist in military architecture. He is related to the Sienese school. He is also considered a precursor of Mannerism.

The attribution to Peruzzi may be confirmed by comparison with examples of his draftsmanship in the collections of the Louvre Museum: Baldassarre Peruzzi, *Satirical Allegory: Mercury being purged in a city square*, pen and brown ink, brown wash, black chalk on paper, 33,2 x 51,5 cm, Collections : Crozat, Pierre (1665-1740) - Vasari, Giorgio - Cabinet du Roi - Mariette, Pierre-Jean, INV 1419;



and *Altar decoration project*, pen and brown ink, metalpoint, brown wash on beige prepared paper, 29 x 40,2 cm, Collection: Saint-Morys, INV 262.



Another example of architectural drawings by Baldassare Peruzzi shows common features: A *design for an organ case*, circa 1520, pen and ink with wash and white heightening on buff paper, 56.5 x 38.0 cm, RCIN 905495, Royal Collection Trust, Windsor.

In the upper pediment of the organ case is the shield of the Gonzaga, rulers of Mantua, and in the curved pediment the personal device of Federico II Gonzaga. The drawing was probably commissioned from Peruzzi in Rome to be sent to Mantua, where the organ case would have been constructed from wood by local craftsmen. At the centre are Peruzzi's notes on possible adjustments to the design.

This large and impressive sheet is a study for an organ case, with Apollo standing at the apex of the design, flanked by four females, presumably Muses, and with other seated Muses in relief against the attic storey below. In niches to the sides of the attached columns are standing allegorical figures, with further niches down the side of the organ. At the centre, where the organ pipes would be, the artist has written:



« It is to be noted that the small pipes of the organ are on this side and that, on the other, where the large pipes are, the frieze marked B is left out. Besides, if it is desired, the pediment or quarter-circle underneath the satyrs can be removed and the cornice here left straight, using the upper pediment. Further, both pediments can be removed and it can be made in the form of a triumphal arch. »

The architecture relates closely to a design by Peruzzi for an altar surround in the Getty, the measurements on which give a total height of around 3m (10ft), and it may be supposed that the organ was to be about the same size.

Inscribed by the artist, centre: « *FIDES / B / E da notare che in questa faccia vanno le cañe piccole delo organo / & da l'altra dove vanno le cañe grandi va levato via el collari/no segnato .B. prete rea sepo volendo tor via el fastigio overo / quarto tondo socto ali satyri e qui dare la cornice drecta ussando / el fastigio sup[er]iore. Vltierius se po levare luno e laltro fastigio / e farlo a modo de arco triumphale* ».

Last example of an architectural drawing: *Two designs for a chapel (Entrance of the Chapel of S Giovanni, Siena Cathedral ?); with decorative friezes and figures over the arch*, pen and brown ink and brown wash, 20,7 x 28,1 cm, Recto A. Inscribed with dimensions in braccia (ba) and dita (d). $24 d = 1 b^{\circ}$, as is clear from the fact that the height of the pedestal dadoes is given in both forms. Recto B. Inscribed: "*Modernaccia per accomodare le istorie* »; previous collection: Sir Thomas Lawrence (L.2445), William Beckford; Registration number 1848,1125.12, British Museum, London.



This drawing can be likened to a drawing by Baldassarre Peruzzi comparable in the National Gallery of Canada: *The Tree of Jesse*, circa 1530, pen and brown ink with brown wash over black chalk on laid paper, 41.6 x 31.4 cm., Accession number 18693. In style and handling, this drawing is very close to our drawing.



Another example very close in the collection of the Städel Museum, Frankfurt: *Abduction of the Sabine women*, pen and brown ink, black chalk on paper, 12,7 x 10,8 cm, Object Number 563 Z.



Our final comparison: attributed to Baldassarre Peruzzi, *Soldiers in a landscape*, pen and brown ink, brown wash on paper, 23,6 x 34,8 cm, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris.



Baldassare Tommaso Peruzzi was an Italian architect and painter, born in a small town near Siena (in Ancaiano, frazione of Sovicille) and died in Rome. He worked for many years with Bramante, Raphael, and later Sangallo during the erection of the new St. Peter's. He returned to his native Siena after the Sack of Rome (1527) where he was employed as architect to the Republic. For the Sienese he built new fortifications for the city and designed (though did not build) a remarkable dam on the Bruna River near Giuncarico. He seems to have moved back to Rome permanently by 1535. He died there the following year and was buried in the Rotunda of the Pantheon, near Raphael.

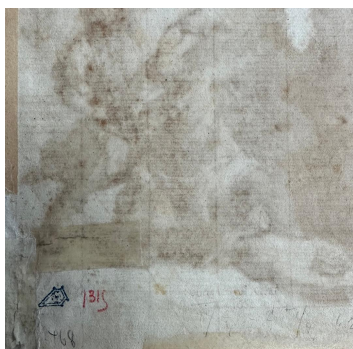
He was a painter of frescoes in the Cappella San Giovanni (Chapel of St John the Baptist) in the Duomo of Siena.

Almost all art critics ascribe the design of the Villa Chigi in Rome, now known more commonly as the Villa Farnesina, to Peruzzi. In this villa, two wings branch off from a central hall with a simple arrangement of pilasters, and a decorative frieze on the exterior of the building. Some of the frescoed paintings which adorn the interior rooms are by Peruzzi. One example is the Sala delle Prospettive, in which Peruzzi revived the perspective schemes of Melozzo da Forlì and Mantegna, possibly under the influence of both.

Peruzzi had produced a mosaic ceiling for the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome; the mosaic depicts the Saviour. Other paintings ascribed to him are to be found in Sant'Onofrio and San Pietro in Montorio. That Peruzzi improved as time went on is evident in his later works, the « *Madonna with Saints* » in Santa Maria della Pace at Rome, and the fresco of Augustus and the Tiburtine Sibyl in Santa Maria in Portico a Fontegiusta at Siena. As our master interested himself in the decorative art also, he exercised a strong influence in this direction, not only by his own decorative paintings but also by furnishing designs for craftsmen of various kinds. While primarily known as an architect, one of his great loves was drawing. His extraordinary pen and ink drawings for the basilica of St. Peter's are preserved in the Prints and Drawings Collection of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence: over 500 drawings (mostly architectural). He was especially well known for his extraordinary studies of antique buildings, as seen in *The Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* (1502–1503) in the Allen Memorial Art Museum.

His final architectural masterpiece, the Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne (1535) located now on the 19th-century Corso Vittorio Emanuele, is well known for its curving facade, ingenious planning, and architecturally rich interior. The exterior details display a Mannerist-style.

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Baron Adolphe Augustin Rey de Villette (Milan 1864 - 1934 Breteuil), collector of drawings and prints, was architect in Boulogne-sur-Seine and Paris.

After graduating in architecture in 1888, Augustin Rey had a brilliant career as an architect: he was a laureate of the Institute and of the Central Society of Architects and participated in numerous architectural projects in Paris and in the provinces, such as the reformed church in Saintes. He is also known as one of the leaders of hygienic architecture.

A worldly man, Rey de Villette gave numerous receptions where artistic, learned and political personalities rubbed shoulders; lastly, a great watercolourist and art lover, he collected old master paintings brought back from his frequent travels throughout Europe. After 1917, a former curator of the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg was given the task of cataloguing and maintaining this collection. Augustin Rey often stayed in Florence, where he owned the dell'Aquila estate, and in Hythe, Kent, England.

This amateur lived in an environment of important collectors. His wife was one of the two daughters of the great antiquarian Spitzer, whose famous art collection required several public sales for its dispersion. He himself assembled a very large collection of drawings and prints from the 15th to 18th centuries, from all schools, most of which was realized, during his lifetime, in the sale described below.

Sale: 1931, 4-6 May, Berlin (at Hollstein and Puppel). Collection "Graf R. . de V. ." and other provenances. Drawings and prints from the 15th - 18th centuries. 1557 nos. Main names in the prints : Dürer, I. v. Meckenen, Schongauer, Lautensack, Hollar, Callot, Canaletto, Lucas of Leiden, Brueghel, van Ostade. And in the drawings, many great masters of whom we will mention especially Fra Bartolommeo, Boucher, Bruegel the old, Callot, Campagnola, Canaletto, van Dijck, Gellée, Giorgione, Goltzius, Goya, Guardi, Nanteuil, v. Orley, Ostade, Parmesan, Piazzetta, Pollaiuolo, Ruisdael, Tiepolo, Tintoretto, Velasquez, Veronese.

