

Caylus



ANNIBALE CARRACCI

(Bologna, 1560 – 1609)

Hercules Resting

1595-1597

Oil on copper laid on panel

23 x 33.3 cm

PROVENANCE:

Lyon & Turnbull, 27 November 2014, lot 39

RELATED LITERATURE:

POSNER, D. *Annibale Carracci: A Study in the Reform of Italian Painting Around 1590*. 2 vols. London: Phaidon, 1971.

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The Age of Correggio and the Carracci: Emilian Painting of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Exhibition catalogue. Washington D.C.: The National Gallery of Art, 1986.

DEMPSEY, Ch. *Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style*. Fiesole: Edizioni Cadmo, 2000.

BENATI, D. and RICCÒMINI, E. (eds). *Annibale Carracci*. Milan: Electa, 2006.

ROBERTSON, C. *The Invention of Annibale Carracci*. Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2008.

Born in Bologna in 1560, Annibale Carracci initially studied painting with his brother Agostino in the studio of their elder cousin Ludovico. Nonetheless, his earliest dated works, such as *The Crucifixion* of 1583 painted for Santa Maria della Carità, opt for the new naturalism which broke away from his master's Mannerist tradition. Also dating from this period are *The Butcher's Shop* in Christ Church, Oxford, and *Man eating Beans* in the Galleria Colonna in Rome, both genre scenes that reveal the artist's proximity to Bartolomeo Passarotti.

The Venetian chromatism evident in paintings such as *The Baptism of Christ* (1585) and *The Assumption of the Virgin* (1592) clearly reflect the time Carracci spent in Parma and Venice at this period. In 1582 Ludovico, Annibale and Agostino founded the Accademia degli Inaccaminati in Bologna and that same year the three artists started to collaborate on major works such as the frescos for the Palazzo Fava (1584) and those in the Palazzo Magnani (1588-1591), a type of painting in which Agostino revealed his superiority to the others. As a result, he received a commission in 1595 from Cardinal Odoardo Farnese to execute the decoration of the family palace in Rome. Its principal gallery (1597-1600), with Carracci's *The Triumph of Divine Love*, became the most outstanding example of the new pictorial trend.

The present *Hercules in repose* can be associated with the decorative cycle that Carracci depicted in the *camerino* of that palace. The cycle represents the Cardinal Virtues along with various images of Hercules, suggesting that the young Odoardo saw himself as a philosopher prince. Hercules is shown resting with the emblems of his triumphs at his feet opposite the Sphinx and Cerberus (fig. 1). Various compositional and iconographic parallels have been suggested for the figure, including Adam after the Creation in several works of this period, as well as the statue of the river god Tiber in the Belvedere Courtyard in the Vatican. Carracci probably first studied this image in a drawing, and a sheet sold at Sotheby's New York in 1998 can be directly related to the present painting (fig. 2). There is also another sketch that is probably related to the fresco in the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 3).



Fig. 1. Annibale Carracci, *Hercules resting, accompanied by the Sphinx.*, 1595-1597. Fresco.

Palazzo Farnese, France Embassy in Italy, Rome.



Fig. 2. Annibale Carracci, *Hercules reclining, and separate studies of his head and right foot*, 1595-1597. Black chalk, heightened with traces of white chalk, on blue paper, 258 x 396 mm.



Fig. 3. Annibale Carracci, *Hercules resting* (recto), 1595-1597. Black chalk, heightened with white, squared in black chalk on roght, on blue paper faded to brown-green, 366 x 533 mm. Cleveland Museum of Art (1997.52.a).