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Auction	Fine Art
Date	18.11.2021, ca. 10:44
Preview	12.11.2021 - 10:00:00 bis 15.11.2021 - 18:00:00

CHIESA, SILVESTRO
Genoa 1623 - 1657

Title: Monk at Prayer.
Technique: Oil on canvas.
Mounting: Relined.
Measurement: 68 x 54cm.
Frame/Pedestal: Framed.
Certificate:
Anna Orlando, Genua, September 2021, copy available.

Provenance:
Private ownership, Belgium.

The as yet unpublished painting offered here can be brought out of anonymity, as the stylistic features clearly point to the Genoese School, more specifically to the painter Silvestro Chiesa, whose oeuvre can now be expanded by one work.

This is an important discovery, since few works by this talented and naturalistic painter of the Genoese School are known, partly because he died "in his youth" during the plague of 1657, as his first biographer Raffaele Soprani reminds us (*Le Vite de' Pittori...* 1657, p. 217), and partly because many of his works are still undiscovered, wrongly attributed to other artists or remain in anonymity, as was long the case with the painting at hand.

Nevertheless, Chiesa had "great success" in his time, as Soprani goes on to describe. The biographer mentions some of his works conceived in Genoa for the churches of the Padri delle Scuole Pie and the Nostra Signora dei Servi. One of these has been preserved in its entirety and, in view of Soprani's reliable attribution, provides a guide for the reconstruction of his oeuvre. This is an altarpiece, now exhibited in the museums of the Strada Nuova in the Palazzo Bianco in Genoa, showing Blessed Gioacchino Piccolomini healing an epileptic boy. Some stylistic as well as technical details - from the colour of the grounding and the palette oriented towards earthy brown tones to the depiction of the drapery and the way the hands were executed - are very similar to Silvestro Chiesa's key work and allow the artistic attribution of the painting before us. The powerful naturalism that characterises the style of this master is also evident here. This can also be seen in this unprecedented, expressive figure of the praying monk with its convincing naturalism. It is a naturalism that can also be found in the little-known, museum-quality work *The Suffering of Job* in the Finnish

National Gallery in Helsinki.

Even more convincing is the depiction attributed to Chiesa of the blind Homer dictating his verses in the Galleria Sabauda in Turin. In this case, too, clear comparisons can be made, both in terms of the general mood of the two works, based on an undoubtedly realistic approach, albeit tempered by sentimentality, and in terms of certain details in the execution.

Still typical of Silvestro Chiesa is the depiction of the drapery. The clear and insistent folds create suggestive plays of light and shadow.

Chiesa possessed the art of combining Caravaggio's realism with the calmer and sentimental approach of many Genoese painters - from Giovanni Andrea De Ferrari to Gioacchino Assereto, from Orazio De Ferrari to Luciano Borzone (the latter was not coincidentally his master).

We are grateful to Anna Orlando, Genoa, who confirmed the attribution of the present painting on the basis of a high-resolution digital photograph.

Estimate: 10.000 € - 12.000 €
