LOT 37
FEDERICO ZUCCARO
SANT' ANGELO IN VADO, MARCHES 1540/42 - 1609 ANCONA
TWO STUDIES OF A RECLINING MALE NUDE, WITH HIS LEFT ARM RAISED
Black and white chalk on faded blue paper
236 by 334 mm

ESTIMATE 12,000-18,000 GBP

PROVENANCE
John Skippe (on his mount),
thence by inheritance to Edward Holland-Martin,
his sale, London, Christie's, 20 November 1958, lot 78 (as Attributed to Cigoli), to Gladitz;
sale, London, Christie's, 30 March 1976, lot 2 (as Cigoli);
with Thomas Agnew & Sons Ltd., London, Master Drawings, 1977, no. 12 (as Jacopino del Conte)

CATALOGUE NOTE
Nicolas Turner first attributed this drawing to Federico Zuccaro in 1978, identifying the reclining figure of the young man, here studied twice, with the prisoner in the lower left hand corner of Federico's fresco, Paul and Silas praying in prison (fig. 1), one of three scenes that he executed in the vault of the Cappella Paolina, in the Vatican, at the centre of the triangular section above Michelangelo's Conversion of St. Paul. After Michelangelo executed his two large frescoes in the chapel the work was interrupted until 1573, when Don Vincenzo Borghini submitted, through Vasari, a plan for the remaining decoration. Pope Gregory XIII, Boncompagni, did not, however, accept these plans, instead
entrusting the project to a Bolognese artist, Lorenzo Sabatini, who would complete three scenes before his death in 1576. Three years later Federico Zuccaro took on the project, completing the final wall and the ceiling decorations in December 1581.

This broadly drawn, accomplished study, clearly made from a live model, is a type of drawing that is fairly rare in Federico's oeuvre, and it therefore reveals much about his working method, as well as his ability as a draughtsman. In this sheet Federico seems to have studied very carefully the plasticity of human forms, and he has succeeded brilliantly in his rendering of the complex foreshortening of the figure. The drawing dates from a crucial moment in Federico's artistic career, when he had the privilege of working at close quarters with Michelangelo's astonishing achievements in the Paolina, an experience that Federico clearly found of immense value, especially when drawing the human body.

Fig. 1

Federico Zuccaro, Paul and Silas praying in prison, Vatican, Cappella Paolina