

DOMENICO BECCAFUMI

Siennese school, 1486 (?) - 1551.

The leading Mannerist painter of Siena. According to Vasari, his real name was Mecherino, and he took the name of Beccafumi from an early patron of his. Vasari says that he died in 1549 at the age of 65. However, there is documentary evidence that he actually died in 1551. On the premise, therefore, that Vasari was correct about his age when he died, his date of birth is put in 1486. There are documented works of his from 1513 on -- by which time he had paid a visit to Rome. For the rest of his life, apart from visits to Genoa and Pisa, he remained working in Siena. He was involved there, from 1517 on, in designing the marble pavement of the Cathedral.

^{Sculpt}
~~1782~~ John the Baptist and Francis

oil on panel, each ^{panel} ~~panel~~ 12½ x 4½ ins.

Wings of a triptych, the centrepiece of which consists of a Madonna and Child in a Tabernacle, in carved and polychromed wood, 12½ x 8½ ins.

Colln. Edith Clowes.

Provenance

Newhouse Galleries, New York. Acquired by Mrs Clowes in 1960.

Literature

"Bacchiaca and his Friends" (cat. of Baltimore Museum of Art exhbn., Jan.-Feb. 1961), Baltimore Museum News Quarterly, 24, 2, winter 1961, p.51, no.41 ; G.Coor, Neroccio de' Landis, Princeton, 1961, p.52, n.168a.

Exhibited

Baltimore, 1961 (see lit.).

Certified by E.Sandberg-Vavala (1960) as a work by Beccafumi ; she cited J.Pope-Hennessy to the effect that the centrepiece was by a follower of Jacopo della Quercia (Sienese, 1374/5 - 1438)⁽¹⁾. Coor (1961) justly noted that this is a composite work. The sculpture she identified as Querciesque-Nerocciesque -- comparing Quercia's wooden group in S.Martino, Siena⁽²⁾ ; the wings as later, very different in character, and remote from the art of Beccafumi. She identified the right-hand saint as ~~St~~^{Saint} Francis, rather than ~~St~~^{Saint} Anthony as had previously been supposed. Pouncey (1966) suggested that the wings should be labelled Umbrian school, late fifteenth or early sixteenth century⁽³⁾ ; they have a provincial, Signorellian character.

The whole forms an interesting example of a composite devotional triptych, consisting of a wooden sculpted centrepiece and two painted wings. This combination may well go back to the sixteenth century.

Notes.

- x 1. Doc. in Clowes archives.
- 2. E.Carli, Scultura Lignea Senese, Milan, 1951, fig.121.
- 3. Statement to the compiler.