

JUSEPE DE RIBERA

Spanish school, 1591 (?) - 1652.

Ribera was known in Italy as "lo Spagnoletto". He was born at Jativa, near Valencia, and is almost certainly the "Joan Jusep Ribera" baptized in the Colegiata there on February 17, 1591. According to Palomino he studied with Francesco Ribalta at Valencia, but there is little or no evidence in his early paintings to suggest this. He went to Italy at an early age --the exact date is unknown-- and stayed there for the rest of his life. He spent several years in Rome, and may also have visited Parma and Padua. Subsequently he moved to Naples -- again the date is unknown, but probably around 1616 -- and did work for the Spanish viceroys. He was apparently on close terms there with Reni, Stanzione, Lanfranco and Domenichino. He may also have met Guercino, and certainly knew his work. The last years of his life were years of hardship, ending with his death in Naples. Ribera's style is based essentially on that of Caravaggio and his followers in Naples. There are dated etchings of his from 1621 onwards, and his first dated painting is of 1626, by which ^{time} he belonged to the Accademia di San Luca in Rome. Many of his paintings were sent to Spain by the patrons who commissioned them, and Ribera's art correspondingly played a key role in the spread of Caravagism to Spain.

^{An Ancient}
Philosophy (called Archimedes)

oil on canvas, 49 X 39 ins.

signed bottom left "Jusepe de Ribera,
español F. 1637".

Condition

Good. The character of the sleeve suggests some repainting in that area.

Provenance

Fürstlich Lichtensteinsche Gemäldegalerie, Vaduz, Lichtenstein (by 1767) ^① ~~of origin unknown~~; Newhouse Galleries, New York. Acquired by Dr Clowes in 1955.

Literature

A.L.Mayer, Jusepe de Ribera, Leipzig, 1908, p.188 ; 1923 ed., p.201 ; A.Krönfeld, Führer durch der fürstlich Lichtensteinsche Gemäldegalerie in Wien, Vienna, 1931, p.23, cat.no. A 57^②; B.de Pantorba, Jose de Ribera, Barcelona, 1946, p.25 ; E.H.Turner, "Ribera's Philosophers", Wadsworth Athenaeum Bull., spring 1958, p.5, n.5 and pp.7f, fig.2 ; D.Fitz Darby, "Ribera and the Wise Men", Art Bull., 45, 1962, pp.298f. and fig.9.

Exhibited

Paintings and Graphics by Jusepe Ribera, Oberlin College, Ohio, winter 1957, cat.no.4 (Allen Memorial Art Museum Bull., 14, 2, winter 1957, p.74) ; Ind., 1959, no. 49.

One of a series of paintings by Ribera of the "wise men" or ancient philosophers. The total number of canvases in the series in question is unclear, and so is the identification of the figures in them. The present work --along with five other philosophers --was evidently in the Lichtenstein collection by 1767.^③ How they were acquired and where they came from is unknown.

In the eighteenth century the Lichtenstein figures were identified as Aristotle, Plato, Crates, Anaxagoras, Diogenes and Protagoras.^④ Subsequently the present philosopher --shown holding papers which include a sketch of intersecting spheres -- was identified as Archimedes.^⑤ According to Fitz Darby, however, the figure is to be taken as Aristotle, in doctor's cap and gown.^⑥

Notes

Notes

1. See no. 3^b below.
2. The prefix "A"^h refers back to the 1873 cat. (by O. Miethke).
3. Descrizione completa di tutto ciò che ritrovasi nella Galleria di pittura e scultura di sua altezza Guiseppe Wenceslas del S.R.I. principe regnante della casa di Lichtenstein, Vienna, 1767, p.105. The listing of six works here seems to go against Fitz Darby's suggestion that there were originally three more paintings in the seriessm corresponding to the missing numbers A 56, 373 and 375.
4. See the cat. cited in n.3, and also Description de tableaux et des pièces de sculpture que renferme la Galerie de Son altesse Francois Joseph chef et prince regnant de la maison de Lichtenstein, Vienna, 1780, pp.160 and 169. It is not clear which numbers in Krönfeld's 1931 cat. correspond to each of these identifications. The other five philosophers appear in that cat. as A 55, 372, 374, 376 and 377. A 377, signed and dated 1636, is inscribed with the name of Anaxagoras, but it is not clear if this inscription is contemporary. A 55 is called Diogenes and A 57, the present work, Archimedes. A 372, 374, 376, all said to be dated 1637, are listed as unidentified philosophers. A 376, sold along with the Clowes painting, is now in the Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford (Turner, op.cit., fig.1), and a third painting sold is in a U.S. private colln. (ibid., fig.3). A 55 is illustrated in A. Strix and E.V. Strohmer, Die Fürstlich Liechtensteinsche Gemälgalerie in Wien, Vienne, 1938, pl.19; the remaining two have never been published.
5. See n.4
6. She suggested (pp.288ff., 296ff.) that Prado no.1121, called there Archimedes (Catalogo de Las Pinturas, 1963 ed., p.551 ; dated 1630) should in fact be identified as Democritus, the laughing philosopher; and that Prado no.1120, called Aesop, may be an "unrevised" Aristotle.