

ANDREA DEL SARTO

Florentine school, 1486-1530.

Born in Florence in July 1486, this artist was the son of Agnolo di Francesco, a tailor --hence his name "del Sarto". According to Vasari, he was apprenticed to a goldsmith at the age of seven, was then with the painter Gian Barile, and finished his training under Piero di Cosimo. In December 1508 he matriculated in the guild of Medici e Speciali. Vasari also states that he shared a workshop early on with Franciabigio. He spent most of his life in Florence as the leading artist of the High Renaissance there, but went to France in 1518-19 at the invitation of Francis I. Most of his extant works consist of religious images and portraits. He died of the plague in September 1530.

Episode from the Life of ^{San} Filippo Benizzi : the
Punishment of the Gamblers
oil on panel, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 24 ins.

Provenance

Chevalier Joseph Toscanelli, Florence (1883)⁽¹⁾; Lowengaard colln., Paris; Böhler and Steinmeyer, Lucerne; Julian H. Haass - Mrs Lillian H. Haass, Detroit; Newhouse Galleries, New York. Acquired by Dr Clowes in 1959.

Literature

S. Reinach, Répertoire des Peintures du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance, 6 vols., Paris, 1905-25, I, 1905, p.539; S.J. Freedberg, Andrea del Sarto,^{2 vols.} Cambridge, Mass., 1963, I, p.221⁽²⁾; A. Pinelli, "Pier Francesco di Jacopo Foschi", Gazette des Beaux Arts,^{6^e sér.} 1969, pp.105f., n.20 (line 3 there misplaced).

Exhibited

Ind., 1959, no.52.

Early in his career Andrea del Sarto painted five frescoes depicting scenes from the life of ^{San} Filippo Benizzi in the atrium of the Annunziata Church in Florence; the last of them is dated 1510. The present work corresponds, in its subject-matter and the general arrangement of the figures, to the second of those frescoes (in narrative order). It was reproduced by Reinach⁽¹⁾ as by Sarto himself. Freedberg, however,⁽²⁾ assigned it to Pier Francesco Foschi or Toschi (1502-1567) -- a follower of Sarto's⁽³⁾ -- and this attribution has since been supported by Pinelli⁽⁴⁾. It appears fully justified.⁽⁴⁾ A comparable work, equally attributable to Foschi, is the Payment of the Workers in the Vineyard,⁽⁵⁾ based on Sarto's lost fresco of that subject in the cloister garden of the Annunziata. Pinelli tentatively suggested that the Clowes panel might have formed part of the predella of Toschi's Altarpiece of ^{San} Peter and Filippo Benizzi in the church of San Benedetto, San Frediano, Florence. This appears possible in terms of size, but not really likely.⁽⁶⁾

In the episode depicted, some gamblers and profligate young men mocked at the saint's devotion as he was going up the Monte Senario with three members of his brotherhood. When a storm came on, the brothers drew their cowls over their heads and quietly went on their way. The mockers ran to a tree for shelter and were killed by lightning.⁽⁷⁾

Notes.

1. See pl. XIX in the 1883 cat. of this colln.

2. As in Haess colln.

3. For this artist's known works in painting (three altarpieces in San Spirito, Florence) and other documented or attributed frescoes, see O.H. Giglioli, "Affreschi inediti di Pier Francesco di Jacopo di Domenico Toschi", Bolletino d'Arte, 32, 1938, pp. 25ff. See also, for further literature on him, preceding Pinelli's article: R. Longhi, "Avvio a Pier Francesco Toschi", Paragone, 43, 1953, pp. 53f.; M. Pouncey, "Five Drawings by Pierfrancesco di Jacopo di Domenico Toschi", Burl. Mag., 99, 1957, p. 159; and D. Sanminiatielli, "Foschi e non Toschi", Paragone, 91, 1957, pp. 55ff.

Notes, cont.

4. In an oral opinion given to the compiler in 1966, P.Pouncey also supported the attribution. He compared the heads and expressions in the drawing in his own colln., pub. by M.Pouncey (see n.2)

5. Priv.colln., Berlin. See U.Schlegel, "Tafelbilder des Cinquecento Fiorentino in Berliner Privatbesitz", Pantheon, 21, 1963, p.42, ill.

6. The width of the altarpiece was given by Pinelli as 1.85 m. -- i.e. a little over 72 ins; Pinelli suggested a date for it of towards 1540. Foschi's Altarpiece of the Immaculate Conception in S.Spirito, Florence (cfr. n.2) has three predella panels, which are about one tenth the height of the altarpiece itself.

7. A.Jameson, Legends of the Monastic Orders as represented in the Fine Arts, 2nd ed., London, 1852, p.216.