

FRANCISCO DE ZURBARAN

Spanish school, 1598 - 1664.

Francisco de Zurbaran Salazar was born on November 7, 1598 at Fuente de Cantos in the province of Badajoz, and was apprenticed by 1614 to Pedro Díaz de Villanueva in Seville --an artist who was perhaps a pupil of Juan de la Roelas there. He was greatly influenced by the work of the Italian tenebrists, Ribera and the young Velasquez. He resided in Llerena in the province of Badajoz from 1617 to 1628, and then in 1629 moved to Seville at the request of the town council and settled there. His first work there, commissioned in September 1629, was the altarpiece of Saint Joseph for the Church of the Trinidad Calza. In May 1630 the painters' guild in Seville, headed by Alonso Cano, ordered Zurbaran to submit to an examination, but the town council supported him in his refusal and commissioned an Immaculate Conception for the town hall as a vote of confidence. In 1634 he is recorded in Madrid, collaborating on the decoration of the Buen Retiro palace, and was paid for the series of the Labour of Hercules in the Prado. He also did two historical pictures for the Hall of Realms, only one of which, the Defense of Cadiz, is preserved. He returned to Seville with the title of painter to the King and worked from 1636 onwards on a large cycle of paintings for the Charterhouse of Jerez de la Frontera. Between 1640 and 1658 he produced works for South American patrons as well as for Spanish churches. He apparently returned to Madrid and lived there from 1658 on, but by that time his handling had deteriorated in quality. He died in Madrid on August 7, 1664.

A Monk being Stoned

oil on canvas, 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins.

Condition

The painting appears heavily retouched in the head, hands and sky.⁽¹⁾

Provenance

Acquired by Dr Clowes in 19 .

Literature

~~(see below)~~

Evidently one of the series of canvases of Mercedarian martyrs, painted for the lower cloister of the Barefoot Mercedarians of the Church of San José in Seville ; the date of around 1636 for this series comes from the fact that Zurbaran did two paintings for the church which are dated that year. Thirty-eight paintings from the series passed to the Alcazar in Seville in 1810 ; sixteen were subsequently in the Galerie Espagnole of Louis-Philippe. Soria catalogued twenty-three paintings from the series in all⁽²⁾ -- but did not include the present work, which corresponds in size to the remainder (approximately 61x41 cm.). It has generally been agreed that Zurbaran's workshop was wholly or largely responsible for the execution of the series⁽³⁾; and the present work, from its quality, is to be attributed to the workshop correspondingly.

It is not possible to establish the identity of any of the individual martyrs depicted.

Notes.

1. Other paintings from the same series (see below) are also in doubtful condition -- e.g the Cistercian Monk Praying in the Museo Greco. Toledo.

2. M.S.Soria, The Paintings of Zurbaran, Phaidon Press, 1953, pp.173f., cat. no.163.

cont.

3. See D. Angulo Iniguez, "Francisco Zurbaran, Martires Mercedarios", San Carlo Borromeo", Archivo Español de Arte, 14, 1940-41, p.372 ; P. Guimard, "Zurbaran et la Découverte de la Peinture Espagnole en France sous Louis Philippe", in Hommage à Ernest Martinenche, Paris, 1939, pp.23ff., ^{and} ibid., Zurbaran et les Peintres Espagnoles de la Vie Monastique, Paris, 1960, pp.196f., 261f. ~~and~~ Soria, loc. cit.