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THE THREE ARCHANGELS
BY NERI DI BICCI
Florence 1419-1491

THE THREE ARCHANGELS BY NERI DI BICCI

Those who have visited Florence will remember as one of the city's most harmonious architectural impressions, the basilica of Santo Spirito on the left bank of the Arno, designed by the greatest of the early Renaissance architects, Filippo Brunelleschi (begun in 1436). Adopting as it does the full Latin cross, with square ends to the arms, and the aisles carried completely around them, it affords fine perspectives from all parts of the interior. It was not finished until the last decades of the fifteenth century (the dome completed in 1482), long after the death of Brunelleschi, but must have been in use long before that time, for we know that in 1471 Neri di Bicci received an order for a large altarpiece to be executed for the della Palla family for their chapel in Santo Spirito. This altarpiece, which for several generations adorned the Palla chapel, has through a curious change of fortune, come into the possession of the Art Institute.

Neri di Bicci (1419-1491), well-known to visitors of the Academy in Florence, where five of his altarpieces are shown, or of the Louvre, where he is represented by a large *Annunciation* and a *Madonna*¹, was a follower of Fra Angelico, Domenico Veneziano, and Fra Filippo Lippi. He has left a diary (*libro di ricordi*) now in the state archives of Florence, covering the period from 1453 to 1475, in which he notes under the date of May 7, 1471, that he "began to paint for Mariotto di Marco della Palla an altarpiece on which will appear the Angel Raphael and Tobias, to the right the Angel Michael and to the left the Angel Gabriel; in addition, below the feet of the Angel Raphael, a small picture representing the crucifixion with St. John and the Virgin, and next two little angels; the predella will represent the miracles of the Angel Raphael."² From this description we can easily recognize our painting, in which only the small predella pictures are missing. As Dr.

Gronau has established from documents, the Pallas owned the seventh chapel on the right in Santo Spirito, and this chapel was dedicated to the three archangels who are represented in our panel.

In the chapel which formerly housed the altarpiece of Neri di Bicci, we now find a baroque marble relief representing Raphael and Tobias which was placed there in 1698; but Neri's work must have left its original place long before this, as the Palla family had died out as early as the sixteenth century and the chapel was afterward owned by a charitable society, who dedicated another altarpiece to their own saint. It is not until the middle of the nineteenth century that we again encounter our painting,—in the well-known collection of Alexander Barker of London, from which it was sold in 1874 at Christie's. In the sale catalogue it appears wrongly as a work of Lorenzo di Bicci, the father of Neri, and the erroneous statement is made that the picture is described by Vasari. Vasari, indeed, confuses the work of the two artists, but the painting by Lorenzo di Bicci which he mentions is a fresco in San Marco, Florence (now destroyed), not an altarpiece like ours.

After the sale at Christie's the painting came into the possession of the Earl of Somers, Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire, whose daughter, Lady Henry Somerset, bequeathed it to her son, Henry Charles Somers Somerset, The Priory, Reigate, and from here it came into the possession of a Paris dealer, from whom the Museum acquired it.

Neri di Bicci is not generally regarded as a great personality in art. If we look up his name in the art histories, we find almost everywhere the same statement: that art became with him a trade and that he knew the mechanical side of his profession well but had little emotional quality. One of the popular writers even asserts that he was so little of an artist

¹In this country there are some paintings by him in the Jarves collection of Yale University, in the John C. Johnson collection in Philadelphia, and a large altarpiece in the Michael Friedsam collection, New York.

²Reprinted in *Rivista d'Arte*, Vol. III, p. 39, 1895.

N. B. I am indebted to Mr. Marcel Nicolle of Paris for his helpful information regarding the history of our painting.

that his pupils ran away from him, though we know quite the contrary to be true and that a number of good artists like Francesco Botticini, Cosimo Roselli and Guisto d'Andrea joined his successful studio as his assistants. No doubt Neri di Bicci cannot be compared with masters like Fra Angelico, Fra Filippo, Botticelli, or the Pollaiuoli; but when we consider that he was one of the most popular artists of his time in Florence and received more orders than he was able to fill, we may be sure that his merits must have been considerable, for he lived in a time when culture and taste were at their height in Florence.

Like most good artisans, Neri di Bicci, the last of the family of artists whom Vasari calls "the last Giottoesques," is conservative and used the gold ground in a period when in Florence it was generally given up. But how wonderfully he makes use of this gilding! The gold is not only in itself of greatest luminosity and applied in a most durable manner, but it permeates all the other colours, most of which are underlaid with it, heightening the brilliant effect, especially of the different shades of vivid red. Without question Neri di Bicci shows himself a splendid colourist in this altarpiece. The dark blue of Tobias's robe is surrounded by a gorgeous carmine in the costumes of the three angels, while the brown of the large spread-out peacock wings of St. Raphael draws the colour composition together. What a richness of colour he has achieved in the details without destroying the harmony of the whole! Observe how silver has been added in certain parts, as in Tobias's fish and St. Michael's sword; how each pair of wings and each pair of shoes differs in colour; how charmingly the landscape has been enlivened by the touches of white in the river with its little boats, the towers of the city in the distance and the flowers among the rocks in the foreground! In the design, also, we find more vitality than is usual in his compositions, though his typical characteristics are present in the faces with their heavy chins, thick

noses and somewhat lifeless eyes. And what a fine contrast he has achieved between the courageous, energetic figure of St. Michael and the quiet, thoughtful Gabriel with the spray of lilies in his hand and his expression of gentle peace; while between the two, a symbol of helpfulness, walks the archangel Raphael, leading Tobias by the hand, his other hand bearing aloft the box of ointment destined for the healing of Tobias's father. Thus we may assume that the artist endeavored to portray three types of human character, the warrior, the peacemaker and the active worker.

This is the holy story transformed into a charming worldly narrative, a brilliant pageant, in accordance with the gay and festive spirit of the Florence of this period. Of the tragic side of the Christian story only the small tablet of the crucifixion in the foreground speaks, so small that it may almost be overlooked by reason of the two cheerful angels at either side of it.¹

The subject of our picture is not an unusual one in Florentine paintings, especially during the last decades of the fifteenth century. When a younger member of an important family left home for his first journey of apprenticeship, often, in the interest of his welfare, a painting was ordered in which the incident was symbolized as Tobias protected on his wanderings by St. Raphael, or even by all three archangels. Not long after our painting had been executed, another picture of the same subject was ordered from the studio of Verrocchio for a chapel at Santo Spirito, by Gino Capponi—the well-known composition in the Uffizi. It has therefore been suggested that the figure of Tobias in this altarpiece represents the youngest son of the Capponi family, Alessandro, who went to Lyons to open a branch of the Florentine firm; so we may possibly recognize the portrait of one of the sons of the Palla family in our picture. It is not unlikely that the order for this famous composition from Verrocchio's atelier, which is sometimes attributed to Botticini, who also worked with Neri di

¹The same arrangement of a small crucifixion in the foreground, at the side of which two angels are kneeling, is found in the altarpiece by this artist in the Cologne Museum.

Bicci, had been suggested by the painting in the Palla chapel.

There is unquestionably some connection between the two paintings, and while it is not likely that Neri was the inventor of this composition, but used an older type, we may believe that Verrocchio and the Botticellesque artist (according to Berenson, Amico di Sandro, who executed the Turin painting) were influenced by Neri's work. In both the Uffizi and the Turin paintings, all four figures are advancing in a phalanx-like march, giving by this diagonal arrangement a feeling of depth to the composition; while Neri di Bicci keeps the earlier style, in which only the two center figures are advancing, while the figures at the sides are standing in contraposition, in a line which keeps the relief planes flat, as in a Gothic tapestry, to whose effect it may be compared in all its decorative qualities.

In fixing our eyes only upon the great

personalities in art we are inclined to forget how high the level of the decorative arts must have been in their time in order to make these exceptional personalities possible. How few of the Florentine masters there are who did not begin their careers as simple artisans—men who developed to such greatness as Donatello, Ghiberti, Botticelli and the Pollaiuoli—and who never neglected in their masterpieces this fundamental sense for decoration which they learned as masons, mural painters or goldsmiths. In a museum, which should be of help in the development of modern arts and crafts, important examples of works of decorative painting, which show the high standard of the handicrafts of the great periods, should not be missing. We are fortunate in being able to present to the public a masterpiece of decoration by one of the most talented artisans of the great Renaissance age.

W. R. V.

A BYZANTINE IVORY COFFER OF THE IX CENTURY

The Museum has recently been very fortunate to acquire a rare and important Byzantine ivory casket belonging to the Syro-Hellenistic type and dating probably in the IX century. A similar casket with fronting eagles and lion motifs from the Spitzer collection is in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; another casket of nearly similar type is in the Rhodes Hawkins collection of the British Museum; while a third is in this country and is one of the distinguished ivories purchased by Mr. Morgan from the Hoentschel collection and now on exhibit in the Morgan wing of the Metropolitan Museum. There is also a fourth and very fine casket with Christian motifs in the Cleveland Museum, known as the Bethune casket. Our casket thus belongs to a small but notable group, all coming within the Iconoclastic Period (726-842 A. D.) and the larger number from Constantinople. O. M. Dalton, the Keeper of Ivories in the British Museum, states very pre-

cisely the importance of this work when he says,¹ "Ivory carvings of the Christian East possess a higher relative importance to Byzantine art as a whole than do those in the West to occidental art." The casket is rectangular in shape with a sliding cover (although circular shapes or pyxides are also known). Both these shapes were inherited from the jewelled coffers of Roman prototypes.

The two side and end panels of our ivory are carved in low, flat relief, representing mythological animals and wild beasts of Syrian origin, while the cover panel is carved with dancing figures of Hellenistic origin, very probably representing the games of the Hippodrome held during the reign of Constantine and his first successors at Constantinople.

Very finely carved rosettes alternating with daisies enclosed in contiguous circlets with simulated leaf motifs between them add richness and delicacy to a pattern admirably suited to the aesthetic capaci-

1 O. M. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, p. 179.

ties of ivory, even if a trifle static in effect rather than flowing as would be the case in a Persian or Arabic motif. Upon the cover an outer border of simulated berries alternating with leaves, completes the variety of ornaments employed. These borders occur in most of the coffers of this period.

Fig. 1 shows three animal groups carved in pairs, representing in the center, we believe, a dog or wolf attacking a deer, balanced with fronting griffons on one side and peacocks on the other, together with a single deer at the end of the panel, carved so that the continuity of line is retained with the fronting peacocks. The corresponding side has an evenly

Christian art of this period is due to the wholesale destruction by order of Christian emperors of the work that had already been done. The Arab conquest in the Near East in the seventh century was also a contributing cause to this unfortunate loss.

The cover of our box is of especial interest, illustrating as it probably does an incident from the Hippodrome games held at Constantinople. Three pairs of male and female nudes sway across the panel in a bacchanalian dance. Long flowing scarves are caught about their ankles; two of the troupe hold a tambourine, the center figure an oliphant or horn which he is blowing, the third a syrinx,

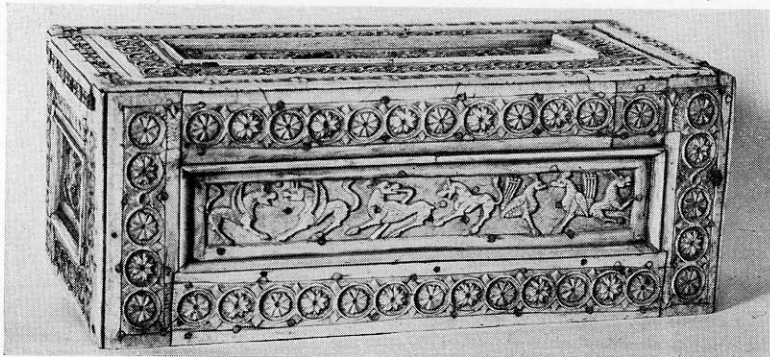


FIG. 1 BYZANTINE IVORY CASKET. IX CENTURY

balanced sequence of animals paired in three groupings: the center fronting lions before a "tree of life" motif balanced by fronting griffons on the right and a wolf or dog attacking a deer on the left. The dog, the wolf and the deer are all easily distinguishable in the similar Hoentschel casket of the Morgan collection.

The origin of the animal motifs and the treatment (or the flattening of the relief) is Syrian or Mesopotamian, whence the ivory carvers turned for inspiration following the iconoclastic decrees, when direct representation of religious subjects was strictly forbidden. We have to regret that much of the vagueness concerning

and the fourth a flowing scarf. Here the Hellenistic influence—the representation of figures, which was likely of Alexandrian origin—is fused with the Oriental animal motifs and combined in the one carving.

The panels, which are backed with wood, are joined to one another by small dowels, or ivory pegs, equidistant from each other.

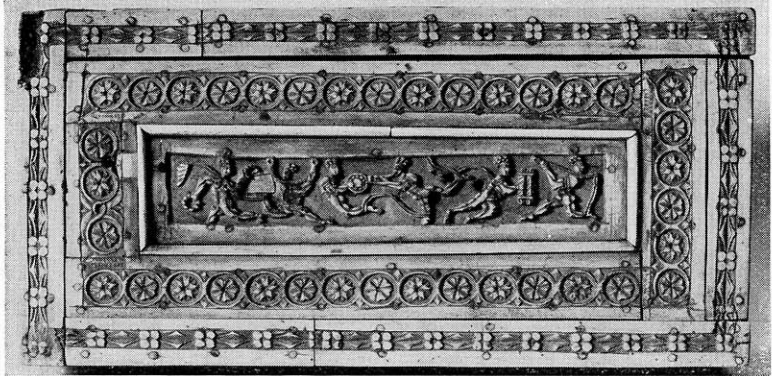
The history of East Christian ivories falls briefly into two periods, commonly referred to as the first golden age (third to sixth century) and the second golden age, to which our casket belongs, or the period of Iconoclasm, and that epoch

immediately following from the ninth to the eleventh century.

In the first period three Eastern capitals became prominent as ivory centers, each one developing along its own racial traditions—Alexandria preserving the Greek spirit, Antioch in Syria and Palestine preserving the Oriental. A number of diptychs carved with Christian subjects of the Virgin enthroned holding the Christ Child, and the Crucifixion, were executed in this first period, sometimes with purely Greek influence inspired by sculptured sarcophagi and sometimes with Eastern influences inspired by Coptic textiles.

cloths and from Assyrian traditions, became prominent, while the Oriental influence changed the technique by flattening the relief, the tendency of the Greek being to carve in high relief. Since Antioch was one of the large trade groups connecting Asia with the West through the Mediterranean Sea, it was bound to play an important part in sending Oriental ideas into Europe.

In the second golden age, these eastern-most capitals lost prominence, and ivory carving became centered about Constantinople, where many Syrian workers were responsible for uniting Oriental motifs with the Greek. In this period, from the



COVER OF BYZANTINE IVORY CASKET. IX CENTURY

The Arab conquest abruptly arrested much of this work and the ivory carvers were driven, some to Italy, others to Syria and Palestine, while a great many found work at Constantinople. Then, too, the decrees during the wave of iconoclasm prevented the continuance of original traditions. The Iconoclastic Age is, however, responsible for two very important changes. If it ended for the time being representation of religious subjects on the one hand, it gave new impetus and new motives on the other. It revived interest in Greek subjects and introduced Oriental themes. From Antioch, Mesopotamian motifs derived both from Coptic

ninth to the eleventh century, ivory coffers first came into wide use. They were employed for both reliquary and secular purposes. In sacred uses they were receptacles containing the ashes of saints; in secular uses they were employed as coffers for jewelry. Such was probably the use of the famous and perhaps the most important casket extant, the Veroli casket in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the finest example of the Hellenistic school,

There was, during this second period, a close relationship between the workers in ivory, the illustrators of manuscripts and the silversmiths. A silver casket of the eleventh century, one of the treasures

of the Vatican Library, is an instance of this similarity.¹

Finally it was at Constantinople that the East and West met and fused their

respective cultures into an art which we designate, for want of a better term, Byzantine.

A.C.E.

ACCESSIONS TO THE PRINT DEPARTMENT

Five prints, all by early and important masters, have recently been added to the Print collection of the Institute. *The Baptism of Christ*, by Martin Schongauer; *The Grand Ball*, by Master M. Z. (Zatsinger); *Fortune*, by Master A. S., and the landscape, *Conversion of St. Paul*, by Augustin Hirschvogel, all splendid impressions, carry us back to the beginning of the history of the graphic arts.

First in point of time and achievement, comes Martin Schongauer of Colmar, who before Dürer was the best engraver in Germany. Primitive masters had preceded him, nameless for the most part, or identified only by their initials or the dates upon their plates; but Schongauer may justly be considered the Father of the Northern schools of engraving.

He was the first of those early men who were more definitely engravers than painters or goldsmiths, and while no picture is certified by his signature or document, he left more than one hundred engravings, authenticated by his signature, "M. S.," with a cross, one arm of which is hooked.

The date of his birth is disputed, and our knowledge of the facts of his personal life is but meager. Sometime between the years 1445 and 1450, Schongauer was born at Colmar, of good family, and we read of his matriculation at the University of Leipsic. His father was a goldsmith, and the son was also trained in this craft. We know that he was held in high esteem by his contemporaries, and that the great Dürer journeyed to Colmar to visit him, only to find that Schongauer had recently died.

Burgkmair, the well known painter of Augsburg, writes of Schongauer's fame

as an artist, and tells us that he was called "*Hubsch*," not because of his person, but because of his art.

The Master E. S., who was the most noted engraver before Schongauer, had struggled with the difficulties of perspective, had clung to the Gothic forms of architecture, and made no attempt to use other than the provincial types of his day. Schongauer in his early work followed closely the technique of this engraver, but his distinction lies in the fact that he was to surmount the difficulties which had troubled his predecessors. He had a much greater knowledge of perspective, he learned to differentiate the strength of his lines and to have them follow the curves of the body. His figures stand out from their surroundings, the folds of his draperies were freer and more decorative, and he sought always the perfection of form.

Not a great draughtsman, Schongauer created a new type of beauty, mystical and serene. His madonnas and saints have a tenderness unknown to the realistic masters of the north, and as time went on his compositions were more and more simplified. He no longer fills his backgrounds with rich architectural designs which most of the masters of the period delighted in, but became, on the contrary, sparing of details. His power of fantastic invention was great, and his *Temptation of St. Anthony*, also in the collection of the Institute, so delighted Michelangelo, that he made a drawing of it.

Owing to the fact that Schongauer did not date his plates, it is difficult to arrange them chronologically. Von Wurzbach, however, has grouped them in three

¹ Illustrated in Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, Fig. 342.

periods, according to the excellence of their technique. In the first period are those prints produced under Netherlandish influence, the second before the Boisserée picture of St. Bartholomew, and the third, a time of refined originality, from this date until his death. To this last period belong the beautiful *Angel of the Annunciation*, also possessed by the Institute, and the newly acquired *Baptism of Christ*.

This print, fine in composition, with the benign Christ as the central figure, has all the reverent feeling, the simplicity

substance being allowed to cool and harden. The surface of the plate was highly polished, and the design appeared in black on a bright surface.

Mediæval manuscripts speak of the art. Eracilius, a Roman of the eleventh century, and Theophilus, a monk of the thirteenth century, describe the process, as did Vasari and Cellini in the sixteenth. Vasari asserts that Finiguerra was the first worker who took proofs or impressions from his plates, and though this is disputed, it is certain that the art was known to this famous goldsmith.



THE GRAND BALL BY M. Z. (ZATSINGER) ABOUT 1500

and sincerity which Schongauer in his last period expressed with so much skill.

The Niello print is of beautiful quality and has for the student an historical as well as esthetic value, for it was from this art that engraving derives its origin. Niello was a process known for centuries to gold and silver smiths. It was a method of treating an engraved gold or silver plate by filling the furrows made by the engraver's tool with a black substance (nigellum) formed by the fusion of copper, lead, and sulphur, which gives the art its name. The powdered niello was laid on the plate, and so run into the lines; the

Tuscany was the chief home of niello, and it was a practice among these craftsmen to make sulphur casts of their work, rubbing the lines with lamp black, thus gaining a more perfect idea of the state of their engravings. At a later date it was discovered that a proof could be taken on dampened paper, by filling the engraved lines with ink, and by pressure, bringing the ink out of the lines on to the paper. This was the beginning of plate engraving, though the niellist used it chiefly as a means of proving his design.

Outside of Italy the art of niello was little practiced, the Florentine school, and



THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST
BY MARTIN SCHONGAUER. C., 1440-91

the Bolognese school headed by Francia, producing most of the beautiful plates.

Master A. S. is cataloged by Bartsch as an unknown German master and the print was formerly in the well known Davidsohn collection.

The Grand Ball by M. Z., or Zatsinger as he is called, is the work of an early German master who flourished about the year 1500. His name is disputed, and his prints were signed merely with the initials M. Z. He was of Bavarian origin and tradition has him a painter and a pupil of Wolgemut. Whatever doubt may exist as to the identity and history of this master, we have a permanent record of his work in the twenty-three or four prints which have been preserved.

Master M. Z. came after Schongauer, and before Dürer, and though he lacked the strength and certainty of these great masters, he was an important figure in a period of transition. He had a wide range of subject, being particularly happy in his portrayal of the local life of his day. *The Grand Ball*, one of his best known works, is a study of the manners and customs of his own city. It represents a ball given by the Grand Duke Albrecht IV of Bavaria, who may be seen in the alcove,

playing at cards with a lady of the court. Despite the faulty drawing, this print has a strong sense of movement, and gives us, as did the best of Master M. Z.'s work, a sprightly and charming study of mediæval life.

Augustine Hirschvogel (1503-1563), who died thirty-five years after Dürer, was an etcher of Nuremberg, and a close follower of Altdorfer. He seems to have been a most versatile man, knowing the arts of glass painting, enameling and painting, as well as etching.

His landscape, *Conversion of St. Paul*, has a decidedly modern feeling. Though scriptural in theme, it is really a landscape. It has the directness, the economy of line, the power of suggestion of a modern etching. It was in this field that Hirschvogel excelled, and this print, with the others in the Print Department by this master, give us an excellent idea of the development of etching in Germany after the time of Dürer.

Early prints of fine quality are becoming increasingly rare, and these five prints recently acquired are of great importance, representing as they do, consecutive developments in the history of graphic art.

I. W.

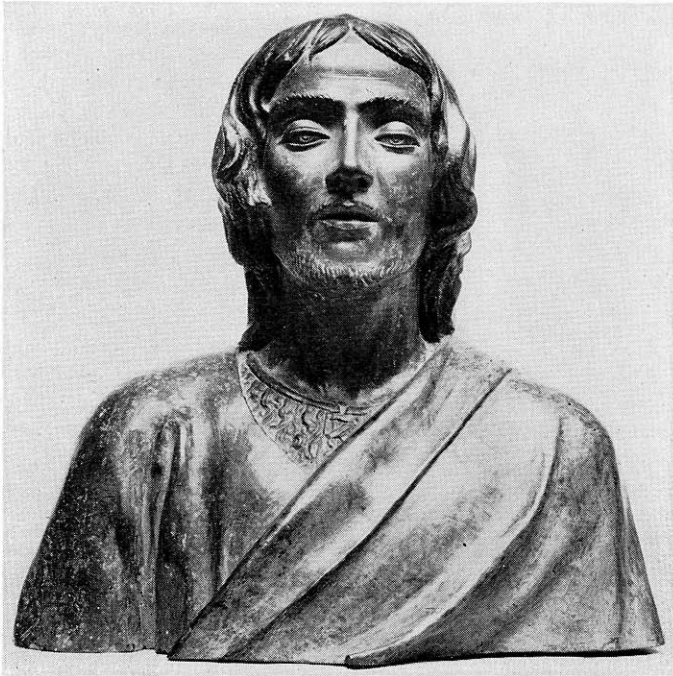


NIELLO PRINT

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST BY BENEDETTO DA MAJANO

From Donatello to Michelangelo, almost every one of the great Florentine sculptors has treated the subject of St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of Florence. The theme of the preacher in the wilderness appealed to the realistic sense of the Renaissance sculptors as well as to their spiritual attitude, and the result is a wonderful series of different representations which are preserved to us in the form of busts, statues, or statu-

In a painted terracotta bust by Benedetto da Majano (1442-1497) acquired by the Institute, we find a compromise between the two tendencies. The fine and regular features of the young saint are imbued with a spirituality which is naturally lacking in the portrait busts in which aristocratic Florentine families had their children disguised as St. John as a playmate of the Christchild. Our bust reproduces not the individuality of any partic-



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST BY BENEDETTO DA MAJANO
Florence 1442-1497

ettes, executed in terracotta, marble or bronze.

Beginning with the powerful naturalism and passionate fervour of the sculptures of Donatello, the characterization becomes more pleasing and delicate with his followers in the second half of the fifteenth century, beautiful busts of St. John as a child by Desiderio and Rossellino, replacing the ascetic figures of their great master.

ular model, but gives the pure idea of the artist, who strives for a faithful rendering of the theme without giving up his feeling for charm and beauty. And we may say that he has succeeded to a high degree in expressing the idea of a youth enthralled by the great and strange message of a new religion. Beautifully is the effect of it revealed in the eyes directed firmly at a distant vision, in the vibration of the sensitive nostrils, in the half-open mouth

breathing words of unheard-of spiritual meaning; while the ascetic side of his character is touched upon in the slightly sunken cheeks and the fine straight wrinkles of the forehead, which do not detract from the beauty of the youthful head with its similarly curved horizontal and vertical lines, finely poised upon a strong neck and surrounded by rhythmically flowing curls. The colour (or what is left of it) and the dark terracotta, finely patined, enlivened by the orange red of the mantle, is in its contrasts in keeping

decorative works of Early Renaissance plastic art, or the Filippo Strozzi tomb in Santa Maria Novella, containing the marble Madonna in the round in a frame of roses. His art is also well represented in this country, where collectors of Renaissance sculpture were early attracted to his personality, by two portrait busts in the collections of Mr. Widener and Mr. Mackay, and by excellent terracotta statues in the Judge Gary collection and in the Altman collection in the Metropolitan Museum.



THREE-QUARTER VIEW OF JOHN THE BAPTIST
BY BENEDETTO DA MAJANO

with the fascinating mixture of beauty of forms and severity of spiritual thoughts.

Benedetto da Majano, closely related in his early works to Antonio Rossellino, and in his late period forming a transition to the High Renaissance of Michelangelo, is one of the most popular figures of Quattrocento sculpture. The charm of his art will be remembered by all who have seen his exquisitely carved pulpit representing scenes from the life of St. Francis in Santa Croce, Florence, one of the finest

Less severe and grandiose than Donatello, less aristocratic and graceful than Desiderio or Rossellino, less conscious in style or precise in technic than Mino, his narrative talents, his fine sense of decoration, his pleasure in pretty, homelike types taken from the Florentine bourgeoisie, give him a position of his own in the latter part of the Quattrocento comparable in some degree to that of Ghirlandaio in the field of painting.

Our bust, when acquired, was attri-

buted to a follower of Verrocchio, but it is not difficult to recognize Benedetto's style and hand in it, especially when we compare it with those of his works executed in the seventh and eighth decades of the fifteenth century. The relation to the famous marble statue of St. John, formerly in the Palazzo Vecchio, now in the Bargello, and to the *Madonna dell'Ulivo* in the Cathedral at Prato, whose type, in the outlines of the mouth, eyes, and sharp upturned nose, is very similar, is obvious, while his portrait busts show a great resemblance in the position of the

head and the outlines of the shoulders. Characteristic of the technic of the terracotta works in which this artist excelled, is the sketchy, incised treatment of beard, moustache and eyebrows, and the fine modelling in flat relief of the camel's hair of St. John's shirt and of the curls. We may remember that Benedetto da Majano executed a terracotta work representing St. John the Baptist for the abbe of San Frediano at Pisa¹ which has long been considered lost, and it is not impossible that it may be identical with our hitherto unknown work by the artist.

W. R. V.

THE MEETING OF THE DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART FOUNDERS SOCIETY

At the annual meeting of The Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society which was held on October 26, Mr. D. M. Ferry, Jr., was re-elected president of the society. The other officers elected were Mr. Hal H. Smith, Vice-President, Mr. William J. Gray, Treasurer, and Mr. Clyde H. Burroughs, Secretary. Mr. William B. Stratton, Mr. Ralph H. Booth and Mr. Hal H. Smith were elected trustees for the term expiring 1930.

At the annual reception for members which was held on the evening of the same day, Dr. Lynn Harold Hough gave a very inspiring talk on "Art and the Spirit of Man," and Mr. Ralph H. Booth, President of the Arts Commission, made an address outlining the responsibilities of the society toward the new Institute of Arts.

The reports of the Secretary and Treasurer were most gratifying, as the following summary will reveal:

Membership funds for the year ending June 30, 1926, amounted to \$79,204.90. From this fund art objects were purchased for the Institute's collection amounting to \$46,900, and \$200 was contributed as a prize for the Michigan Artists Exhibition, leaving a balance of more than \$18,000 available for further purchases. In addition to the purchases, the Founders Society, through the individual gifts of

its members, has added art objects to the Institute's collection conservatively valued at \$110,824.66, bringing the total value of objects presented to the Museum through the Society up to \$157,724.66.

The membership report for the year shows a total of 4,456 members, which is 99 more than were taken in last year and 627 more than the year before. Two of the members, Mrs. Anna Scripps Whitcomb and Mr. Julius H. Haass, have become Benefactors during the year by virtue of the large contributions which they have made, and thirteen others are now Governing Life Members by virtue of contributions valued at more than \$1,000 each. While there have been some losses in the membership roll during the year, these have been greatly overbalanced by the addition of more than 1200 new members. It is a satisfaction to note that the cost of maintenance and operation of the membership department is considerably less than for the previous year.

All in all, the Founders Society has made a better showing this year than last. The social functions and lectures at the Institute have been well attended by the members of the Society. The invested funds are in a prosperous condition and will enable the making of further purchases during the coming year.

¹Compare L. Dussler, *Benedetto da Majano*, 1924, p. 83.