

Domenico Maggiotto (Venice 1712 - Venice 1794)

A Bearded Man Holding an Apple

Black chalk, heightened with touches of white chalk, on grey paper faded to brown. Laid down.
390 x 313 mm. (15 3/8 x 12 3/8 in.)

Domenico Maggiotto was one of the artists known as the 'Piazzetteschi' for their dependence on the example of their teacher Piazzetta. Apart from Maggiotto, these artists included Giuseppe Angeli, Giulia Lama, Antonio Marinetti and Francesco Polazzo, and all produced drawings and paintings that have at times been confused with those of Piazzetta. This is particularly true of the chalk drawings of heads known as teste di carattere; large-scale, highly finished studies of heads drawn in black and white chalks on blue, brown or grey paper. Among Piazzetta's most celebrated drawings were a series of such teste di carattere, produced as independent works of art, to be framed and glazed for display. Indeed, the fact that Piazzetta's reputation outside Venice was well established by the early 1720's can be credited to the fame of these drawings, many of which were engraved.

Piazzetta established a drawing school in Venice, in which Maggiotto is known to have enrolled in 1722. The success of the master's teste di carattere would have led his students and assistants to produced similar drawings as studio exercises. Although the correct attribution of such teste di carattere among the pupils of Piazzetta remains problematic, the present sheet may be attributed to Maggiotto. A stylistically similar group of such head studies by Maggiotto is in the collection of the Museo Correr in Venice.

Although the present sheet may be thought to record a drawing by Piazzetta, no such prototype is known. Instead, as Michael Burrell has kindly pointed out, Maggiotto seems to have derived the physiognomy, pose and costume of his subject from a portrait etching of the painter Jan Snellinck from the Iconography series of Anthony Van Dyck.

Provenance:

One of a group of nine drawings by Maggiotto purchased in Italy c.1834 by William Garnett
By descent to his great-great grandson, Major W. F. Garnett
His sale, London, Christie's, 18 April 1967, part of lot 35
William H. Schab Gallery, New York, in 1970
Anonymous sale, London, Sotheby's, 16 November 1972, lot 135
Mr. and Mrs. Jerrold Ziff, Urbana, Illinois.

Exhibitions

New York, William H. Schab Gallery, Master Drawings & Prints 1500-1960, April 1970, no.120; Urbana-Champaign, Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Drawings from Four Collections, 1973, no.20; Urbana-Champaign, Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, The Ziff Collection of Old Master & Nineteenth-Century Drawings, 1999, no.26.

Literature:

Mary Beth Lewis, ed., Drawings from Four Collections, exhibition catalogue, Urbana-Champaign, 1973, pp.31-32, no.20; Urbana-Champaign, Krannert Art Museum, The Ziff Collection of Old Master & Nineteenth-Century Drawings, 1999, pp.58-59, no.26 (entry by Darius Spieth).

Artist description:

Domenico Maggiotto is thought to have entered the studio of the painter Giambattista Piazzetta in Venice at the age of about ten. He rose to become one of the master's leading pupils and assistants, his status reflected in the fact that he was entrusted with the completion of the Piazzetta's altarpiece in the church of San Salvatore after the elder artist's death in 1754. The previous year, Maggiotto had served as Prior of the Collegio dei Pittori in Venice, which suggests that he may have achieved a measure of independent renown by this date. Nevertheless, relatively little documentation survives for his career, and only a handful of altarpieces may be firmly attributed to him.