

Italian Primitives

Paris Art Studies I

Italian Primitives from the Altenburg Collection

Baron Bernhard August von Landenau 1779-1854.

Politician, philanthrope, amateur astronomer and art connoisseur from Thuringia and one of the most important early collectors of Italian art of the 14th and 15th centuries (180 works). He was given the astronomy prize by the French Institute in 1815 and admitted into the French Academy of Science in 1817. He built a museum, art school and library for his native town, Altenburg in 1844.

Sienese Artists:

Guido da Siena (active in Siena bet. 1270 and 1310)

Working in the hieratic and formulaic "Greek Manner" (Byzantine) of the 13th century Guido developed in his later career a more supple style that pre-figures the manner of the great Duccio.

Deodato di Orlando (documented in Lucca bet. 1284 and 1314 - dead by 1331)

Influenced by the Roman style of his day he has a tendency to create more solid and monumental volumes bestowing a classical dignity on the figures of his altarpieces. A greater delicacy and depth characterizes his small paintings.

Pietro Lorenzetti (active in Siena bet. 1306 and 1344, dies of the plague in 1348)

One of the great Sienese painters of his generation along with his brother Ambrogio and Simone Martini. An emotional subtlety in the rendering of his figures and an alliance of delicate colors with solid form characterize his art. His specialty is precious small diptychs and triptychs.

Lippo Memmi (documented in Tuscany and Umbria bet. 1317 and 1347)

One of the followers of Simone Martini. His art is characterized by monumental handling and full volumes allied to an elegant linearity and delicate ornament particularly in his small format works.

Andrea Vanni (documented in Siena bet. 1353 and 1413)

Probably trained by Martini's followers, Memmi or Ceccarelli. A predilection for rich ornament, good modeling and a somewhat rigid linearity.

Paolo de Giovanni Fei (documented in Siena bet. 1369 and 1411)

Re-interprets and re-vitalizes the style of Simone Martini. Likes complex compositions with narrative detail conceived in an elegant, courtly, rather precious manner that reflects the influence of the International Gothic style.

Angelo Pucinelli (documented in Lucca and Siena bet. 1380 and 1407)

Characterized by strong expressivity, sometimes to the point of grimace, sculptural relief and heavy draperies in the rendering of his figures.

Tadeo di Bartolo (documented in Siena and southern Italy bet. 1383 and 1422)

Faithful to Siennese traditions and somewhat repetitive he integrates the new elements of narrative and a certain realism into his compositions.

Giovanni di Paolo (Siena 1398 - 1482)

Resistant to the "modern" style of the early 15th century di Paolo turns back to the medieval world

exploring expressivity, pathos and an exalted spirituality in many of his works. A passionate, often unrealistic and visionary style.

Sano di Pietro (Siena 1405 - 1481)

A pleasant very productive painter with a fresh narrative style, he ran one of the most active studios of 15th century Siena.

Matteo di Giovanni (documented in Siena bet. 1452 and his death in 1497)

A very successful painter influenced by Florentine innovations brought to Siena by Domenico di Bartolo and Pollaiuolo and also Liberale da Verona. Capable of fine drama (Massacre of the Innocents) and the new taste for antiquarianism (San Agostino altarpieces in Naples).

Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio (Siena 1410 - 1449)

Influenced by the great Sassetta he nevertheless develops a fairly original narrative style ranging from strong drama to gentler poetry within the new geometrically constructed spaces of the Renaissance.

Admires and copies the 14th century master Ambrogio Lorenzetti.

Michele di Michele Ciampanti (Lucca bef. 1447, documented until 1511)

Major Lucca painter influenced by the styles of Botticelli and Filippino Lippi in his later career. His style grows uninspired and provincial by the end of his life.

Liberale da Verona (Verona 1445 – 1526 or 1529)

Great painter of illuminated manuscripts, he had a great impact on the Sieneese painters of his generation. In 1476 he returned to his native Verona where he painted numerous altarpieces, private devotional pictures and wedding chests.

His style seems old fashioned at the end of his career in comparison to the new tendencies imported from the Veneto through the influence of Mantegna and Bellini.

Florentine Artists:

Bernardo Daddi (Florence c.1290 - 1348)

The most active Florentine painter between 1320 and 1348, head of large studio. A disciple of Giotto who specialized in small format works with a fine narrative style. Like many artists of his generation he died during the great plague, but his influence can be felt in the following generation in the work of Maso di Banco and Orcagna.

Agnolo Gaddi (documented bet. 1369 and 1396)

Major Florentine painter of the second half of the 14th century with a fluid, linear style and rich color.

Lorenzo Monaco (known bet. 1391 - 1422)

A monk, as his nickname indicates, who entered the Calmodolese (Benedictine) monastery of Sta Maria degli Angeli in 1390. Great representative in Florence of the Gothic manner with a linear style and palette more reminiscent of the Sienese tradition.

Fra Angelico (1395 – 1455)

Member of the Dominican order (at least since 1417) in Fiesole. Celebrated for his piety and gentleness he is a painter of great luminosity and one of the innovators of his age who combines the new science of geometric perspective and unified space in his landscapes with a lingering medieval meditative poetry and sense of refined ornament.

Masaccio (Tomasso di Ser Giovanni di Mone) 1401 – 1428

His most celebrated work are the frescos of the Brancacci chapel painted in 1425 in the church of the Carmine in

Florence, a cycle that shows a new unity of deep space and natural light and austere monumental forms for his realistic figures inspired by sculpture. He is considered the first great Florentine painter of the Renaissance.

Neri di Bicci (1418 - 1492)

Son of the painter Bicci di Lorenzo he belongs to the "middle" generation of the Florentine Renaissance that of Fra Angelico, Baldovinetti and Benozzo Gozzoli. He is a specialist of the single image altarpiece topped by a sky and resting sometimes on predellas which he turns into rigid formula. His is a "compromise" style combining the spatial and formal inventions of the Renaissance with more traditional elements in the continuing use of gold and decorative detail that made him a very successful painter.