



San Lorenzo distribuisce le elemosina (St. Lawrence distributing alms)

Date

1875-1900

Primary Maker

Fra Angelico

Medium

Albumen print

Description

Photograph of the fresco painting "St Lawrence Distributing Alms" by Beato Angelico (1447-8). Decoration of Niccoline Chapel at the Apostolic Palace, Vatican. Situated in the heart of the Apostolic Palace, close to Raphael's logge and the areas where the apartment of Julius II and Leo X would later be established, the Niccoline Chapel owes its name to Pope Nicholas V (Tommaso Parentucelli, 1447-1455), who ordered its construction corresponding to the final two floors of the tower constructed at the behest of Innocent III (1198-1216), the fourth pontiff bearing the name (1243-1254), protecting a pre-existing palatial core. The sumptuous decoration of the Chapel, ascribable to the Dominican Fra Angelico (or Beato Angelico) by two payments made in February and March 1448, is one of the great works of fifteenth-

century Italy and is probably the peak of what may be defined as the Florentine painter's "Christian humanism". The frescoes which cover the interior begin on the wall to the right of the altar, in the direction of the Pope's private rooms, and develop in two overlapping registers along the entire perimeter of the space, concluding on the opposite wall towards the camera paramenti superior, the seat of the Guardia dei Lanzi. There are illustrated episodes from the life of Sts. Steven and Laurence, expressed in parallel in accordance with the rhetorical law of correspondence, starting with their respective diaconal consecrations and continuing with their generous witness of faith, culminating in their martyrdom. The ceiling, divided into four sail-shaped sections by the ribs of the vault, is dominated by the portrayal of the Four Evangelists, whose authority – on which the foundations of Christian doctrine rest – is symbolically transmitted to the eight Doctors of the Church, represented in niches on the arches framing the walls. Although there are numerous references to antiquity in the architecture and poses, a fully Renaissance character may be seen in the moral force that emanates from the varied humanity of the frescoes, heroic and dignified as the protagonists of classical history. (Source : <https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/cappella-niccolina.html>, accessed 6/19/2023)

Dimensions

Overall: 9 7/8 x 7 3/8 in. (25.1 x 18.7 cm)