

Arthur Dawson Thinks a Painting Discovered in New York Is the Original Julius II. Instead of the One Recognized Abroad.

Burceaux had inherited the painting from his father, who was a Parisian of considerable wealth and the possessor of an art collection. Where the elder Burceaux got the painting is not known, except that when he bought it he got with it a certificate from M. Sortois, whoever he may have been, certifying that the painting was by Sebastian del Piombo, who, Dawson declares, could not have painted it.

The Portraits of Julius.

To see the difference between the Pitti Julius, that in the Uffizi, and the Julius II. which Dawson has, is not easy at first glance. One sees an old man with a long white beard and wearing the skull cap and red, wool-lined cape of the Pope, seated in a throne. The face is that of one who is all but done with earthly affairs, but in each of the copies there is a difference of expression.

In the Uffizi portrait the Pope's lips are scarcely visible, and the corners of the mouth are turned down in a decidedly forbidding manner. In the Pitti painting the whole face has been softened, as by an idealist. The mouth has been relaxed almost to the point of characterless innocence of worldly life.

In the Uffizi portrait the rest of the face is in keeping with the forbidding mouth. The nose is larger and more bulbous and the left nostril is lifted in a way that accuses the Pope of a tendency to sneer.

In the Pitti picture the eyes are deeply sunk and slightly dull, while in the Uffizi portrait they are full of vivacity. As one writer puts it:

"The whole face of the Uffizi has the air of having preserved the accidents of the sitter's features, while that in the Pitti seems to be rather a courtly softening of unpleasant characteristics. But the authentic portraits of Raphael show him to have been relentless in his naturalization."

It is upon this latter point that Dawson bases his claim that the painting in his possession is the original Raphael, and that it contains all the "relentless naturalization" of that painter, and the anatomical detail which Raphael acquired from Michelangelo, much under whose influence he was at that time.

The Julius II. which Mrs. Essigke sent for restoration is exactly like the Pitti and the Uffizi and like the National Gallery portrait, which Passavant says is a replica of the Uffizi—like them in that each is surely the original or a copy of the others.

The New York Julius.

Put in the Julius in this city there are many subtle differences. For instance, there is a marked difference in the distance between the right pillar of the throne and the face of the Pope—a difference of more than half an inch; and there is a great difference in the vividness of the cape—that to the left of the head.

the Pitti picture the wool lining of the cape collar is much in evidence, while in the New York Julius this wool lining is hardly visible at all.

In the Pitti painting, also, the hand of the Pope is shown as a very slender and delicate member, while the painting in Dawson's possession relentlessly shows the aged veins and knuckle bones. Yet the two hands seem exactly alike in size, pose and shape. The difference is in the anatomical detail.

The same difference lies between the two faces. The almost divine softness of the Pope's countenance in the Pitti is somehow absent from the Julius which Dawson has. Here the moldings of the skull are painfully correct. The lines of the face are those that come, not from divine anticipation but from retrospect of worldly cares; and the mouth, the nose, the jaw-bones and the sunken eyes all tell of a man of great age whose machinery of life is about run down.

In short, while the pictures are all practically replicas of one another, between this particular Julius and all others there is a difference of fine detail. Whether the painting is genuinely Raphael's work or not, the difference seems to be in favor of the West Point picture is a realistic portrait of the aged Pope.

The differences of detail, Dawson points out, argue his claim that the painting is the work of Raphael and his anatomically realistic example, Michelangelo. He says there is a hard black outline of the whole figure which is characteristic of Perugino, Raphael's master, and which is absent from the other paintings; and the coloring, while like Piombo's, is not Piombo's best, Dawson says, and might well be the attempt of a rival to imitate it.

Mrs. Dawson cited a number of authorities to show the doubts which have been cast upon the authenticity of all of the other paintings of Julius II. as originals of Raphael. While Passavant held that the Pitti picture was the original (found in the Church of St. Maria del Popolo at Rome), "Eugene Muntz Raphael," edited by Sir Walter Armstrong, has this to say of the same painting:

A Lost Raphael.

"Every one has heard of this picture, yet who knows where to find the original? Many lay claim to the honor, yet even if we put aside all but the two preserved, the one in the Uffizi and the other in the Pitti Palace, the problem is still far from being solved."

Passavant, in spite of his declaration for the Pitti painting, seems to have had cognizance of the excellent claims of others, particularly those for the Julius II. in the Tribune.

"Ten years hence," he wrote, "perhaps we shall assist in exalting some new claimant to the vacant honor."

"I have shown you," said Arthur Dawson, "the doubt with which all the well-known portraits are looked upon, and none of the writers speak of the influence of Michelangelo, which must have shown in the original portrait as it does in all of Raphael's other work of that period."

"The Peruginesque manner of hard outline, color, and detail is much in evidence, and the great Michelangelo's form and drawing are here sufficient to make us think even that the picture which I have here was executed by Michelangelo himself."

"By comparison with all of the other portraits there is hardly a touch in any of them that will hold a candle to this great portrait. It is entirely different and in a far better condition than any of the others, and, in my opinion, it is the original."



Arthur Dawson.