

TWO PAINTINGS OF ST. ILDEFONSO

Total Cost: € 23.175,00 Each

STATE OF PRESERVATION:

These paintings are completely covered with Japanese paper and it is difficult to ascertain the extent of damage to the surface. It was common to cover a painting in this fashion in the past because they were unable to deal with restoration needs as we can today. There appears to be significant but reparable damage. Tears are not noticeable through the Japanese paper.

RESTORATION PROCESS INCLUDES:

- Consolidation of wooden panels
- Cleaning and consolidation of the pictorial surfaces
- Touching-up of the pictorial surfaces
- Photographic documentation
- Application of varnishes

SAN ILDEFONSO REFUTES THE ARGUMENTS OF THE HERETICS

Artist: Neapolitan School
Date: ca. 1480
Dimensions: 94 x 58 x 3.5 cm
Material: Tempera on wood
Inventory Number: 44680

VISION OF THE ST. ILDEFONSO

Artist: Neapolitan School
Date: ca. 1480
Dimensions: 99.5 x 57.5 x 3.2 cm
Material: Tempera on wood
Inventory Number: 44679



Vision of the St. Ildefonso with the "velinata" (detail).

These two panels were originally part of a larger narrative structure for liturgical use, possibly an altar with a set of doors and compartments equal in size and style. Both paintings were originally kept in Villa Schifanoia near Florence and were owned by American industrialist and diplomat, Mr. Myron C. Taylor (1874-1959), the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See during the years of World War II. The two paintings were inherited with the rest of the estate by the Holy See itself. The villa was transformed into a girls' school before being sold to the Italian State in 1986.

On July 1, 1985, the paintings entered the Museums still in their "richly carved and gilded Gothic frames," attributed to the Tyrolean or Spanish School of the 15th century. The most recent attribution to the Neapolitan School from the late 15th century is certainly more appropriate and shows the influences of the traditional Flemish and Spanish cultures with the Renaissance motifs of the Italian artists active in the new capital for Alfonso V "the Magnanimous" (1394-1458).

The panels refer both to the history of San Ildefonso, Abbot of the monastery of Saints Cosmas and Damian, and Archbishop of Toledo in the troubled years of King Recesvinto in the mid-7th century. Ildefonso, the author of several treatises on monastic spirituality, was a man of exemplary virtue and wide theological learning. In these paintings, he is portrayed as a mentor and passionate orator; his gestures are those of dialectical argumentation. In the first panel, the saint is in the act of teaching or refuting the thesis of a heretical group of unbelievers. In the second panel the Virgin Mary is portrayed in front of the railing of a large Gothic presbytery, surrounded by angels and holy virgins, praising Ildefonso's devotion. As stated by one of his earliest biographers, the meeting of Ildefonso and the Virgin happened the night of December 17th, in the last years of the saint's life. While conducting a procession to the cathedral, the bishop was surrounded by a celestial light emanating from the temple. St. Ildefonso established an important Marian celebration in 656 AD, an event later designated as the feast of the Expectation of the birth of Jesus.



San Ildefonso Refutes the Arguments of the Heretics before the "velinata".



San Ildefonso Refutes the Arguments of the Heretics after the "velinata".