Andries Danielsz. & Frans Francken II
active first half of seventeenth century in Antwerp

Holy Family with S. Anne in a Garland of Flowers

Oil on panel
68.5 x 50 cm (27 by 20 in.)
Signed: F. Franck fecit

Provenance:
Private Collection, Belgium

Exhibitions:
Dutch and Flemish Seventeenth Century Paintings
Daphne Alazraki, New York 1993

Very few biographical data are known about Andries Danielsz. Even the spelling of his name varies from Daneels to Danielsz. It is certain that Andries was first apprenticed with Pieter Breughel the Younger in 1599 and that in 1602 he became master of the St. Luke Guild in Antwerp. Hairs concludes that Andries might have been born around 1580. Recognizing that Andries was a pupil of Pieter Breughel the Younger, one may also understand how he was most likely influenced by Pieter II and also by Jan Breughel the Elder, since Jan I was Pieter II's brother and certainly all of the Breughel's influenced one another to different degrees. It has also been the case that Danielsz.' paintings have been erroneously attributed to Jan Breughel the Elder.

Hairs argues that the Garland of Flowers with The Virgin and Child which is conserved at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan and is attributed to Jan Breughel the Elder (pl.1), is in fact by Andries Danielsz. Hairs bases her argument on stylistic grounds: ses formes précises et fermes sont plus détaillées; il donne du volume à sa guirlande par la vigueur de ses formes et le contraste des fleurs avec le feuillage et le fond d'un ocre brunatre. Dans sa palette domine, comme chez Breughel, le rouge, le jaune et le blanc. It remains uncertain whether Hairs' assertion is correct, however for purposes of this essay it is significant to stress the stylistic affinity of Jan Breughel I and Andries Danielsz.

1) Maere & Wabbes (1994) vol.1, p.125
3) Hairs (1985) p. 256
4) Ertz lists in his monograph another painting by Jan Breughel The Elder with the same subject but of different size. This picture evidently is an authentic work by Jan 1 because it is documented since 1608 when it was acquired by Frederico Borromeo:
Jan Breughel the Elder, The Madonna from Milan, copper 27 x 22 cm Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, inv.no. 71; Ertz (1979) p.589 no.187 pl.377
Ertz suggests a date February 1608 when Frederico Borromeo corresponded with Jan Breughel about this painting. In 1618 Borromeo donated the picture to the Biblioteca Ambrosiana.
Ertz also suggests Hendrick van Balen as a collaborator of Jan Breughel in this painting.
Whether Hairs has confused some documents or whether the painting mentioned by her is really kept at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana and was not known to Ertz, is of minor importance in this context.
cat. no. III
Andries Danielsz. remains an enigmatic painter as no other facts are known, apart from those few mentioned above and only two works are known to be signed (pl.4).

The evolution of the great popularity of depictions of religious subjects surrounded by flowers or fruits is multifaceted. Artists and collectors often had deeply rooted religious beliefs which had to be incorporated in the art which was created or commissioned. In essence paintings sometimes were required to qualify as strictly religious, and thereby justify the depiction of nature, even if the only intention was aesthetic appeal for the beholder. Furthermore there was the developing attitude in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for artists to depict new scientific recognition and discoveries, including innovative botanical and zoological arrivals from far away places.

The new commitment to educate the populace about discoveries in the world obligated painters to pause as craftsmen in the service of the Church and constructively assimilate into the cultural and scientific community. Thus artists not only continued to master problems of perspective and to render of objects with an even finer precision, but additionally were now required to cultivate knowledge, for example, of the human, animal and botanical anatomies.

5) Andries Danielsz., A Garland of Flowers surrounding the Holy Family with Two Angels, God Father and the Holy Spirit observing the Scene from above, signed, oil on panel 105 x 75 cm.

Provenance: Galerie Böhlner & Steimeyer, Luzern 1950; Newhouse, New York 1954; Galleria Lorenzelli, Bergamo 1968; Private collection

Hairs (1985) p. 254, pl. 79
Pl. 4  Andries Danielsz., signed
With the present picture Andries Danielsz. created a fine example of Flemish still life painting in which a figural scene is framed by a garland of flowers. Andries conveys the illusion of the Holy Family and the Holy Spirit hovering in space, since he abstains from painting the traditional cartouche around the figures. The flowers, however, are too large for the figures and thus must be understood as an illusionary frame around the figures. Another painting of similar composition by Danielsz. and Franken II was offered by Christie’s in 1991 (pl.3). In the London painting the figures seemed to be framed by the garland caused by a trompe-l’oeil frame painted into the composition, while in our painting the figures integrate much better in the whole composition.

Frans Francken the Younger was trained by his father, the highly esteemed artist, Frans Francken the Elder. Francken initially followed his father but he later developed a more personal and independent style. His painting style also remained largely unaffected by Rubens, of whom he was an almost exact contemporary. Instead Frans Francken II relied much more on the sixteenth century tradition both in composition and subject matter. Francken primarily painted religious and mythological subjects, often in collaboration with a still life or landscape painter.

Our painting is a very good example of how two artists were each influenced by two different mainstream forces directing their production. Andries Danielsz. aimed to educate via modern botanical discovery and Frans Francken remained loyal to the Church, depicting religious subjects.

Wunderkammer, a Curio Cabinet by Francken kept in the Kunsthistorische Museum, Vienna, which is a fine example of how these cabinets were aimed to educate about the exotic, in the form of rare shells and art.

Pl. 5 Frans Francken II. The Curio Cabinet
signed: FF. oil on panel 74 x 78 cm
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv.no.1048