FROM THE BYZANTINE MASTERS TO THE RENAISSANCE
ITALIAN PAINTING

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Translated by
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ÉDITIONS PIERRE TISNÉ - PARIS
ATTRIBUTED TO GIOVANNI DI PAOLO
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST GOES INTO THE DESERT
THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO (COLL. KYERSON)
circa 1433 (2)
Surprising as it may seem, there exists no handy modern work which provides an over-all view in miniature of the development of Italian painting.

It is self-evident that a work of this kind could hardly be contemplated nowadays without the accompaniment of colour reproductions. It should, however, be made quite clear from the outset that there was no thought of reviving the subject merely by supplying the reader with a documentation of all the originals dealt with. The aim of a book on painting must always be to arouse the curiosity of the reader and inspire him with the wish to see the original works himself at closer quarters. Illustrated with reproductions in colour—which may reasonably claim to provide a general idea of the subject—a book on Italian painting must first and foremost be an invitation to embark on a journey on which one may enjoy and study in situ the works represented.

It has often been stated that each generation re-writes past history from its own point of view. Nowhere is the completeness of the contemporary reassessment more striking than in the realm of art. Fifty years ago not only did judgements but even the actual list of characteristic works differ entirely from those we feel called on to deal with today. In the early years of the twentieth century we were only just beginning to question time-honoured values. Indeed, between Taine's Voyage en Italie of 1860 and Wölfflin's Classical Art of 1900 there is less divergence than between the latter and our current point of view. The "ideal" picture, so to speak, of Italian painting at that time had furthermore a practical basis in the gallery collections which had been built up by amateurs and others who were interested in the spirit of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in which they lived. I happened recently to look through an extremely rich collection of reproductions made between 1900 and 1930 by an informed collector. It contained no example either of Uccello or Piero della Francesca. Up to about the year 1930 experts lived within the representational world of the
Renaissance. For thirty years, as we can see from the present confusion in our
galleries, a violent development has taken place in our general conception of the fig-
urative arts, upsetting our appreciation of the enduring values of the Renaissance
no less than our estimation of the present values in the plastic arts. The gallery
crisis reflects that of the contemporary situation with regard to the plastic arts
and influences our relative appreciation of all aesthetic qualities. No one can
continue to believe that the three-dimensional and tactile values of Michelangelo
constitute the only "acceptable form" in painting. Far from being manifesta-
tions of a form of sensibility common to all periods of history, works of art enjoy
the privilege of uniqueness. What we grasp through them is not a form of the
human mind in the absolute. After Einstein it is impossible to believe in Euclid
in the same way as people did in the time of Galileo; after Matisse we no longer
view Phidias as they did after Raphael. But the relative comprehension of a past
system of thought must not leave us with the illusion of a stability of experience.
Far from being testimonies of a form of sensibility common to all periods of art,
works of art, like all systems of symbols, have their roots in time; they allow us
to discover and reconstitute ways of feeling and thought which were character-
istic of very clearly circumscribed historical groups.

Thus right at the start we have admitted a twofold hypothesis: the histori-
cal character of the Renaissance, and secondly the validity of a relative inter-
pretation of works of art. We shall not therefore judge Italian Renaissance
painting by the yard-stick of an archetype of universal art.

A more or less remote origin can always be found for a given form, but we
must not conclude that genuine plastic creation consists of the mere addition of
elements. The history of art may claim the right to step outside the confines of
inventories and the business of analogies; following out certain hypotheses, it
may take as its aim the description of those coherent systems—as great civil-
isations may be defined—with an insistence on the elements which link them
together rather than on the origins of the particular elements displayed.

Once we cease to subscribe to the notion that man, everywhere and always
true to type, continues through the ages to apprehend the exterior world in the
same way, and consider, instead, that his great power manifests itself in his cap-
cacity for creating new systems, representational and otherwise, which vary in
value with the sum total of his knowledge and his powers of control over matter,
we no longer need to try and judge Italian art with a sort of intellectual absolute.
We can see it, instead, for what it is and in relation to other specific activities of
the time. This history of Italian painting then is one in which artists and schools
are not considered as the more or less skilled interpreters of a form of art but
as the creators, in a period, that is now worked out, of one of those great conventional systems of symbols in which, in accordance with precise coordinates of time, space and rationality, the representational experience of a given area of civilisation is organised.

The plan of the present volume, which is devoted to the origins of Italian painting of the modern epoch, proceeds from the structural conception of the history of art just mentioned. We no longer hold that the Golden Age, that is Roman society at the beginning of the sixteenth century under the Popes Julius II and Leo X, constitutes the highest form of modern civilization inasmuch as it applied the formulas, re-discovered by previous generations, of an absolute beauty, which had been determined and expressed once and for all by classical antiquity. In other words we are stripping the Renaissance of its exterior finality to consider it as the creation of a period which although, admittedly, based on one interpretation of antiquity, also explores new aspects of nature and new possibilities of man’s power over that nature. The result is that with the notion of finality disappears the idea that, starting from certain premisses, Italian painting of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was bound to result in the classical work of the beginning of the sixteenth century. We cannot judge artists and their work by the extent to which they approached an ideal which at the time when they were active lay ahead in the future. The Renaissance was the wider product of tentative, sometimes even divergent efforts which, to start with, did not all move in the same direction. In its final form, as we shall describe it in the volumes that follow the present one, it will be considered both as an empirical exploration of certain possibilities that arose during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and as a simultaneous abandonment of one particular avenue of investigation.

Men of my generation in their childhood days, have seen personalities like Duccio or Piero della Francesca come to the forefront. Nor must we forget that St. Francis and the Sienese school were “discovered” at the opening of the present century. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Preraphaelites were the contemporaries of Lorenzo de’ Medici, Ghirlandaio and Gozzoli; next to be discovered were Fra Angelico and Botticelli; the centre of interest in the origins of Italian painting was thus transferred from the end of the fifteenth to the beginning of that century.

It is now the moment to give some explanation of the transition from Giotto to Masaccio. In general terms, the problem is the fourteenth century. It has already been admitted on Vasari’s testimony that Giotto had risen in a century of darkness like a bright star, heralding Florentine brilliance. It was also agreed that Petrarch and Boccaccio played a similar role in the realm of letters
as prophets of a reconciliation between modern societies and eternal truth. But our own generation is beginning to perceive the complexity of the period preceding the amazing triumph of Florence with greater acuity, and we shall be in no way diminishing its glory if we show in what a chaos of events—governed by no absolute rational law—this triumph took place. The object of this work is to make readers aware of the development from the final, but by no means dead forms of Byzantine art and Gothic art in Italy—both of which were foreign to that country—into the early manifestations of Italian art of the Renaissance and what was to be the new internationalism of the future. The key to the interpretation does not lie in a dialectic view of the lives of men but in a closer knowledge of the accidents of their history.

The first result of this plan has been the abandonment of the strictly chronological division into centuries, a system of division favoured by so many recent works. For example, whereas in dealing with Florentine art the author stops round about the twenties of the fifteenth century, which correspond to the development of a system of conventions, bound up with a sudden interference with the theoretic, technical and aesthetic knowledge of men of that time, she moves forward as far as the last third of the fifteenth century when Siena is under consideration. Contrary to traditional opinion, it will be seen that Sienese art did not precede the Florentine style and that the representational Florentine manner of the thirties of the same century was not necessarily included in the experiments, admirable in themselves, of the preceding generations. Although Giotto anticipates Masaccio to some extent, the final determination of the new style was not the outcome of a kind of internal development of the only formulas valid since the start of the fourteenth century. The development of painting alone is not sufficient, as will be seen later, to account for the final form taken by the figurative system of the Renaissance in the Florence of Masaccio and Masolino, of Donatello and Brunelleschi, of Manetti and Alberti. The simultaneous integration of mathematical, technical, historical and moral speculations alone explains the particular formation of a new style, representative of a new attitude of men towards the universe. The rapid development of the system of conventions which was to give rise to one of the most admirable figurative styles in history will be described in the second volume of this series, devoted to the Florentine Quattrocento; it was not considered desirable in this first volume to list in their embryonic stage the component elements of a formula which not one of the great artists of the fourteenth century anticipated and which was certainly not considered essential in their works—but rather to describe a state of affairs, with its unending experiments and revealing preoccupations characteristic of another state of civilization.
Replacing research into the origins of the Florentine style of the Renaissance by an objective description of the varied forms of art of the fourteenth century in Italy, the author of this volume has noted down a number of facts which give that period its unity. Breaking away from the traditional formulas of Byzantine painting at the beginning of the fourteenth century, Italy entered the circle of Gothic civilization through the door of painting, while at the same time preserving its independence and originality remarkably vigorous. Neither Romanesque nor Gothic architecture had succeeded in completely integrating the Peninsula within the orbit of western civilization. Without finding inspiration in slavish plagiarism, Italy—which was the crossroads of Mediterranean civilization up to that date—from that point took its full share in the great work of building up a more widely conceived culture. This is brought about by modifying the form and representational conception of a painting that had been more closely related to Gothic sculpture than to painting proper and which had given birth in France to the twin activities of the miniature and stained glass. Since Italy did not practise an architecture based on voids but remained faithful to the wall, being more attached to the technical tradition of the mosaicist and possessing fewer resources than France, in the fourteenth century she expressed her own individual figurative creations for the most part in the fresco. It was the great decorators rather than the painters of panels then who determined the originality of Italian art in the fourteenth century.

Readers will doubtless wonder why this first volume of a history of Italian painting is not entitled "A History of Gothic Painting in Italy". This precaution was taken lest anyone should imagine that gothic painting exists separately from actual works. Gothic art had not yet evolved; at the time when Italian artists were tentatively determining the varied forms of a style which wavered between the picturesque and the monumental, it did not yet possess all its characteristics. One of the chief aims of this work is to prove that at the period when the workshops of Siena, Florence, Padua and Assisi were developing, Gothic art was not a defunct form of civilization. The present volume lays due and proper emphasis on the creative character of Gothic art at the very moment when a new form of thought was being established. It is opposed to the conception which sees Gothic art fallen into a natural decline by the fifteenth century. Properly speaking, the Middle Ages had no autumn. In mid-fifteenth century, Gothic art, as we shall see in Siena, was still creative. It was a form of life and thought in full vigour that was supplanted by a new form of life during the Quattrocento. The reasons for this triumph will be discussed in the next volume. The point to emphasize here is the reason why the title "Gothic painting" has been rejected.
There is in Italy, let us repeat, no question of a borrowed Gothic formula applied to painting. We see instead an active contribution towards a way of life and thought that was still very much alive. The development of Italian painting in Florence and Siena in the fourteenth, and in Siena in the fifteenth century enriched and defined the final nature of Gothic art. One cannot therefore speak about the introduction of a Gothic school of painting in Italy but of the existence of an original Italian painting which changes our final historical estimate of Gothic art. Neither Renaissance nor Gothic art are the realization, through the medium of human expression, of ideas that existed as it were in essence prior to that moment.

The argument of the present book is opposed to the current opinion in that it differentiates between Giottism and the painting of the Renaissance proper. The high level of Italian painting was reached before the origins of the latter which was so clearly defined in time and space and the climax of which arrived all of a sudden, eclipsing all other movements. When the Florentine Renaissance as a more modern solution established itself over the whole of Europe, it did not drive out a dying civilization and idiom. It is impossible therefore to limit this survey of Italian fourteenth century to a narrow relationship—even in a modified form—with international Gothic art, thereby reducing the period thus considered to that of a mere apanage of French Gothic. In Siena in particular, the links with the Byzantine tradition were still strong and the Roman tradition continued to be as vital an influence on the imagination of a Giotto as French sculpture. Italian painting of the fourteenth century is, properly speaking, already a national painting, inextricably bound up with the struggles between the City States. As the present work will show, it is round the rivalry between two towns, Siena and Florence, that the problems of Italian fourteenth century painting revolve. Before it finally offered other countries a representational formula that expressed a new conception of the powers of men over nature and society, Italy of the latter part of the Middle Ages revealed in its art a conflict of power. Recent studies on the relations of art and society in Florence in the fourteenth and fifteenth century have neglected the importance of this conflict, failing to take this rivalry between the two cities into account. There is a tendency to think that works of art only reflect and illustrate the social conditions—constituted so to speak independently of them—of a period which is everywhere consistently the same. In point of fact they contribute to the formation of intellectual and social links in a given milieu, being not merely a product of society but one of the forms of expression through which collective groups think like individuals. As well, then, as being a symbol, any work of art worthy of the name is a creative act, a truly original work. It constitutes something which plays a part in activities which
are not merely the concern of the upper stratum of society. The notion that art is a luxury arose in the nineteenth century at the time of the "art for art's sake" creed and decadent aestheticism. The creative artist is convinced of the great practical utility of his work and this utility or positive efficacy is a very real thing. Art is not necessarily bound up with leisure; it does not merely constitute an aristocratic refuge for a few privileged people disgusted with the perennial stupidity of the crowd. The works of the Italian fourteenth century continue to exercise so much attraction for us precisely because they introduce us into the intimacy of artists who were, like ourselves, men involved in the turmoil and passions of their period; not as spectators but actors in the eternal drama of history. It would be going beyond the scope of this book to over-emphasize this question. The author, however, may claim credit for linking, as it were, in one continuous chain, the study of the various manifestations of art with the great political and economic trends of the time.

The reader will find additional points which merit attention in the Notes, limited to artists mentioned in the text. In other words there has been no attempt to supply exhaustive documentation. Nevertheless it is hoped that the formal set-out of available information provided on the main figures will be of use. No convenient ready-reference system exists, and a glance at the headings will enable the reader to realise the difficulties of finding one's way about in this subject. At the present moment our Italian friends are passing through a phase of scholarship which might almost be described as over-meticulous. It recalls those phases that classical philology periodically underwent during the great period of the establishment of ancient texts. The number of works whose authorship is known for certain is so reduced, the game of attributions so fascinating that it is easy to see the temptations which present-day critics are subjected to when confronted by so many anonymous and fascinating masterpieces. May we beg leave, however, to issue a warning against certain exaggerations. In cases where there are as many as six or eight attributions for major works, all emanating from first-class scholars and all resolutely contradictory, it is obvious that we are at a deadlock. The author has decided to make the distinction between established works and those that are not. If, in doubtful cases, an endeavour to group works according to stylistic families appears to be justifiable, the quest for identities at any price or the improper reconstitution of huge ensembles which were dismembered in the dim and distant past is a practice no less misleading. Let us hope that no effort will be spared to locate the greatest possible number of references in the archives, which still appear to have many surprises in store. But in the meantime let us argue about stylistic interpretations rather than
waste our time desperately fathering works of art on a given artist. Let us guard furthermore against the desire to attribute the same merit and homogeneousness to every work by one artist—a practice which the example of contemporary plastic creation has proved to be extremely misleading.

This book in no way claims to be a full-scale attempt to solve problems on lines suggested by the present fashion for determining aesthetic and historical values on the shifting ground of attributions. In fact—except for an odd hint here and there—we have deliberately restricted the amount of space devoted to pretentious speculations concerning political, economic and social interpretations of Italian painting in the fourteenth century, or to tendencies to provide a closer analysis of representational techniques. In more than one place, however, partial analyses will be found which will serve to show how much can be learned by the adoption of this new method of analysis by style. Theories about space and light, form and colour, relationship of symbolic themes to the political and social background, symbolic significance and the figurative content of art, in the strict sense, belong to the realm of avant-garde speculation. The author, therefore, has deemed it advisable to set very definite limits to an account which is not intended to be more than an introduction to present-day problems in the history of Italian painting.

The second volume—devoted, as we have said, to the Quattrocento in Florence—will be followed by two further volumes, one of which will deal with the formation in the Venice of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of an original style whose technical and representational techniques differ from the Florentine solution to the problems presented; the other, with the formation—principally in Rome—of an interregional Italian School and the development of movements resulting from the fatal evolution of the doctrine—Mannerism, Counter-reform, Academism and Caravaggism. Thus we shall be taking this account up to the time when Italy ceased to be virtually the only country to supply the models which, for four centuries, determined the direction of painting for each period and on an international scale.

Pierre Francastel.
Devotees of the Byzantine school claim for Byzantine art the highest honours in a world which is turning away more and more deliberately from the three-dimensional vision, perspective and "classicism" of the Renaissance. This static, contemplative, decorative and stylized art, founded, according to M. Grabar's recent definition, on the unity of the image..., the almost denuded simplicity of chastened drawing..., in which either complete immobility or a restful equilibrium of rhythmic movements prevail, ought, in their opinion, to find an increasingly comprehending public. The more so, in that it was in reaction to this art that the Renaissance, which today provokes in its turn a
defensive reaction, took place. It would seem a perfectly justifiable claim, and the modern public has already shown itself for many years more and more aware of the grandiose manifestations of Byzantine art when they merit genuine interest. Whether it be the Ravenna, Salonica or Torcello mosaics or the architecture of the Christian churches of Constantinople or Greece, the amazing ensemble of St. Mark’s, Venice, or particular icons, there is no lack of experts and admirers.

Any vision is valid in itself on condition that it produces authentic works of art: the vision that produces abstract or representational works; the vision that stylizes or the vision that takes its material directly from life; the vision that organizes the world into a two or a three-dimensional system; the vision that bounds itself within strict laws or the vision that gives free rein to the imagination. For different reasons but with the same intensity we are equally moved before a Greek Kouros of the sixth century and a Phidias, a capital from Cluny, a sculpture at Rhenish, an Easter-Island head and a painting by Cézanne. Provided the work is alive, grows and is organized, no system is intrinsically bad. The only thing that is not valid is academic art, mechanical reproduction based on accepted lessons, tricks of the trade, emptied of their native sense and animating principle, the work which does not represent a triumph over a difficulty, or set itself a problem, or search for a new content. When the artist no longer knows why he animates things in his own particular way, one may charge him with academism and declare his work dead and gratuitous.

All arts when they are authentic and alive pass therefore, almost inevitably, through two phases, the period of creation, during which the artists’ activity has a meaning as a vehicle of research and when the work, provided it has succeeded in overcoming the problem involved, appears as a living and inevitable thing—and the period when ready-made formulas are elaborated and accumulated and gradually stifle the urge to discover personal solutions.

But it sometimes happens that one art, having arrived at the academic stage, fails to encounter another which, based on new principles, dislodges and replaces it. In this event the former continues to subsist and deteriorate. Formulas which are no longer animated by any spirit of comprehension are handed on in a more and more threadbare condition and end by losing even their virtue of mechanical perfection. The art then dies for lack of competent technicians and executants. That is what happened to antique art at the threshold of the Middle Ages. It is also what happened at a certain juncture to Byzantine art which, despite what seemed to be a brilliant revival in the fourteenth century, ceased for ever to be a creative art.

At the time when Italian art, properly so-called, began to flourish, Byzantine had long ago reached the academic stage in the few ancient centres left and the stage of complete decadence everywhere else. Technically speaking,
outside Venice and Constantinople the secret of mosaic work was lost; architecture had degenerated into a repetition of the same type of building more and more crudely executed, and the art of the icon had declined into crude image-making.

Thus whereas in the mosaics of Ravenna and Torcello, the paintings of Reggio, Modena and Bologna, the buildings of Sicily, twelfth-century Italy showed
a last spark of Byzantine art, the thirteenth century definitely marks the beginning of a provincialism which, without altogether losing a good earthy flavour, moved steadily forward into an impasse.

There was no halt to the production of pious imagery at that time throughout the whole of Italy and particularly in Tuscany, judging at any rate by the remains which have come down to us. But from the iconographic and plastic point of view the types and models are very limited. They can be reduced to three main categories: 1. the painted Crucifix, which appears either in the form of a cross, cut out in a broad manner in such a way as to leave space for the less-important figures at Christ’s feet and with the arms generally terminating in two small square panels decorated with half-length figures, or else in the form of a rectilinear panel in which small compartments surround the Crucifixion and illustrate the Passion-story. 2. The Virgin in Majesty; finally 3. The altarpiece devoted to a saint. The last-mentioned, which usually “reads” horizontally, more or less repeats the theme of the rectangular crucifix with the difference that the Christ on the cross is replaced by the image of a saint whose legend is recounted in the small surrounding compartments.

All these images, the Christ and Virgin Mary in particular, were mass-produced by Greek monks who had come to seek refuge in Italy against the persecutions of the Iconoclasts, and they were always inspired by types imported from Byzantium: the Christ in Glory, front view, eyes wide-open, body stiff and erect; the Madonna seated on a throne, also full-face with huge eyes; the Infant Jesus sitting upright on her knees in front of her, giving the blessing. The theme of the saint appears to be of more recent origin than the two preceding ones.

In the thirteenth century and most certainly under the influence of Franciscanism, the type of Christ and Madonna began to be modified; gradually throughout all Italy the Christ of the Glory is replaced by the Christ of the Sorrows. The head droops towards the shoulder, the features, hitherto impassive, are distorted by suffering, the eyes are closed or half-closed, the body is twisted and dislocated. But the plastic conception still remains the same, each volume being bounded by a clearly-marked line which closes on itself; and each surface of the said volume is treated as a flat plane. A considerable number of these painted, cut-out crosses exist in Italy of this period. Totally unknown in France, they had in effect replaced the luxurious and costly Byzantine crucifixes made in repoussé, enamelled and set with precious stones which not only involved modest monasteries in expenses beyond their means but demanded a standard of metal-chasing which was no longer obtainable. Among these crucifixes the oldest to which an artist’s name can be attached are, it seems, those of Giunta di Guidetto di Colle, called Giunta Pisano, who was first mentioned as a painter in Pisa in the year 1202 and signs of whose activity are to be found as late as 1255. The finest
emanate on the one hand from Bonaventura Berlinghieri who was working at Lucca in the first half of the century and to whom is attributed the fine Cross painted in ivory tones which is now in the Lucca Museum, and on the other, from a painter, called the Master of St. Francis, and his School whose works are collected at the Umbrian Museum at Perugia.

In this revived form of Byzantine art, the painted cross was to pursue its career throughout the whole of the thirteenth century and culminate during the early years of the fourteenth century in the famous Arezzo Christ attributed to Cimabue, and later to provide the most western and most modern theme of the Crucifixion which was destined to be used in various forms up to our own time by all the Schools of Christian art.

The rectangular crucifix with embellished panels is much less common. In its original form it enjoyed a much more limited span of life, possibly because it was ousted by the analogous formula of the altar-frontals consecrated to a saint which enjoyed a very long vogue. The few examples which we possess however deserve our full attention. There is one of the School of Berlinghieri, beautifully designed and coloured, in the Museum of Pisa. There is above all a superb example of the School of Pisa that is particularly refined and elegant, dating back to about 1230, painted in sombre tones in tempera on parchment covered with a gold grisaille, likewise in the Museum there. Faced with a work of such exceptional quality one may well wonder whether Pisa, the most ancient and prosperous sea-port town of the period, maintaining, thanks to its peculiar geographical position, extremely wide contacts with the outside world by sea as well as by land, was not at that time the most advanced centre of the whole of Tuscany.

The Madonnas underwent a transformation at the same time as the Christs. Those of the early part of the century are still frontal and hieratic, as for example the Virgin of Santa Maria Maggiore in Florence. Then, though still in the Greek idiom, they present a three-quarter face. Among those which have survived, the first who leans her head towards the Child, is perhaps that of the diptych of the Academy in Florence. Later they became maternal, tender, caressing, smiling or pensive. The Child is shifted from the Madonna’s lap over to the side and leans against the arm which encircles him; he also begins to move and smile. The ultimate stage is reached in the Rucellai Madonna, first attributed to Cimabue, then to Duccio, the Virgin of the Maestà by Duccio in Siena, that of Cimabue at the Uffizi Gallery and the very fine Virgin in the Louvre, long attributed to Cimabue but which seems to be more likely of Roman origin, from some artistic centre having links with Cavallini. Still later there was through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a succession of delightful Sienese Madonnas whose charm proved one of the principal causes of the infatuation for the art of Siena which seized hold of art-lovers at the beginning of the twentieth century.
The origin of the great effigy of the Saint, framed in compartments illustrating his legend often in an amusing and picturesque manner, seems to coincide with the beginning of the evolution which transformed the Christ in Glory into the Christ of the Sorrows and the Madonna of the Maestà into a symbol of maternity. The most ancient of the small painted altarpiece known in Italy is still consecrated to Christ although it is not a crucifix. Christ is represented seated on a throne surrounded by a spangled radiance and the Four Beasts of the Evangelist. Six panels disposed round it recount the story of the Passion. The small altarpiece of 1215 comes from the Abbey of Berardenga and is preserved in the Siena Pinacoteca. As time goes on, Christ is replaced by saints whose effigy occupies the centre, whilst the compartments illustrate their legends. To begin with, the saints of the New Testament and the first Christian era; John the Baptist of the portable altarpiece of Siena, Mary Magdalene of the Academy in Florence who gave her name to the Master of the Magdalene, St. Peter of the paliotto at Siena, of a slightly later date, St. Zenobia attributed to the Master of the Bigallo of the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Florence. Very soon, however, St. Francis becomes the figure most frequently seen in these representations. Berlinghieri's, carried out at Lucca and at present in the church of San Francesco at Pescia, signed and dated 1235, is indisputably superior to all the others by virtue of a kind of grandiose and rugged presence which entitles it to rank as a genuine work of art. Others, the St. Francis by Margaritone of Arezzo, that of the School of Berlinghieri at the Church of Santa Croce in Florence, the one of the School of Guido at Siena, without attaining to the same grandeur, serve to build up an iconography of the saint which later was to be useful to Giotto and his successors. The anecdotal and picturesque element which these small panels, surrounding a central figure, introduce into painting and religious imagery is one of the most moving features of painting in the following century, and it developed through all the predella paintings in which the artist, now more at liberty to give rein to his imagination and gifts of observation, was to create scenes, of which some resemble genre paintings while others are compositions inspired by pure fantasy. The small altarpiece of the thirteenth century holds therefore an important place in the development of the painting that was to follow.

Yet, if all this productivity renewed the subject, it contributed no real renewal of vision and plastic representation. And it was the same for mural decoration at this period. Gothic art penetrated Italy late and in a fragmentary form, thanks, above all, to the arrival of the Cistercians from France at the end of the twelfth century, and, because of them, in the purely architectural form peculiar to that Order. Thus, apart from a transient and limited vogue which lasted a mere fifty years, Gothic was never adopted in Italy as an organic and complete
Sienese School - XIII Century - Birth of the Virgin
Panel of the Triptych of St. John the Baptist - Pinacoteca Siena
style. Because of this, Italy never knew stained glass which, in French Gothic
churches with their walls consisting largely of voids, constituted the main orna-
ment of the nave and apses. To decorate the vast mural surfaces which contin-
ued to be a feature of traditional Italian architecture, they had recourse either
to mosaics or fresco. Now mosaicists were rare and the secret of the technique,
having become the almost exclusive apanage of the Greeks of Byzantium, aws
no longer transmitted to the more distant countries. Already in the eleventh
century when it was a question of decorating the edifices of Monte Cassino, the
Abbé Didier was obliged to call in the artists of Constantinople.

Rome alone made an exception to this rule. That city had in point of
fact preserved basilicas from the first Christian era decorated with mosaics entirely
inspired by the spirit of antiquity. But most of them were in an extremely
dilapidated condition. It was in the twelfth century when the reconstruction
and restoration of some of them was undertaken—at San Clemente in particular—
that a first school of Roman artists was formed who discovered among other things
the secret of the mosaic in their endeavours to reconstruct and complete those
whose surviving fragments sufficed to teach them the lost technique. At the
beginning of the thirteenth century after the interruption caused by the Imperial
wars, we are confronted by a flourishing Roman school of marblers, sculptors
and mosaicists. It was under the dominance of the powerful family, the Cosmas,
who during the whole of the century were everywhere in demand and filling the
whole city with works in characteristic style, transmitting the craft from generation
to generation. These artists were decorators rather than painters and sculptors,
but in their vast workshop of decoration, pursued studies which were con-
ected with every artistic technique, including architecture.

Was it in this environment that the well-known painters and mosaicists
Pietro Cavallini, Jacopo Torriti or da Torrita and Filippo Rusuši received their
specialised training and education? They bear witness to the diversity of the
Roman school which—as was long believed—cannot be solely identified with the
Cosmas’ studio. There was no lack of original artists if one considers the variety
of the idioms which are to be seen in the Roman paintings of the period, particu-
larly at Assisi. We do not possess sufficient evidence to distinguish the different
tendencies with any certainty. But we can at least be sure that their art
presents special characteristics that one would look for in vain elsewhere than
in Italy.

The iconography remains Christian and conforms to that which was cur-
rent in the rest of the country but the technique is far more inspired by ancient
and Latin examples than by those of Greco-Byzantine art. The artists have this
in common however, that they all began with the mosaic which for centuries had been considered the technique reserved for those rare experts who hailed from Venice and Constantinople. But it is not really a paradox since there is every reason to suppose that it was through the restoration of Roman, and therefore Latin mosaics, that the secret of this art reached the Roman workshops of the thirteenth century by the process of continual transmission. The work of restoration proceeded: in 1290 Nicolas IV consecrated the re-built Lateran church, and the following year saw the completion of the large mosaic which, utilizing what survived of the previous decoration, continued to adorn the apse of the basilica up to 1886. This restoration was the work of Jacopo Torriti who five years later signed and dated the great absidal mosaic of Santa Maria Maggiore. There again he adapted and re-fashioned a Latin original, and although he brought a greater freedom of expression and his own personal idiom to this work, he remained profoundly steeped in the examples of antiquity which he had before his eyes. The figures are treated as round volumes, the transition from one surface to the next is imperceptible; the attitudes have a new suppleness, and above all, the drapery, instead of being linear and graphic in treatment, angular and synthetic, falls in abundant folds and turns back in delicate curves.

Like Torriti, Pietro Cavallini seems to have done his first work in mosaics. Nothing is known about his early activity but his first signed work is dated 1291 and consists of a series of mosaics representing scenes from the life of the Virgin in the church of Santa Maria Trasteverina in Rome. There again we find striking signs of the old tradition.

Ghiberti attributes to Cavallini not only the mosaics of the façade of San Paolo fuori le Mura but also the frescoes which represent scenes from the Old Testament which formerly decorated the interior of that church and water-colours of which are still to be seen in the Vatican. Van Marle, in a hypothetical reconstruction of the chronology of the artist ascribes some of these works to a period preceding those of Santa Maria: first group between 1270 and 1279, second between 1282 and 1287, a third as late as 1294-1303. There is nothing intrinsically improbable in this. In point of fact at that date, sometimes the fresco, sometimes the mosaic process was used for mural decoration. Cimabue still did mosaics to decorate the apse of Pisa cathedral at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and it was only about 1330 that they progressively abandoned the use of mosaic in exchange for fresco which was much less expensive and more rapidly carried out. It was certainly the alternate use of both techniques which was responsible for the transference of the lessons which the Roman artists had assimilated in their contact with ancient Latin mosaics to the domain of the fresco.

The frescoes of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere which go back to about 1293 and can be attributed with more certainty to Cavallini are a brilliant testimony
PAINTING
M2SSIMA

CAVALLINI - CIRCA 1565 - AN APOSTLE
DETAIL OF THE LAST JUDGEMENT - FRESCO
S. CECILIA IN TRASTEVERE, ROME
UNKNOWN ROMAN PAINTER - ANGELS APPEARING TO ABRAHAM
FRESCO  UPPER CHURCH, SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI
c.1295-1297
to this. The figures of the Apostles which with the Virgin and St. John the Baptist, surround the Christ of the Last Judgement, show a robustness, and—let us not shy at the term—realism, poles apart from the unreal and stylized Greco-Byzantine conception of the art. The whole notion of the human figure is transformed; the artist no longer tries to render the essence and symbol through the medium of a generalized human figure, but to set up a body and a countenance which borrow their substance from reality. In short, instead of confining himself to the evocation of the divine element, he confers a physical presence on the human person.

This was a revolution of incalculable consequence. It had, it is true, a basis in the ancient examples, but their existence alone would have no more sufficed to bring it about than it had done during the previous centuries. It had required an urge for renewal before it could come about, and for a century now Rome had manifested the desire to rouse herself from her ruins. Furthermore artists first needed to become conscious that there was no way out from the impasse into which traditional ways had led them. Events on every side had been conspiring to make them feel dissatisfied. Since Louis IX’s return from the Holy Land in 1254 and the last crusade attempted which his death in Tunis interrupted in 1270, the great crusades had practically come to an end, and if the fleets of the Italian sea-port towns formed during the war-period still continued to ply between the East and West for commercial purposes, people’s minds were turning more and more towards national and even regional problems. As interest became focussed on the immediate neighbourhood, the Oriental mirage faded away, Byzantine prestige waned and ceased to exercise the fascination that it had exercised over Italy for three centuries.

The new way of seeing and representing that had started its journey in Rome was destined to make further headway. L. Coletti who has specialised in the study of Italian painting of the northern part of Tuscany, states that he has discovered important traces of Roman influence, and of Cavallini in particular, in the art of Romagna and in the Bologna region. At any rate the presence of Roman art in Umbria, where it was best placed to exercise its influence, is beyond dispute.

The presence of the Roman School has been particularly noticed in Assisi, backed up by adequate proof, though we cannot be sure that it is the work of Cavallini himself or of one—or rather several—of his known or unknown companions. The walls of Assisi today offer a living chronicle of the art of the end of the thirteenth century and the whole of the fourteenth, and create a puzzle which must remain permanently fascinating to all those who are addicted to making
attributions. At that time Assisi was still the sanctuary of the Franciscanism that was growing up. The vast church of Saint Francis, consisting of two superimposed naves, was erected and waiting to receive its fresco decoration. Each generation of painters was to set the mark of their own period upon it. The Romans were the first to be called in, perhaps at the same date as Cimabue, perhaps a little later. In the Upper Church they executed sixteen frescoes which cover the top part of the walls of the nave and represent scenes from the Old and New Testaments. Today they are in such a state of decay that we have only a few half-preserved fragments to judge them by. But these fragments enable us to measure the scale of the revolution accomplished. As in the works of Rome, we see the triumph of the ancient Latin inspiration both in the representation of the human body and drapery and in the way the figures are situated in space. One magnificent nude figure in particular, that of Adam of the "Original Sin", might lead one to suppose that the Renaissance was near at hand. Unfortunately Eve has completely disappeared, but in the lower row two angels, slender yet robust, subtly draped and with individualized heads, show the new degree of skill attained. Everything in this cycle is not of the same quality nor in the same idiom, and in all probability several hands have shared in the work. This points again to the presence in Rome not only of an artist of genius but of a whole workshop or even an artistic centre.

The course of history did not allow this School to pursue its development. The year 1305, when the Papacy was transferred to Avignon, witnessed the end of all activity of this kind in Rome, and it was not fully resumed until the sixteenth century. The return to ancient tradition which had seemed in the offing—and which might well have been a bad influence on painting—did not take place for another century and then by more devious ways, though they were probably more productive. However, the first impulse given by the Roman group could not go by unnoticed. Giotto, possibly Cimabue, saw the Roman frescoes at Assisi. They did not imitate them, for both men were artists and not copyists, but each derived his own, if different lesson from them.

Once Rome had withdrawn from the arena, the destiny of painting in Italy passed to the Tuscan centres. Siena and Florence were now to compete for superiority in the arts as they were to over the question of political and economic domination. From the start, Pisa, which went as far as Rome in the matter of new idiom in the realm of sculpture, was the first to succumb from the political point of view. She was to provide a magnificent line of sculptors, but in the realm of painting, she could not stand up to her two rivals whose story was to fill the whole of the fourteenth century.
In the year 1240, by the will of God, Giovanni, called Cimabue, was born in the city of Florence to give the first light to the art of painting.

It is with this lyrical note that Vasari plunges straight into the heart of the setting which surrounds the works of Cimabue. The date he gives for his birth is by no means certain, but to within about a decade it is not improbable, since the first indication we have of the artist’s life is the year 1272 and concerns a stay in Rome. From it we may infer that he would then be between twenty and thirty, the period of life when an artist normally embarked on journeys of this kind. This person, of whom, apart from the brief mention of 1272, we find no further trace until we come to the two or three years which immediately preceded his death in 1302 or 1303, has recently lost something of the legendary character that he possessed for previous generations. Over and above Vasari’s text and Dante’s eulogy, we now have the Pisan documents (cf. Notes) and, thanks to a kind of emotional and stylistic unity that enables us to situate it in an artistic, political and social context about which much more is now known, the work is more definitely established.

In the absence of much information about the man, we may endeavour to situate his work by attributing it—until there is proof to the contrary and since everybody is agreed for the moment—to the painter whom Dante celebrates in his poem.

It seems certain that Cimabue grew up in Florence where he later possessed a studio, in its period of full expansion in the second half of the thirteenth century. For his native city it was that period of feverish activity and social struggle when, by sheer thrustfulness, a new society—middle-class, industrial and commercial—was engaged in ousting from power and from all the activities that led to the possession of wealth the former society of patricians over which it was finally to triumph by the end of the century. This transformation was accompanied by an immense increase of wealth and activity as well as that reversal of traditional values which always follows revolutions of this kind.

We have already seen the leap forward that Cavallini had made in the representation of the human figure, and we can be sure that Cimabue’s sojourn in Rome in 1272 was not without its effect on his future career. However, his experiment took a different direction from that of Cavallini who had made a special onslaught on the hieratic treatment of the human figure from the physical point
of view. Cimabue aimed rather at weaning the characters of the Christian legend from the spiritual conventionalism in which they had been fixed and frozen by the Byzantine tradition. Less concerned than Cavallini to re-vitalize the figures physically, he endows them with an intense emotional content and a violent expressionism in which suffering, raised to the point of mysticism, is the dominating element. If we remember that the classical spirit with which Cavallini was imbued only affected Cimabue slightly and take into account the spiritual climate into which the latter's Florentine origins plunged him, it is not difficult to see the reason for this divergence.

It is his work at Assisi that reveals him in the most striking way. In the absence of positive evidence we can assume that it was after his stay in Rome and before his return to Florence, which we can date about 1282, that Cimabue was active in Assisi.

Roman mosaicists—Torriti (?), Rusuti, even Cavallini too—had perhaps already come to work there when Cimabue was commissioned to decorate the choir and transepts of the Upper as well as part of the Lower Church. In so far as present attributions can be considered certain, he executed there a Passion of Christ and an Apocalypse of St. John in the former and a Virgin with Child surrounded by Angels with St. Francis in the latter.

It was the period when two tendencies which had appeared after the death of Saint Francis were being stressed in Franciscanism to the point that made a real schism inevitable. On one side were the Conventuals, ready for compromise with the official Church, particularly on the question of absolute poverty—the necessity of which was violently contested by the Popes—on the other, the Spirituals, resolute in maintaining the primitive rule of the poverello in its pure and original sense. The doctrine of the Spirituals which had a strong mystical element, was based on an individual interpretation of the Apocalypse. According to this, the Angel who appeared to St. John at the beginning of the sixth cycle and who bore the seal of the living God—the stigmata—was to be identified with St. Francis considered as the initiator of the reign of peace on earth. The doctrine maintained that the beginning of the sixth cycle, announced by the Apocalypse, opened with the appearance of the Franciscan Order and that the hour therefore had come to establish on earth the reign of the Holy Spirit under the guidance of St. Francis and his original rule. In 1226 the Order officially adopted a compromise established by its general, Saint Bonaventura, which accepted the identification of the Angel bearing the stigmata with St. Francis but refused the immediate and literal application of the doctrine, claimed by the Spirituals. The representation in a church of St. Francis of an apocalyptic cycle which includes, among other things, the Vision of St. Francis at Patmos and the Fall of Babylon fully illustrates this compromise. But if the artist had not, in
all probability, a free choice of subject, he remained free in the execution of his work to manifest his greater or lesser degree of adherence to the doctrine illustrated. Now such a breath of mysticism bordering on violence runs through the Assisi representations that the Spiritual sympathies of the artist can hardly be doubted. The deplorable condition of the _Apocalypse_ interferes with aesthetic appreciation but from what we can still see in the better preserved _Crucifixion_ and some of the isolated fragments we can form some idea of the artist’s exceptional power of expression. In his compositions, always organized on a very straightforward geometrical principle—sometimes by a series of horizontal bands, sometimes in concentric lines round a central figure—the harshness of the Passion, the intensity of the suffering, horror and indignation are such as could only emanate from a soul vowed to fanaticism.

There is a similar intensity at the other end of the emotional ladder. In the Lower Church, Cimabue has represented the _Virgin and Child_, accompanied by angels and St. Francis. To Cimabue the Virgin symbolizes gentleness, and the whole fresco is pervaded with that emotion which in him has come to assume the same degree of intensity as the violent passions expressed in the Upper Church. The representation of St. Francis, treated as it is with love and penetration, shows him human and ugly—that is if we are expecting physical beauty—but radiating with a kind of universal sympathy which has nothing divine or formal about it. It reveals the other aspect of the personality of St. Francis, so sadly betrayed by his disciples—his simple, human, somewhat eccentric side which the Conventuals scorned and the Spirituals, vowed to mysticism and the strict application of the rule, also were too often inclined to neglect.

The Assisi _Virgin_ remains unrivalled in Cimabue’s work, or at any rate in the work attributed to him. The great Uffizi _Madonna_ lacks both its abandon and its splendour. No saint is present to introduce a human note; she remains official—and still very Byzantine—on her huge throne which is a veritable piece of architecture. If we are to be strictly truthful, we must admit that the only work we can attribute with complete certainty to Cimabue, the _St. John_ mosaic, at Pisa, is also far from revealing an analogous quality.

On the other hand in the very fine, so-called’ “Arezzo _Crucifix_” we find the powerful accents of the Upper Church frescoes of Assisi raised to a more intensive pitch. A god suffers and everything is blotted out before his suffering. We are spell-bound by the face—composed of an assembly of small volumes, clear-cut and independent, yet at the same time united by the expressive force of the whole—to such an extent that we forget the noble, extremely stylized architecture of the body. The artist who conceived it, whether he was called Cimabue, as most historians think, or not, may justly claim to be one of the greatest masters of Italian art.
« Credette Cimabue nella pittura
Tener lo campo, ed ora ha Giotto il grido
Si che la fama di colui è oscura »

DANTE. Purgatorio, XI.

(Cimabue thought he held the first place in painting but now Giotto has all the clamour so that the former's fame is obscured.)
The above quotation in which we can detect a certain note of regret does not present the matter in a true light; it is not a question either of superiority—who dare assert that Cimabue's masterpieces are inferior in beauty to Giotto's?—or of fame but of an entirely different general and artistic climate. According to an old tradition Giotto was a pupil of Cimabue, but if so, the disciple soon liberated himself from his master's influence, so quickly indeed that none of his present known works bear the slightest trace of it.

Once more we must turn to Assisi to view the works by the two men; figures, on the one hand, bounded by a vigorous system of symbols which although not of rectilinear form belongs no less to Byzantine tradition; on the other, figures treated as volumes, supple, subordinated to naturalistic observation. Vehement expressionism, sombre mysticism, grandeur and exaltation of feelings taken as far as it is possible to take them, as opposed to rationalism, serenity, sobriety elevated to an absolute rule; intensity of feelings obtained by stripping down to essentials, and display of the whole to the exclusion of every superfluous detail. Two conceptions of art, two temperaments, two periods. Giotto, with the start his genius conferred upon him, launches us straight into the next phase of Florentine artistic superiority.

After a period of cruel social struggles, the wealthy middle-class succeeded, thanks to the armed intervention of Pope Boniface VIII, in triumphing over both the resistance of the patricians and the ascendancy of the people which at one moment seemed established. Supported by the dynasty of Anjou, exploiting the resources of the Vatican and then of the Pontifical Court at Avignon of which they made themselves the bankers, the rich Florentine middle-class, known as the Black Guelphs, were to keep a firm grip of the situation, overriding bankruptcies and other catastrophes that occurred in the middle of the century. They were to bring about the collapse of their chief rivals, the bankers of Siena and the merchants of Pisa. In the prosperous and populous city which simultaneously carried on banking operations, a thriving woollen industry, inaugurated the silk industry and won new markets for its trade, nothing else counted but the general expansion. Even military operations were soon relegated to mercenary soldiers, and religious enthusiasm was no longer in vogue. What was wanted was some soothing church doctrine that left an ample margin for individual consciences and did not annoy the popes who were the source of fabulous revenues and the axis of the whole Florentine political system. An Apocalyptic representation associated with the Franciscan doctrine such as Cimabue had executed at Assisi would seem akin to heresy in the eyes of the new controlling powers in Florence.

So when Giotto in his turn went to Assisi in 1297, where we first come across him, he was certainly obliged to take the new tendencies into account, whatever his private feelings may have been.
GIOTTO - ST. FRANCIS GIVING HIS CLOAK TO A POOR MAN-FRESCO
UPPER CHURCH, SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI
circa 1297
But is Giotto really the author of the St. Francis cycle which adorns the Upper Church at Assisi? His authorship has been bitterly disputed by German critics. In my opinion, however, there is one comparison which provides an irrefutable confirmation of this attribution; it is that between the scene of St. Francis renouncing the World and the scene treating the same subject in the Bardi Chapel in Santa Croce, Florence, the authorship of which has never been contested. Let us look at them. It is a similar composition, divided into two symmetrical parts, symbolizing the scission, and a background of architecture which serves as a plastic link between the two—and above all, we have the same striking image of the bishop receiving the naked saint in his arms and covering him with a cloak, an iconography which we do not encounter anywhere else before Assisi and which must therefore be the invention of the painter of the frescoes. Why should Giotto, at the height of his reputation, full of self-confidence and, by now, a complete master of his medium, have amused himself at Santa Croce twenty years later by borrowing, nay, almost copying the iconography, the conception and composition of another artist? It is only conceivable if he was himself the author of the fresco and if the representation that he had worked out was one near to his heart. We might justly object that the quality of the Assisi frescoes is inferior to that of Giotto's earlier work, but we must not forget that at Assisi Giotto was still a young man, and that it was perhaps his first attempt at full-scale composition. It would furthermore appear that the grand scale did not suit his artistic temperament. In the Arena Chapel in Padua, the dimensions of the panels are roughly half those at Assisi and, on the other hand, the great Last Judgement which occupies the entrance-wall reveals the same weakness of execution as the St. Francis frescoes.

Having said that, let us return to the work itself. The cycle is composed of twenty-eight frescoes along the walls of the choir, recounting the life of St. Francis. It is, to the best of our knowledge, the first time in the history of Italian art that a work of such amplitude has been devoted exclusively to one saint. Up till then the saint, when he makes his appearance on wall paintings, traditionally scenes from the Old and New Testaments, always takes a secondary role. We see him at the foot of the Cross or of the Virgin's Throne; he plays the role of intercessor or witness or else introduces the donor. The great innovation at Assisi was to make him the chief hero of his own legend and give him the central place. Is this a process of deification which raises the saint to the rank hitherto exclusively reserved to Christ and the Virgin Mary? Or is it, on the contrary, a process of humanisation which has led to this display of the detail of his life and makes him a closer and more intimate figure to the faithful? The two aspects are real enough and their origins complex. First, in a general way, the movement which tended, if not to substitute the saints for the Virgin and Christ, at least
to assure them of an equivalent place in Christian iconography, had long been under way. We have seen one aspect of it in the substitution of the saint for Christ in the altar-frontals of the thirteenth century. The tendency came from France—not from painting but from the sculpture of statues—and it forms part of the French stream which, through commercial channels and pilgrimages, had never ceased to flow into Italy from the time when French Gothic art acquired its universal reputation. Now the saint was always an honoured figure in France. He had left the embrasure of the porches to become the central figure of the cathedral-jambs and he was often elevated to being the sole figure in an architectural ensemble which was an entity in itself. Furthermore—and this was an anticipation of the future secularization of art—the scenes from his life allowed of a variation of subject and an escape from the monotony of the eternal repetition of the Gospel stories.

And then St. Francis was no ordinary saint. Like St. Louis in France, he was a modern saint; his life was still quite close to the times; his activities had been far-reaching and had raised controversy. His admirers felt the need both to steal themselves in his example and to impose it on others and sanctify it in the eyes of the sceptics. But whereas a Cimabue still used the intermediary of the Apocalypse to consolidate the doctrine of St. Francis and limited himself to placing his effigy at the foot of the Virgin’s throne, Giotto—certainly with the approval of his sleeping partners—undertook to display episodes from the Saint’s life openly before the eyes of the faithful, and he constructed a new world in which the Saint was the sole hero.

We cannot hope from the choice Giotto made of episodes to get any hint as to the personal feelings of the artist; the most we can learn is something about the tendencies that prevailed among the monks of St. Francis. The scenes were derived from the text of the legend published in 1265 by St. Bonaventura; by accumulating proofs of the veneration in which he was held both among the common people and the church leaders he allows his desire to honour the Saint to come through, and yet, at the same time, he displays the evidences of the Saint’s supernatural power. The emphasis is not on the characteristics that we are accustomed to consider to be the essence of Franciscanism: simplicity, poverty, charity, the joy of living. Only one fresco, St. Francis renouncing the World—the quality of which strikes the imagination all the more because it appeals to the emotions—is directly concerned with poverty, the main point of disagreement between the two branches of the Order. Only one has Charity for its theme, St. Francis giving his cloak to a poor man. Finally one, the most moving of them all, shows us St. Francis preaching to the birds. On the other hand there are seven devoted to the spectacular miracles, so opposed to the spirit of the poverello of Assisi, eight which might be called ecclesiastical, and six with a very official
mystical flavour. Running captions, placed in white scrolls at the foot of each fresco, provide an elaborate explanation and leave us in no doubt as to the didactic intentions of the whole.

Some of these frescoes, however, by the quality of the emotion and the poetry with which they are suffused, may perhaps serve as a guide to the artist’s personal sympathies and taste. The delightful fresco of St. Francis giving his Cloak, with its rustic landscape, its small country church, its grazing horse; the picture of the town of Arezzo, in the fresco in which the Saint is driving the demons out of the town; the birds of the St. Francis preaching show clearly that Giotto felt much more attracted by the representation of simple and human things, by the spectacle of life around him, by its picturesque elements and the humble poetry that accompanies it, than by the miraculous and pompous representations. Without going so far as to endow him with the mysticism of a Spiritual, one may consider that a certain harmony of spirit constituted a bond between the artist and the “pure” branch of the fraticelli.

It is the execution of the Assisi frescoes which from the artistic point of view presents the greatest interest for us. Because the quality of Giotto’s previous work eclipsed that of Assisi we must not therefore under-estimate its revolutionary character. It is quite obvious that for us the question of realism has lost the greater part of its interest and today it is no longer a matter of discovering how much nearer Giotto approached objective truth than his predecessors. But we, for whom the realism is a routine, tend on the other hand to forget that in Duccio and Giotto’s time it was stylization that was the routine and that any manner that deviated from it constituted a novelty as disturbing and exciting as departures from realism are to us. Now, on this point, the Assisi frescoes show a definite advance. The hieratic framework which, despite his efforts to transform straight lines into broken ones, Cimabue had not succeeded in bursting through, now cracked on every side, making Giotto a direct follower of the Cavallini tradition. At the next stage of his career, that is to say at Padua, Giotto was to jettison further what remained of the somewhat soft and vague drawing of the Assisi period and move deliberately towards a sculptural conception of the forms.

The Paduan frescoes present us in fact with a Giotto who seems, this time, to have got onto the right road. It was a big advance on his Assisi work. This time it was no longer a question of St. Francis or of the creation of an original iconography; we go back to the consecrated cycles of the life of the Virgin and Christ; one occasion could provide as good a pretext as another for a story. But in point of fact it is not on the story but on the composition and on isolating and displaying one moment of intensity in each scene, that Giotto brought all his power to bear. The pregnant moment is expressed now in a static manner (the scenes from the Life of Joachim, The Annunciation, The Wedding Feast at Cana),
now in a dramatic manner in which everything expresses movement, as in the extremely impressive *Deposition*. There is never any overlap between the two different conceptions. Furthermore the accessories, when they exist at all, are not connected with the legend any more than they serve to identify the personages or the circumstances; their function is to emphasize either the static or dynamic character of the composition. The rock which closes the background of *Joachim*
and the Shepherds adds its weight to that which crushes the exiled saint, and the angels who are throwing themselves down in the top part of the Deposition help to complete the sensation of emotional intensity that torments the group of people below. The accidental is not playing its usual role in work conceived in this manner: the treatment of the personages and the way they are grouped assumes an importance that was still lacking at Assisi. It is in this treatment that Giotto's knowledge of Gothic sculpture rendered him incalculable service. The wonderful figure of Joachim asleep, those of the kneeling St. Anne or the Virgin, that of Christ tuning away Mary Magdalen in Noli me tangere, and many other works have an undeniable relation with the sculptured representations of French sculp-

GIOTTO - JOACHIM'S DREAM - FRESCO - DETAIL
ARENA CHAPEL, PADUA - 1295-1306
tors, with the figures of the Gothic cathedrals or the works of Pisan sculptors. The extraordinary relief-effect of some Giotto figures, obtained by large smooth areas and by the use of clearly drawn but extremely simplified drapery, constitutes in itself the proof of the knowledge which has been the subject of so much argument. Not to mention the fact that the sculptor Giovanni Pisano seems to have collaborated with Giotto at the Arena Chapel in Padua and that, even if the painter had not yet seen the Pistoia pulpit, which dates approximately from 1298 to 1301, an exchange of ideas between two artists of that calibre, both working at the same place, was bound to have taken place. In the frescoes of the Scrovegni Chapel, Padua, Giotto’s realism is happily only relative. It is not a question of an abandonment, but of a change of stylization. Instead of gaining inspiration, as his predecessors had done, from the pattern of the icon and Greco-Byzantine miniature, Giotto derived his from the plastic source of volumes as they were rendered by Gothic or sometimes even Romanesque sculptors—does not the Christ of the Noli me tangere seem to be in a dancing attitude which is very typical of the great figures of the Romanesque porches? (1) The direct observation of nature plays only a small part in his representations, and his landscapes, of unparalleled charm, are arbitrarily constructed from observed but very much transposed elements. His careful organization of the surface, the disposition of the solids and voids—nor let us fail to remark the emotive role that voids play in Giotto compositions—is incomparably more important than any preoccupation with material resemblance.

On the other hand if Giotto brings a passionate interest to bear on the interior composition of each of his scenes taken in isolation, he remains more or less indifferent to the problem of the renewal of the harmony of the setting—taken as a whole—with the architecture. In this he was following the tradition which consisted in making a maximum use of the surface available. The thirty-eight frescoes, six of which are devoted to Joachim and St. Anne, nine to the Madonna and twenty-three to Christ, cover the side-walls of the nave in three superimposed rows without any interval, and encroach on to the vault. Furthermore, they frame the triumphal arch which gives access to the choir and have as a pendent a vast Last Judgement on the other side of the façade. The vault is starred with round medallions and the fresco borders are animated with five-lobed medallions, each containing small scenes from the Bible. A base, painted trompe-l’œil fashion, serves as a plinth to the frescoes, and is intersected along the border extension by fourteen long and narrow panels which contain very fine allegoric figures painted in grey-green grisaille and representing the Vices and Virtues. The choir, decorated by one of the master’s pupils, completes this

(1) Cf. the Dancing Prophet, Souillac in France (Lot), the name by which this representation of Issiah is usually known. W.J.S.
somewhat overcrowded, all-embracing decoration. When fifteen years later Giotto, who had been commissioned to decorate four chapels of the church of Santa Croce at Florence, was to grapple once again with the problem of architectural setting, although he reduced the number of subjects, he no longer felt the necessity for harmony between the actual painting and the structure of the building in his conception of the whole.

It is much more difficult at Padua and Florence than at Assisi to know to what extent the choice of subject was dictated to Giotto. With regard to Assisi the reply is obvious; as the commission came through the Order, the subject of each scene must have been settled beforehand in detail by the monks. At Padua and Florence the commission was given by private individuals: laymen and very wealthy at that. We cannot exclude the possibility that the artist received merely general instructions and was able to interpret them according to his own wishes. The Scrovegni family which built the Arena Chapel to win
atonement for their sins, was a family of bankers and money-lenders. It is extremely improbable that it entertained the slightest sympathy for the Spiritual element in Franciscanism which preached poverty. It is significant that in the Arena cycle we should find six frescoes devoted to St. Joachim, the saint—who, next to the poverello, enjoyed the greatest favour among the Spirituals, so much so, indeed that they were sometimes erroneously called “Joachimites”. This favour was moreover a demonstration of the opposition of the sect to the Popes, because one of their number, Gherardo da Borgo, had been condemned and tortured by Alexander IV for having made St. Joachim the subject of a mystical work. An important development of the Joachinite theme must consequently be considered as an allusion to Spiritual tendencies, and we have every reason to believe that Giotto introduced it into his cycle of the Virgin and Christ on his own authority. Let us make it quite clear—there is no question here of making Giotto out to be a rebel. He put his art at the disposal of the powers that be of this world without embarrassment or hesitation, and his whole career as an artist is the proof of this. But when the chance came along or when he was left any freedom of choice he made a friendly gesture across the years to the Little Brothers for whom he had a real affection.

Once he was back at Florence he thought less about the matter or else he was too preoccupied. The Bardi and Peruzzi families, each of whom in about 1318 and 1322 decided to consecrate a chapel in the church of Santa Croce to the glory of their ancestors, were at the summit of the social hierarchy of the town. They had control of the wool industry, trade and the bank; they advanced credits to the King of Naples which exceeded by a fifth the total revenue of his crown, and to the King of England the means to finance his war with France. In the years 1315-1335 they were at the height of their power. When we remember that at the time of his bankruptcy, the King of England was in debt to the Bardi and the Peruzzi to the tune of 1,365,000 florins and that at the same period 70,000 florins bought the town of Parma and 80,000 Avignon, we can form some idea of their power. The Bardi—it seems—were ardent Franciscans. Their most respected saint was St. Louis of Toulouse, a saint of the royal family whom the Guelph party in power at Florence adopted as their patron immediately after his canonisation which took place in 1317. The Bardi Franciscanism then had nothing suspect or subversive about it, and it was completely in accord with the whole religious and financial politics of Florence in which they were prime movers. It was natural and logical that they should have their chapel adorned with the legend of St. Francis. But this time there was nothing unusual to distinguish the decoration; Giotto was drifting with the tide, or rather, having won reputation and wealth, was forgetting his old sympathies. Among the Franciscan patron saints of the chapel, the royal saints hold the place of honour: three
out of four—St. Louis of France, St. Louis of Toulouse, St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Among the scenes of the life of St. Francis—carefully selected and reduced to six, not only because of lack of space but also because Giotto had by now an increasing predilection for syntheses and elimination, for emphasizing only what was most significant—is the Confirmation of the Rule of St. Francis, that is, the official consecration. In the Peruzzi Chapel, consecrated—likewise in six scenes—to the two St. Johns, John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, is also a Vision at Patmos, taken from the Apocalypse but so much toned down, so cold that all its appeal is lost. In these last works which we know of him Giotto devotes himself entirely to the full expression of his art. He discovers wonderful rhythms and exploits his consummate skill and knowledge which, while commanding our respect, make us think back wistfully to the spontaneity and freshness of his early work. However, the Death of St. Francis in this cycle is an incomparable masterpiece. It belongs to those works which compel the admiration of succeeding generations and which pupils imitate because they are the works of a master and because they contain elements which seem transmissible. We shall see how this art fared in the hands of his successors.

**The Giotto Circle**

Giotto was not the only artist working at Florence at the beginning of the fourteenth century. But we have such scanty information about the artistic activity of this period that the study of the few works extant must be based solely on hypotheses and deductions. The Black Death of 1348, the resulting chaos, the renewal of the population, the subsequent change of the social structure were probably collectively responsible for the disappearance of documentary evidence. Apart from odd, fragmentary archives, the oldest available source goes no further back than 1385 (Filippo Villani), that is to say the period when all the protagonists and witnesses had long been dead.

We must begin by making one important distinction. On the one hand were painters and studios working independently of Giotto and whose relations with the latter were—either because of ignorance or imitation—somewhat limited: this implies a good deal of independence on their part. On the other were painters trained by Giotto; those who during the first period of their activity endeavoured, whether they belonged to his atelier or not, to follow the master as closely as possible, and who gradually moved away from this allegiance after his death and as their own personalities become more mature.

A few works and still fewer names enable us to form an idea of what the
MASO DI BANCO - A MIRACLE OF ST. SYLVESTER - DETAIL
SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE
circa 1340
first of these categories was like. An altarpiece representing St. Cecilia and Scenes from her Life, another very akin in style, dedicated to St. Margaret, some isolated figures of saints, form a group which are generally attributed to one artist to whom we give the name of the Master of St. Cecilia. In the St. Cecilia altarpiece, usually considered more or less as belonging to that period, we note the presence of robust and solid and very elaborate pieces of architecture, heavier than the general run of Giotto’s at Assisi, which tends to confirm the theory that their author was of Roman origins. The treatment of the large figures on the other hand is related to the treatment Giotto gives to his. In particular, the affinities of the figure of St. Cecilia with Giotto’s Virgin in the Uffizi are very striking. Finally the small figures of the side wings present a slight elongation, the sole remaining trace of Byzantinism in this work, which owes more to classical inspiration than anything else to be found in Tuscany at the beginning of the century. Apropos the workshop of the Master of St. Cecilia, Sienese influence has been suggested, doubtless because of the elongation and also on account of the small panels, some of which are veritable pieces of genre-painting. These considerations seem to be the result of a certain confusion about the time element. If in fact we follow general opinion and place the St. Cecilia altarpiece round about the year 1304, the sole possible influence would be that of the School of Guido of Siena, for Duccio had not yet undertaken his Maestà and Segna da Bonaventura was only just embarking on his career. It is difficult therefore to see why an advanced and precocious Florentine master should have gone to look for his models among artists who were chiefly preoccupied with renewing themes of the past. Examples of Byzantinism were not lacking on the spot; they were common ground for the whole of Italy. Furthermore, everything that departed from Giotto’s synthetism and tended towards the representation of detail in everyday life is nowadays considered as an indication of Sienese influence. Now this inference is partially true for a later period. At the beginning of the century the realist genre-painting comes from Florence although it is not derived from Giotto. Siena too had its genre-painting as we find it for example in the portable altarpiece of San Pietro in Banchi or in that of St. John the Baptist in the convent of St. Petronilla but the inspiration certainly has another source. Byzantine and fanciful, it is concerned with a play of arabesque and graphic invention rather than with living reality. Whereas a much older link, bound up with the miniature, exists between Pisa and Florence and probably inspired those little scenes which frame the centre panel of altarpieces and in which popular characters and animal figures feature so strongly.

In Siena the genuine realist genre scene had to await the arrival of Ambrogio Lorenzetti who in point of fact seems to have become infatuated with it after
MASTER OF THE VAULTING OF ST. FRANCIS - NATIVITY
LOWER CHURCH, SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI
before 1345
two prolonged stays in Florence. And after Ambrogio it very rapidly began to fall into the sinuosity so beloved of the Sienese.

From that time on it seems hardly justifiable to speak of Sienese influence in the Florentine genre-scene, even in later periods, when, in theory at any rate, there was no longer anything to prevent its dissemination. In any case we must approach the question with discernment. It may be beyond doubt that some Sienese stylistic elements—the elongation of figures or cylindrical volumes—appear in some of the works of a Bernardo Daddi, and certain of the Florentine school return to the use of a gold-leaf background which is a Byzantine legacy, but they had in any event no need of Siena after Giotto's death to effect a return to the realistic and popular detail which was part and parcel of an ancient and local tradition. The work of the Master of St. Cecilia on the one hand, that of the illuminators on the other, testify to this and take us back to an archaic strain which, quite outside the Giotto influence, manifested itself in the Florence of the early fourteenth century.

The work of Biadaiolo, the illuminator, is in itself ample proof of this efflorescence of the realist genre-scene which has no preoccupation with spatial representation, or, to put it more exactly, exists within the mediaeval framework of simultaneous representation. Along with him, Pacino da Bonaguida belonged to those who, while illustrating fashionable ideas in the domain of religion, presented them in the traditional idiom, and continued to satisfy the needs of a conservative clientele. They were insensitive to the experiments of Giotto or even of a Master of St. Cecilia. As always in transitional periods, the same tendency is observable in the majority of these artists. Halfway between them, however, that is between a neglected, yet popular Pacino and a Master of St. Cecilia who was careful and attentive to the march of time, a certain Jacopo del Casentino represents the stage of compromise. Certain works that we can assign to the Master of St. Cecilia's studio—works of pupils or distant disciples—complete this summary picture of post-Giotto activity in Florence: the so-called Fogg (1) Pietà and the Virgin in the church of Figline, which are generally linked up with a framed Madonna with St. Lucia and St. Peter and a St. Peter alone, both of which are in the Horne collection in Florence; a Crucifix in the Church of Santa Croce, and two figures of saints—SS. Francis and Andrew of the Griggs Collection in New York. The art critics who attribute these works to one and the same artist call him the Master of the Fogg Pietà or the Master of Figline, according to their preference.

Outside Florence itself it is to Assisi we must turn for proofs of Florentine activity. There, side by side with Giotto's work, is to be found a whole confused mass of work, contemporary or slightly later, representing both independent

(1) In the Fogg Art Collection in the U.S.A., W.J.S.
ateliers and Giotto's pupils. On the strength of a somewhat shadowy testimony it has been thought possible to infer the presence of the Master of St. Cecilia at Assisi, probably prior to the execution of the altarpiece after which he has been called. He is supposed to have executed a fresco in the St. Francis cycle in the nave of the Upper Church—the fourth, counting from the last. Perhaps he even did the three last ones in which critics have refused to recognise Giotto's hand and some would also include the first. The truth is that we have not sufficient documentary evidence, yet in itself the presence of the Master of St. Cecilia at Assisi would have nothing surprising about it. Assisi was a kind of sanctum for any Italian artist who had achieved a position of consideration, and the Master of St Cecilia seems to have enjoyed enough esteem to have been admitted to work in this Franciscan Pantheon of painting. Other Florentines whom Italian art critics—hopelessly handicapped, alas, by the absence of all documentary information—are endeavouring to identify at the present time, were similarly accepted.

Among the works of Giotto's pupils at Assisi that of Taddeo Gaddi has been almost definitely identified. Taddeo Gaddi is certainly the best known pupil of Giotto's immediate entourage. Having survived the Black Death of 1348, he was venerated at Florence as the direct heir of the great master's art, and it was he, after Giotto's death—and even in his lifetime when Giotto himself was unavailable—on whom the most important commissions in the town and the district devolved. He, too, worked in Santa Croce, the great Franciscan sanctuary of Florence where all the great families considered it a point of honour to have their chapel; at San Miniato al Monte, the decoration of which was being completed at the time; and—following a kind of inter-Italian competition from which he emerged triumphant—at Pistoia. A docile follower of the master, though lacking the latter's creative power, he continued his methods not without charm but—less interesting from this point of view than the Master of St. Cecilia—without contributing the leaven of a sufficiently well-defined personality. Gradually weariied by the atmosphere of Giotto's painting which had been stripped down to the bare essentials, he gave himself up more and more to the picturesque which doubtlessly came more easily to him.

More independent, more open to various influences but also more archaic, Bernardo Daddi, about whom we also have some concrete information, was among those we can class without hesitation among the direct disciples of Giotto.

A document of paramount importance, dated 1347, permits us to reconstitute the classification which his contemporaries drew up at the time of artists then active. It is a list of the best Florentine and Sienese painters made after the result of the competition just mentioned, organised by the monks of San Giovanni Fuorcivitas at Pistoia for the execution of a polyptych intended for
ATTRIBUTED TO JACOPO DEL CASENTINO - SCENE FROM THE LEGEND OF SAN MINIATO - ALTARPIECE
SAN MINIATO AL MONTE, FLORENCE
In half of the thirteenth century
their church. In connection with Florence it contains half a dozen names: Taddeo Gaddi heads the list, followed by a certain Stefano; then come Archangia and Nardo; in whom we recognise Andrea di Cione, called Orcagna and his brother Nardo; next Puccio (Capanna Puccio) and finally a certain Francesco, "of the atelier of Andrea" whom we agree to identify with Francesco Traini.

In this list, in which with the exception of Capanna Puccio, to whom Vasari attributed a vast output of high merit, completely contested nowadays, everybody is pretty clearly identified. The person Stefano alone remains a complete mystery, and the most varied hypotheses have been suggested. They are complicated by the fact that his name is involved in the most complicated story we have to complain of from Vasari who appears to have confused three different artists under the one name! The name in question is Tommaso di Stefano, called Giottino if we follow Vasari's nomenclature. In point of fact Stefano was doubtless Giottino's father and Tommaso must be identified with Maso di Banco as distinct from Giottino with whom he has long been confused.

We are dealing then with two people in Giotto's immediate entourage, Stefano and Maso, Giottino belonging, it would seem, to the succeeding generation and being perhaps, if L. Coletti's hypothesis is correct, a pupil or disciple of Maso. Concerning the first of these artists whom contemporaries seem to have held in high esteem, nothing positive has ever been established. Ghiberti assigns to him Scenes from the Life of Christ in the cloister of Santo Spirito and a Glory of Paradise in the apse of the Lower Church of Assisi, but these frescoes have disappeared. Vasari attributes to him further a Crucifix with SS. Dominic and Thomas, in the Chiostro verde of Santa Maria Novella in Florence and the fine Assumption, destroyed during the last War, in the Camposanto at Pisa. But our mistrust of Vasari in matters concerning this period is too great for us to be able to place any confidence in his statements—especially as the said fresco was often attributed later to Simone Martini. We cast round in a similar way for traces of Stefano in Lombardy, for always, according to Vasari, he is supposed to have worked for the Visconti family at Milan, like Giotto and perhaps Maso.

As for Maso, about whom under the name of Maso di Banco we have a certain amount of information from archives, it is generally agreed to assign to him two frescoes in the Chapel of St. Sylvester at Santa Croce, one of the Bardi family-chapels. They had already been attributed to him by Ghiberti and we note, not without surprise, that they are considered, from Ghiberti up to Lionelli Venturi and L. Coletti, as one of the greatest masterpieces of Italian painting of the Trecento. A slight problem arises about its date which is usually placed round the year 1341. It was, however, the year in which Maso quarrelled with the Bardis with the result that his property was sequestrated on the order of one of the members of the said family. It is hard to believe that the commission was
given while the quarrel was on, especially when we remember the omnipotence of the Bardini in Florence. It would obviously be enough to pre-date the commission slightly and the hypothesis as hypotheses go is probably not far out.

Two other enigmatic names gravitate round Giotto’s powerful personality. One is Buffalmaco whose fame has been handed down by oral tradition but of whose work we have no trace—unless one day we re-assign to him the Faenza polyptych of the Blessed Humility; the other, Capanno Puccio who, having enjoyed every honour—thanks to Vasari—now sinks into total oblivion. As for the Orcagna group, mentioned in the Pistoia document, it was particularly active in the second half of the century, and along with that of the second generation of the painters of the Giotto tradition—the Giottone’s, the Agnolo Gaddi’s, the Giovanni da Milano’s—, it will be the subject of a separate study.

In conclusion we see from our examination of the works of the period that the greatest interest is less centred on the pupils and followers of Giotto than on those who side by side with him contributed to the renewal of Florentine painting at the beginning of the century. The “great figure of Maso” is, it is true, for reasons which escape us, like that of Barna in Siena, an object of veneration and curiosity on the part of contemporary Italian critics. We must confess, for our part, that we do not share this infatuation.

Duccio

SIENENSE art forms a chapter on its own in the history of Italian painting. From the end of the thirteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century it shows a continuity which while allowing each artist his personal variations is none the less homogeneous, and the concept of school and style can be more justly applied to it than to Florentine art in a period in which we notice a temporary exhaustion of artistic sap after the death of Giotto. Its influence, therefore, was both more immediate and more universal. It affected not only Italy and France but the city of Florence itself which had to await its great Quattrocento artists before it regained the final ascendancy over its rival in the sphere of the arts which it had long held in the economic, political and military sphere.

We have little information about the origins of Sienese art. Of a few anonymous traces of thirteenth century art in the keeping of the Academy Gallery in Siena, three small altarpieces, two Franciscan diptychs and the name of a painter, Guido da Siena, survive. The only picture signed by this artist, a Madonna, was repainted by an artist in Duccio’s entourage and thus we find ourselves faced with a somewhat paradoxical situation; for it had been by follow-
ing this clue that experts had reconstituted a whole school of artists subjected to his supposed influence while the master himself remains a more or less unknown quantity.

For practical considerations therefore, it is only with Duccio di Buoninsegna that we can begin a modern study of Sienese art if we want to avoid falling into too many errors of fact.

Younger than Cimabue, slightly older than Giotto, Duccio is first mentioned in contemporary documents as a painter of cassoni—chests and coffers which served a variety of purposes—in the year 1278. The reference here was to chests used for housing “the instruments of the Commune” (that is of Siena) to quote the document. Heavily fined in the year 1280 for an offence about which we have no information, the artist then has no further mention in the Siennese archives until 1295. But between the two dates above we can trace him in Florence. A contract still survives there by which the Company of the choristers of the Virgin of Santa Maria Novella (the Laudesi) commissioned from Duccio quondam Boninsegna a full-scale Virgin “of the best painting”. This is the first stage in a dispute that has been going on for more than half a century.

The second stage is a picture: a Virgin and Child which was in the chapel of the Rucellai family in Santa Maria Novella but has since been transferred to the Uffizi where it is still currently known as the Rucellai Madonna. If we accept Vasari’s statement, secular tradition attributed the Rucellai Madonna to Cimabue. But during a period at the end of the last century when art histories were becoming more elaborate, critics began to question this traditional attribution with more and more insistence, for it had been based solely on Vasari’s word and nothing else, and the latter’s partiality for Florence had been noted on more than one occasion. The thesis sustained by the most eminent critics was that the Rucellai Madonna was in fact the Virgin commissioned by the choristers of Santa Maria Novella in 1285. They produced many proofs taken from the minute examination of the picture and, what is more, used Vasari’s own testimony as an argument to support their thesis, for Vasari had seen the picture not in the Rucellai chapel where it was immediately before its transference to the Uffizi, but in the chapel adjoining the one which had formerly belonged to the Laudesi, and which the Bardi family had bought for its own use a century later. The transference of the picture was thus explained. The partisans of Cimabue, on their side, endeavoured to substantiate their claim, but they had to yield gradually before the partisans of Duccio with the result that their ranks are reduced today to a few rare names, including that of Lionello Venturi. Nevertheless any Duccio historian these days examines all sides of the argument before including the Rucellai Madonna among the works of the Sienese master. It would be idle to rehearse the arguments in the limited space here, and it is more profitable
to consider the importance that the attribution of the Madonna means to either of the artists as far as the general understanding of the various currents that cross Italian painting in its beginnings is concerned.

The Rucellai Madonna is a charming work, and there is no question of denying its very great artistic merit. But, luckily for historians, it is not an isolated work. It takes its place in a long series of large-sized enthroned madonnas which, following after the frontal and hieratic type, present themselves three-quarter face and leaning towards the Child: a series which, from the Virgin of the Academy at Florence, those of the Carmelite Church at Siena, of the Gallery at Perugia and of Arezzo, passes through Guido and Coppo di Marcovaldo to reach its culminating point in the Rucellai Madonna, and then persists in the work of Duccio no less than in Cimabue and the followers of both. Furthermore, although the painting was in Florence, it was certainly Sienese in inspiration; but it does not seem to have resulted in any movement away from Florentine towards Sienese taste. On the contrary, its sisters from Duccio's hand—the so-called Crevole Virgin, the Brussels Virgin and the Perugia Virgin, not to mention the
great Maesta—played a role of paramount importance even in Siena. In our lack of complete certainty on the question, let us be content to admire the exquisite Madonna without involving ourselves in the impasse of attribution. We should add, however, that it represents an attempt, evident no less in Siena than in Florence, to create a new theme on the basis of an old one, for the Madonna, leaning over a Child animated with new life, is herself animated with an expression of thoughtful tenderness, and like her sisters, is abandoning the former divine inscrutability for more human emotions.

At Siena, despite this rejuvenation, bringing with it a new grace, the traditional style remains fundamentally unchanged. The Sienese Virgins of the end of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries do not represent a really new vision nor an apprehension of a world that was different from their old outlook. Their contribution lies more in the fact that they retain their link with a traditional but rejuvenated style towards the formation of one aspect of the delightful "Sienese manner" which, in certain respects, was to linger in the Byzantine elements of painting longer than Florentine art did.

Sienese art would not, however, be a great art if it was mannered and nothing else. Though it had one foot in the past, it took account of the present, and the subtle admixture of the two elements is one of the keys to its charm. The contemporaneous element was, on the one hand, the life of a city which all through its history has distinguished itself among Italian towns because to its own particular character, and, on the other, in the sphere of the arts, the link with the great Gothic mainstream which had dominated Europe for nearly half a century.

People have wondered how an artist like Duccio could have come into contact with the grandiose sculptural creations of the French cathedrals. We know too little about Duccio's life to give a reply. But when a current of so vast an amplitude exists, it cannot be hidden. Perhaps he travelled, which would hardly be surprising in a period when the artist was a vagabond par excellence. Perhaps he had seen ivories or chests, certainly miniatures which have had a visible effect on his art. At any rate during his youth he had seen Niccolò Pisano working at the pulpit of the Cathedral of Siena, completed in 1266, which is of Gothic inspiration; he also must have seen Giovanni Pisano between 1284 and 1298, working on the façade of the original cathedral which was not demolished until between 1374 and 1377. The fact remains that when we turn towards his masterpiece, the grand Maesta, which was commissioned in 1308 by the Commune of Siena to be placed in the Cathedral, we are very quickly conscious of the freshness which comes from the active participation of an artist in a living and developing movement that is alive and gathering momentum, which for the real genius is something over and above the passive notion of influence. The forms take on a third dimension, colour is beginning to play a role which is no longer
solely dictated by the requirements of harmony but also by the desire to suggest volume. This pictorial transposition of volume is a personal preoccupation which he has made peculiarly his own.

The reverse side of the altar-frontal which was conceived and placed so as to be seen on both facets, keeps to the traditional and official arrangement: a large Virgin Triumphant reigns in the centre, surrounded by male and female saints in superimposed rows. The Virgin forms part of a series already considered; among the Saints, however, one can pick out some heads which have been derived from a different, both more poetic and less mannered, source; those of SS. Agnes and Catherine in particular. One might almost wonder whether they were not inspired by some idealized living model. But it is the back of the altarpiece and the predella panels that give the measure of Duccio's artistic temperament. In a series of thirty-eight scenes—taken, according to tradition, from the life of Christ,—and in the seven panels of the predella, Duccio has created a universe governed by laws of its own, yet one that he makes us understand.

A comparison with another universe, created by another great artist, Giotto, imbued even more than Duccio with Gothic principles, will best serve to illustrate this notion of participation in a living artistic movement which in both cases was to replace the notion of passively absorbed influence. Giotto's frescoes in the Arena Chapel at Padua illustrate the same theme as the Maestà, which they precede by five or six years. And the two ensembles present mostly the same episodes and the same symbolism. But what a difference of interpretation! First in the use of colour. Neutral, clear, restful but somewhat dull and almost monochrome colour in Giotto serves only to clothe the forms and sometimes to accentuate the relief obtained by line. In Duccio not only does it shine with a multicoloured brilliance, reminiscent of enamels, but it is an active principle, participating in the story. The figure of Christ is immediately recognizable in each scene, without further analysis, by the coloured treatment of his garments (*). His red robe with a blue cloak is more sustained in colour and richness than the other values in the garments of the personages who surround him. Thus it constitutes an area apart against a background of various other colour-areas. The photographs in black and white of the Maestà are still more revealing from this point of view than the reality: Christ's silhouette shows up black while the rest of the people appear in light grey. It has been said that the choice of colours was dictated to Duccio by an old Byzantine tradition which had become a ritual, assigning a fixed, symbolic colour of drapery to each personage. It is extremely

* As the Maestà is undergoing restoration it has not been possible to photograph the panels which are in the studio. We are indebted to M. Albert Skira for the reproduction of the Prayer in the Garden of Olives, taken before the restoration, which is, in point of fact, almost double the size of Christ appearing before the Disciples.
probable, but in no way does this fact diminish the credit of the artist as far as the disposition and animation of the colour prescribed was concerned. The mere setting down of yellow is not enough if you want to make the yellow vibrate and gain value in relation to the neighbouring colours, and if Duccio restricts his palette to the prescribed colours, it only serves to show even more his amazing excellence as a colourist.

Then comes the question of composition. One rarely sees a crowd-effect in Giotto, even where the scene includes innumerable personages. This is owing to the fact that Giotto treats each personage in isolation, like a statue, whereas Duccio, who was more of a painter than a sculptor, likes to represent the group as such, sacrificing individual figures to the effect as a whole. This too is because,
unlike Giotto, he much prefers the eccentric to the concentric composition. Look at their respective versions of the *Kiss of Judas*, the one at Padua and the *Maestà*; in the Siena picture, the Apostles, seized by panic at the arrival of the soldiers, scatter in two compact groups towards the edges of the panel; at Padua, they form a threatening circle round Christ, each figure retaining his individual importance. And this leads us to compare the two different psychologies as expressed in the respective works. Nobility, serenity, wisdom are the unvarying characteristics that Giotto confers without distinction on all his personages. Even Judas is great in his wild and brutal determination; he embraces from the front and energetically. Duccio’s Judas, hesitating, cunning, approaches from the side to apply the fatal kiss with the tip of his lips. He is a worthy son of the town of Siena which reconciles extremes, contrives to unite a sharp business sense with fervent religiosity and was destined to produce later on a St. Catherine whose exaltation borders on hysteria, and the wisest of the Popes, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini. Nervous and sensitive, Duccio contributes to painting the art of distinguishing the subtleties in people’s hearts. Even his Christ, tempted on the mountain, shows the inner torment. His Satan—in whom, though heaven knows why, people have insisted on seeing an ancient satyr—is not without charm; the denial by St. Peter, that very human demonstration of weakness, is surrounded by an atmosphere of real genre-painting, and in its intentional simplicity becomes comprehensible to all those who have ever yielded to weakness. Duccio, responsive to the symbolic language of images, has gone to equal pains to dissociate the living Christ, a Christ who remains a man, from the resurrected Christ, the Christ-God who is only an astral body. In all Duccio’s representations of Christ after the resurrection, in fact, Christ appears no longer clothed in his blue cloak but in a darker one, striped with gold arabesques which are the pure Byzantine method of indicating the folds of the drapery. To indicate the transition from the human to the divine, Duccio turned back, instinctively or deliberately, to traditional Byzantine art, an art which best knew how to personify the extra-spatial nature of God.

However, despite all these differences, the two artists of the early fourteenth century are both Gothic: one in his interpretation of the third dimension, the other in his treatment of the folds in drapery; one in his sense of the universal, the other in his sense of humanity; one by his spirit of synthesis, the other by his gift for analysis. We are faced with no contradiction, only with two artistic temperaments, each caught up in a movement which is still alive, still developing and pregnant with innumerable possibilities. We shall see that Duccio’s successor, Simone Martini, will be adding a third sense to this Gothic art which, taking architecture and French sculpture as its starting-point, was to produce one of its final triumphs in Italian painting.
Simone Martini

When Duccio died in 1319, Simone Martini's Maestà had already been four years in its place in the Sala delle Balestre, later known as the Sala del Mappamondo in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena. The fact that such an important work was entrusted to a young painter—Simone Martini in the year 1315 would be between thirty-one and thirty-three years old—during Duccio's lifetime, argues that he must have enjoyed a considerable reputation. Unfortunately we have no knowledge of his activity before this date nor about the training he might have received in Siena during his youth. Simone's Maestà still shows the influence of Duccio—one aspect of Duccio only, that which was responsible for the particular atmosphere surrounding the two saints of his own Maestà, St Catherine and St Agnes. For the latter work certainly marks a stage and contains in embryo the refined aestheticism which was to be the special characteristic of Simone in his subsequent career. Still bound up with the canons of traditional composition which he is to find it difficult to jettison, Simone Martini borrows largely from the repertory of ornamental forms of Gothic art, demonstrably familiar to him. The Virgin's throne is flamboyant in treatment.
and likewise her halos are adorned with floral motifs in the manner of early Gothic decoration, already made widely familiar through precious objects. Crowns and halos are treated as if each thing was a single jewel, an early example of that fondness for jewelry which was to recur in the rest of his work. A certain fancifulness is similarly introduced into the clothes in which the drapery and the motif of the offering of flowers take their place among those attempts at embellishment which were to be one of Simone's charming weaknesses. We find it eighteen years later in the Annunciation.

Fame soon followed the execution of the Maestà. Two years later Simone Martini went to Naples at the invitation of King Robert of Anjou, who awarded him an annual purse of fifty ounces of gold. He became the subject of great adulation in Naples. The King knighted him and entrusted him with the execution of a large picture commemorating his accession, along with various other works. One might call it a family portrait, celebrating as it did a twofold triumph, for on the main panel we see St Louis of Anjou, Bishop of Toulouse and brother of King Robert, crowning his brother, while the predella shows five scenes from the life of the Saint who had just been canonised (1317). This highly official commission which had as its object the glorification of the dynasty of Anjou, provided Simone Martini, ironically enough, with the opportunity of displaying qualities of simplicity which were absent from his previous works, unless one day we finally agree to attribute to him the Sant' Agostino Novello Polyptych of the church of Sant' Agostino at Siena, which seems unlikely—simplicity in the noblest sense of the term. The great figure of the Saint in the main panel is treated after the manner of the figures in French cathedrals, that is with that tempered suppleness, that restrained human warmth, still free from any mannerism; the five predella-panels, sober but precise, are so many genre-pictures. They are treated very much in the spirit—despite the differences of subject—of the various Labours of the Months which adorn so many porches, Gothic piers and their bases.

When, on his return from Naples, Martini undertook the work of the Pisan Polyptych and probably that of Orvieto, he was to discontinue any development of the genre style of painting, having doubtless broken away from the permanent, and certainly obsessive ambience of a French court at which transalpine incursions were always to be reckoned with. The lesson of Naples, however, was not completely wasted. Attracted by the principle of sobriety in human nature, the artist seemed anxious to apply it to a different pictorial conception from that of its origin. In modern artistic jargon he was—'seeing what could be done with it in another idiom'—with the result that he took a step back into the past. For, though the Pisan Polyptych makes a show of superficial Gothic ornamentation, the arrangement and spirit that inform it are archaistic, and even if we were to
ATTRIBUTED TO SIMONE MARTINI - ST. MARTIN LEAVES THE EMPEROR'S ARMY - FRESCO
ST. MARTIN'S CHAPEL, LOWER CHURCH, SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI
Before 1310
suppose its present-day reconstitution is not altogether accurate, no other future arrangement could temper its severity. Ranks of male and female Saints in intentionally severe attitudes stand out against the gold-grisaille background.

This St John the Baptist is a replica of that of the Maestà and the female Saints are languid and dull. The somewhat disconcerting ensemble, considered a masterpiece by some and by others a testimony to the temporary staleness of the artist, produces an effect of monotony and cold beauty. Simone had evidently disciplined a temperament which would take him in a very different direction if he followed his natural impulse. It is the same in the case of the Orvieto Polypych, carried out in the same spirit and of which, either for lack of time, but more probably through lack of interest, Simone left a large part to the collaboration of his future brother-in-law, Lippo Memmi. And he himself, henceforward, was to follow his innate aesthetic enthusiasm as a decorator of surfaces and inventor of plastic and pictorial forms.

To watch his development, we must return once more to the vast painted ensemble of the walls of Assisi, with all the uncertainties which such an examination involves. This time, however, although the attribution has come late in the day, the language of the images is unequivocal, and the least-informed spectator can feel happy about the inclusion of the St Martin Chapel frescoes of the Lower Church of San Francesco in the corpus of Simone Martini's work. As for its place in this work, the period around the year 1328—the date adopted by most art historians—as opposed to those who situate the frescoes between 1334 and 1339—seems satisfactory since it relates these frescoes to the Siena Guidoriccio portrait which is, plastically speaking, its logical complement, if not the supreme climax. It is in fact in the St Martin frescoes that the artist's practical, imaginative and creative sense is so energetically asserted—a sense that has more than a hint of the feudal overlord and grand couturier which we have already seen foreshadowed in the Maestà. In the ten frescoes which make up the Life of St Martin, court and military life are allotted the largest place, if not numerically at least in the quality of treatment accorded. The magnificent scene of The Emperor Constantine knighting St Martin is doubtless a souvenir of the ceremony which took place in honour of the artist himself at the court of Robert, King of Naples. In this fresco, Simone Martini, without going so far as to take a final decision embracing all the participants in the scene, introduces contemporary costume in the subsidiary groups of the musicians and the Emperor's suite. In so doing, he started that vogue for the display of contemporary fashions which was to be taken up again by Pisanello, Uccello, Gentile da Fabriano, and had its apotheosis in the vestimentary splendour of Piero della Francesca and Gozzoli until it was finally abandoned by the exponents of Renaissance classicism. The Emperor's cloak, although, like those of Duccio or Giotto, it still retains
the traditional aspect of a piece of drapery thrown over the shoulder, is decorated with strips of embroidery and fits the body almost like a real garment. It is the same in the case of the Emperor Julian in the scene of St Martin leaving Julian’s Army which serves as a pretext for winning the spectators’ admiration for the superb figure of a knight, dressed in a tunic slipped over his armour to which is fitted a mamélaire and all the paraphernalia of chains which supports the helmet and the sword. A background, showing a military camp, displays the sumptuous tents of the marshal of the armies in oriental fashion. This costume business,
this introduction into religious painting not only of popular and civilian elements—humble life had long been represented—but of picturesque luxury taken from life, as opposed to the impersonal splendour of the Byzantines in the court, palaces and armies, shows Simone Martini and the Lorenzetti as precursors of a vast international movement which was destined to make its way from Flanders to the Rhine and from Burgundy to Florence. As is usual, before an invention of such far-reaching results becomes an accepted canon or assumes a new meaning through some act of creative rejuvenation, before the Flemish interpreted it in terms of detail and Piero derived from it a lesson in monumentality, the first artists to make use of it gave it its purest and most personal value. Such a standard was achieved by Simone Martini himself in the Guidoriccio da Fogliano, a mural painting in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena. In my eyes this Guidoriccio represents the highest plastic attainment, not only in Simone Martini’s work but in the whole output of the Sienese school. The landscape, arbitrarily constructed of castles and hills which move past at the pace of a solitary horseman, the silhouette of the latter who is outlined in full against a dark blue sky in the space prepared for him, are combined elements which would provide in themselves alone a perfect definition of what a work of art should be: a free piece of creation in which the artist, playing with the elements supplied by his observation, constructs a reality that is different from ours, more convincing than real life because it is regulated by internal logic and perfect harmony. The emotion that results is made up of a feeling of fulness and hidden power. The spatial sense which informs this work impresses us and fills us with a longing to escape into solitude. The rare harmony of colour—deep cobalt blue and beige and gold camaieu—underlines the refinement and boldness of the composition.

Horse and horsemen wear the costume of the crusaders: the immediate but already legendary past, vestiges of which still survived in feudal chivalry. Even today traces are still found of it in the heart of Africa among negro tribes whose ancestors had captured knights of the crusades. This caparison and horseman’s cloak, both cut out of the same piece of cloth, are things observed no less than the castles which probably have the same number of turrets as they possessed in reality; the same is true of all the tents in the camp, each with its own emblem. But the arabesque design of the gold cloth which enfolds man and beast in one piece and runs parallel to their united contours, flattens out any relief and transforms this composite silhouette into a two-dimensional cut-out. At the side, on the other hand, by a very happy contrasting effect, the hills swell out and the castles present hollows and jutting edges. A cunning and subtle use of heterodox ingredients which the artist, in full possession of the most various representational techniques, organises and harmonises in accordance with the impulses of his creative imagination.
Some have seen in this picture the personification of the chivalrous code of the closing Middle-Ages. And indeed, Simone Martini, Knight of the Kingdom of Naples, friend of kings, and later of popes, grand seigneur if not by birth at least by intelligence, distinguished and cultivated, speaking French, an indefatigable traveller, inquisitive about everything, passionately fond of luxury and precious things, must certainly have been infatuated by the picturesque and romantic elements in a code of chivalry which was not yet dead. But we tend to forget the circumstances in which the work was ordered. A picture was wanted to commemorate the victory of Siena over Castruccio Castracani and the taking of two fortresses, Montemasi and Sassoforte, which are the two castles represented in the fresco. Now the said Castruccio was a feudal lord, and the petty war which they were waging against him, unimportant in itself, was one of a whole series of similar expeditions of which the politics of commercial Siena had entirely consisted for more than a century. In fact, in order to keep its commercial highways free in the direction of Rome, which was the great financial centre, Siena was forced to wage continual war on feudal overlords who from their castles, which were regular nests of bandits dominating all the trade-routes, pillaged caravans and captured the escorts. It was to intimidate them that Siena had at all costs to keep in its possession the fortresses of Montalcino and Montepulciano and Grosseto, key positions on the road to Rome which Florence coveted for the same reasons. Hence her perpetual struggle with the town of Florence, her competitor, who jealous of the activity of Sienese bankers with the Papal Court at Rome, was striving to bar the route to Rome against Siena and allying herself against her with the feudal lords whose lands encircled Siena in a ring of iron. A struggle in which Siena finally succumbed. But before, and above all, during the period when, from 1226, her government passed from the hands of the nobles into those of the rich middle-class, she achieved marked successes. The episode of the victory over Castruccio is only one of these. Middle-class and commercial Siena owed it to a cor lottiere in her service, Guidoriccio Ricci da Fogliano, whom they proposed to honour in the fresco. The picture is therefore a trophy, a trophy and emblem of a victory of the middle-class over the nobles, modern merchants over feudal lords who persisted in living in the world of the Middle Ages. Hence it cannot be in any way considered as an exaltation of chivalry. Even the character of the condottiere had changed. The condottieri were mercenaries, mostly adventurers without a country who with their armed bands collected during their wanderings from the highways and byways, hired themselves out to the highest bidder for their warlike services. As time went on, they became a real scourge of the country, sacking towns, extorting higher rewards, terrorising cities of the importance of Siena, Florence or Venice. Guidoriccio Ricci is their ancestor. He is the first to whom a "grateful"—or rather terrorised—town raised
a monument. Later on, Padua was to erect an equestrian statue to Gattamelatta and Venice one to Colleone. They placed them in the very heart of their cities, in public squares. More modest, and above all, less progressive in his organisation of terror, Guidoriccio had to be content with a painted fresco in the interior of the Palazzo Pubblico.

That the same painter who created that very real and noble figure of St Louis of Anjou and the bold and vigorous image of Guidoriccio should have produced five years later that somewhat precious vision of grace, the Annunciation, of the Uffizi, shows the full extent of Simone Martini’s mastery of his medium and his prodigious faculty for self-renewal. The small figure of the Virgin who looks sulky and frightened as the great news is announced is a real psychological discovery. How far removed it is in its capricious femininity from all the versions which we have seen since artists began to breathe life into this symbol of the gentler virtues and profounder sorrows! Here we have neither composure, gravity, serenity nor resignation, but merely a young maid to whom the world’s strangest mystery is suddenly being revealed, and who vaguely realises the implications as far as she herself is concerned and feels that the burden is truly an overwhelming one for her frail shoulders. The Angel who gazes at her, questioning and intense, seems himself astonished to find so charming and fragile a creature before him as the object of so grave a mission! What joy Simone Martini must have derived from the painting of this delightful picture! He bestowed great care on its arrangement and setting, invented extraordinary detail—the drapery of the angel, for example, which rises up like a snake to a breath of wind that affects nothing else in the completely closed and tranquil space, whereas the angel is frozen in a static expectancy. It is a matter of small importance that the figures of the Saints at each side may have been painted by the hand of Lippo Memmi, forming as they do part of a plan in which the distribution of the masses was preconceived by the originator of the whole, and in the composition they have the effect of two counterweights, because it can be clearly seen, when the central part is deprived of these two supports, as it is becoming more and more customary to show it in reproductions, how mutilated and empty it seems.

In 1340 Simone Martini, at the request of Pope Benedict XII, perhaps on the recommendation of Cardinal Jacopo Stefaneschi, a great patron of the arts, set off for Avignon where he was nominated procurator of the church of Sant’Angelo al Montone in Siena. He took his brother Donato and his wife with him. We have little information about his activity in Avignon during the four years which preceded his death. It was there that he made friends with Petrarch for whom he painted a miniature in his Codex Virgilianus. Tradition has it that he made a miniature of Laura too, but all trace of it has been lost. A very dilapidated fresco in the porch of the cathedral of Notre-Dame-des-Doms, Avignon, is the sole
testimony to his activity there that has remained. The Walker Art Gallery at Liverpool possesses his last dated work, *The Child Jesus preaching in the Temple* which belongs to the year 1342, that is the Avignon period. Paris, Antwerp and Berlin share a polyptych assigned to this period since it was found at Dijon, but the proofs are lacking.

Simone Martini died at Avignon in 1344, and for some time after that, his influence made itself felt through his disciples in all the art of Provence.
Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti

The Lorenzetti were two brothers whose dates it has been difficult to establish. We first hear of Pietro in 1306 and of Ambrogio in 1319, and after 1348 there is no further trace of their existence, from which we can only conclude that they both succumbed to the Black Death which descended on the whole of Tuscany that year. Their activity is therefore, to within a few years, contemporary with that of Simone Martini but the difference of their temperaments and doubtless of the ambiance in which the artists developed seems to have interfered with any profound mutual influence.

Of the two brothers Pietro is considered the elder and perhaps the instructor of the younger, but while we can form some general idea of Ambrogio from some scattered accounts, Pietro has proved one of the most elusive figures of the century. An almost complete silence surrounds his name very soon after his death. Ghiberti who gives an enthusiastic description of Ambrogio's frescoes at San Francesco, Siena, does not even appear to suspect Pietro's existence, and Vasari who only rarely bestows praise on Pietro’s polyptych at the Santa Maria della Pieve, in Arezzo, failed to decipher his name correctly or to identify the bearer as Ambrogio's brother. Was it through ignorance or contempt of the work? It is difficult to decide. The fact remains that until Cavalcaselle made his attribution of the Assisi frescoes, among other works, to Pietro Lorenzetti, Ambrogio alone was judged worthy of attention. But once this attribution was made, the pendulum swung the other way, and Pietro was proclaimed the greatest artist of his time, superior even to his brother. A great number of works were attributed to him, some certainly without valid reasons, as for example the delightful polyptych of the Blessed Humility made for the convent of the Sisters of the Order of Vallombrosa at Faenza near Florence, formerly attributed to Buffalmaco, which undoubtedly displays more Florentine than Sienese characteristics. There has even been an attempt to attribute the frescoes of San Francesco at Siena to him, despite Ghiberti's testimony in favour of Ambrogio. Those in Santa Maria dei Servi have been assigned to him. Berenson, a great admirer of Pietro's, attributed the two wonderful little isolated landscapes in the Siena Pinacoteca to him, not to mention an impressive series of Madonnas and Child. Today, discreetly, and with a good deal less fuss about the artist's drop in esteem than was made about his elevation, attempts are made on every hand to belittle this impressive work. At Assisi the hand of his disciples has been detected in the large decor-
PIETRO LORENZETTI OR UNKNOWN FLORENTINE PAINTER

PANEL OF THE ALTARPIECE OF THE BLESSED HUMILITY - UFFIZI, FLORENCE

1315 or 1321
ation in the left transept; the frescoes in San Francesco with the exception of the Crucifixion have been re-assigned to Ambrogio; the two small landscapes have been likewise attributed to Ambrogio, and in some cases a collaboration of the two brothers has been recognised; the Servi frescoes have been taken from Pietro and considerable doubt cast on the Blessed Humility. What is our assessment of Pietro Lorenzetti’s contribution to art when it is reduced to these, clearly more correct proportions?

What emerges after the laborious, and still extremely approximate task of reconstitution of his work is that Pietro is above all a painter of Madonnas. He is essentially one of those who gave rise to the taste for the Sienese with which the generation at the beginning of the present century was enthralled on its re-discovery and which we view nowadays from a less limited and more complex view-point. The Sienese Madonna with her exquisite, austere yet feminine and always rather strange manner, daughter of the Byzantine Madonnas and elder sister of the Virgins of Humility who leave their elevated throne to sit on the ground, was going to be mass-produced.

On these mass-produced paintings made to satisfy the countless needs of brotherhoods and religious and professional companies, churches of any importance, from the humblest village parish to the proud cathedrals in large towns, private chapels of the rich and aristocratic, or family chapels in the vast fashionable sanctuaries, the great artists of the time left their personal mark which was perpetuated and multiplied through a host of docile imitators, modest executors of orders which kept them alive. In a country where men painted as they breathed—as in Paris of our own time—few indeed were those among the lesser fry who, even though they were not without originality in other aspects of their art, could bring any new element to their treatment of the Madonna. So there were Madonnas in the Duccio manner, Madonnas after Cimabue, Simone Martini, Giotto, the Lorenzetti brothers, in incalculable numbers and at various periods which we cannot determine by mere analysis of style, so perfect were the imitations sometimes twenty or thirty years later. Pietro Lorenzetti himself created two types of Madonna or shall we say “women” rather, for his female saints and angels fall into the same category. One was the somewhat heavy, fleshly, serene type with a plump face, lips capriciously incurved and full, triangular eyes, very wide at the top—for example the “Dofana Madonna” of the Carmelite altarpiece which is at present at the Pinacoteca in Siena; the St Cecilia of the restored triptych in the same gallery; or the famous female figure which is to be found at the entrance of the room of The Birth of the Virgin. The other type is quite different, more emaciated, sharp-featured, intense, sullen but expressive with almond-shaped eyes and thinner lips. It is essentially the Virgin of the Arezzo Polyptych and the figures of the Assisi frescoes. The two types are most frequently found
together in compositions containing several persons, thanks no doubt to a happy concern on the part of the artist to break the monotony. Thus the placid and impassive Dofana Madonna is surrounded by anxious and slightly decadent-looking angels, and the second waiting-maid in the Birth of the Virgin, presents, by way of contrast with her neighbour, the more expressive type. At Assisi, however, the expressive and intensive type predominates. And this feeling extends from their faces to their bodies. The body of the Christ of the Deposition is, literally, dislocated to make an arabesque design which from the plastic point of view is most effective. We see that the artist has contrived to maintain a very subtle equilibrium, hovering on the frontier which divides expressionism from bad literary-painting. It comes still closer to that limit in the figure of the agonised Mary Magdalene bending over the body of the dead Christ in the Entombment. Here once again, the grimacing expression is saved by a plastic effect made by a magnificent piece of foreshortening. In the same way a remarkable sobriety of composition causes us to forgive the Madonna between SS. Francis and John the Evangelist her tortured smile. This smile recurs so often in Pietro’s work that it becomes an infallible guide, and we find it here again in the noble face of St Francis standing on the Madonna’s left.

Apart from this psychological innovation which, taken up by Sassetta and Giovanni di Paolo, was to achieve a great success at the beginning of the Quattrocento, Pietro does not seem to have concerned himself with any further original contribution. His themes, compositions and colour remain traditional. The
only narrative work which we still have of his—the panels of the Carmelite predella which tell the story of the establishment of the Order, its revival and the approval of its rule—has exquisite charm and a moving picturesqueness, but it does not manifest the same power of personal achievement which animated the Simone Martini frescoes at Assisi of roughly the same period.

Pietro Lorenzetti remained indifferent to the artistic currents of his time. Yet works done in his circle—whether we are able to classify them under definite names or not—testify to the fact that other painters did not dissociate themselves from him. It was the heyday of allegorical pictures—a precursory sign moreover of the approaching decadence of Sienese art, for allegories and expressionism are always indicative of an emphasis on the literary aspect of painting, to the detriment of a purely plastic sense. One of them which symbolizes Sin and Death has long appeared in the guide-books and catalogues of the Siena Pinacoteca under the name of Pietro Lorenzetti—erroneously it would seem. Like several others, it testifies to the religious and moral fever which was slowly seizing hold of people’s minds and was about to produce that extraordinary harvest of saints and visionaries of which Siena was the theatre in the second half of the century.

Ambrogio allowed himself to be borne along in the contemporary stream. His first attested work, a *Madonna and Child*, which is at Vico l’Abate near Florence, is still quite close to Pietro’s idiom, which confirms the hypothesis that Ambrogio was the disciple and the younger of the brothers. What were the factors in his emancipation? In view of the gaps in our information, this is difficult to discover. But we are sure that Ambrogio spent long periods of time at Florence: his Vico Virgin dates back to 1319—and there is no reason why they should have commissioned it from him in Siena, for he was certainly still young and comparatively unknown. In all probability he did it on the spot. In 1321 he is still found at Florence where he was distrained upon for debt. In 1324 he was back at Siena again, but several years later he returned to Florence. In 1332 his name figures in the Florentine Corporation of Physicians and Apothecaries (which includes painters). This implies a lengthy stay in the town.

These periods in Florence have often been held responsible for the spread of Sienese influence in the circles of Florentine painters who, starting out from the Giottesque tradition, were won over to Sienese methods. Working on the spot—it was in the course of his second stay that he delivered the Polypych of San Procolo of which the *Scenes of the legend of St Nicholas* in the Uffizi Gallery and the two panels representing SS Niccolò and Procolo in the Museo Bandini at Fiesole are perhaps relics—Ambrogio is held to have taught the Florentines the Sienese manner. But what is true perhaps of his second stay is certainly not so of his first. Ambrogio was still young and had not yet evolved his own style; rather on the contrary, plunging as he did into the Florentine circle which
PIETRO LORENZETTI - BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN - TWO PANELS OF THE ALTARPIECE
MUSEO DELL' OPERA DEL DUOMO, SIENA
1344
ATTRIBUTED TO PIETRO AND AMBROGIO LORENZETTI - ST. FRANCIS
DETAIL FROM THE VIRGIN AND CHILD BORDERED BY TWO SAINTS
FRESCO - LOWER CHURCH, SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI
between 1320-1330

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ATTRIBUTED TO PIETRO LORENZETTI - MARY MAGDELENE
DETAIL FROM THE "ENTOMBMENT" - FRESCO
LOWER CHURCH, SAN FRANCESCO, ASSISI
between 1290-1300
was immensely active at that moment and seething with ideas, it was he himself who learned the lessons which decided the direction of the whole of his subsequent career as a painter. Between the twenties and thirties Florence was on the point of reaching the culminating point of her economic and political expansion. With her oligarchic regime consolidated, her ever increasing commerce, her new markets, she was filled with boundless ambition. Giotto was, or had just been working at the height of his maturity at the church of Santa Croce, and around him, directly subordinated, as we have seen, to his control or else on similar lines to him, a whole school of artists was trying to satisfy and express the new society which seemed to have so brilliant a future in store. The Master of St Cecilia apparently possessed an important and influential workshop in Florence, while Pacino da Bonaguida, miniaturists and illuminators, maintained the more archaistic tradition which only served to show up the revolutionary character of the followers of Giotto. The melting pot into which ideas and traditions were being flung together at a period when everything was changing within the span of a life-time must have had the same stimulating influence on Ambrogio as the Court of Naples had on Simone Martini, since nothing is more rewarding for an artist than to forsake his familiar ambiance, however interesting it may be, and receive the shock that comes from an entirely fresh environment.

For Ambrogio the outcome of such a shock on his return to Siena was the frescoes of San Francesco. The one of St Francis offering his vows to Pope Boniface VIII is a masterpiece. Ghiberti was delighted with it, and no doubt for the good reason that he found accents in it that were familiar to him from his own city. Yet the fresco is far from being a mere imitation of the Giotto recipe. What Florence had given Ambrogio was a new orientation; he brought from it his acute sense of living reality; there, he had become aware of the problems of space and volume and had learned moreover a great deal about pictorial organisation. What is more important, he found there his own solution to all the problems which his contact with the Florentine world had stirred up in him. His volumes, with their powerful sense of relief, are obtained more by drawing than gradations of tone. They offer neither the articulation nor suppleness of Giotto’s volumes, but, instead, the appearance of those smooth self-contained masses which were later to become a veritable mannerism among some of Giotto’s own pupils, like Bernardo Daddi or Giovanni da Milano, in some of their works. His space is as airy and reads as well as Giotto’s but is nevertheless conceived in a way that is diametrically opposed to the latter’s; instead of relying on the voids and solids, it is constructed with the aid of architecture that has cleverly studied depths and with a series of successive planes, which, without coming under the heading of systems of linear perspective, give a foretaste of possibilities in that direction. Thus conceived and enclosed, this space is no less successful in
ATTRIBUTED TOAMBROGIO LORENZETTI - THE OBEDIENCE OF ST. LOUIS OF TOULOUSE - FRESCO
SAN FRANCESCO, SIENA
1332 (?)
integrating differentiated foreground figures than it is in embracing the crowds in the middle distance; all without any loss of clarity. The figures themselves bear the seal of Florence. This time Ambrogio abandoned all concern with elegance and effects of elongation, so wide-spread in his native city, and vigorously set down a series of sturdy and sanguine personnages with resolute and austere features. The youthful grace of the young kneeling postulant alone contributes a contrasting element, as if to make it clear—as the future will show—that the Sienese idiom had not been utterly submerged in the artist's soul.

When some years later, after his second stay in Florence, Ambrogio saw himself entrusted with the execution of a great allegory, *The Effects of Good and Bad Government*, for the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena, he had in point of fact reached a more subtle compromise between the respective teachings of both cities; Sienese refinement and the popular genre scenes of Florentine inspiration were to take their place side by side; these robust figures were to jostle cheek by jowl with subtle and graceful silhouettes. Having grappled with, and gained mastery over the first effects that such a change of manner always involves, Ambrogio was ripe to tackle new problems. These consisted in the main
of organising huge landscapes and representing a great town no longer by a technique of symbolism but by the method of illusion.

In one point, however, the artist found himself palpably embarrassed and perplexed. His programme consisted of four themes to be divided between three frescoes: one in which he depicted the Allegory of Good Government in the centre; one in which he combined the Allegory of Bad Government and its Effects, that is to say War; finally a third, representing Peace in Town and Country, that is the results of wise government. He found no difficulty in imagining the effects of the latter: a city buzzing with activity, a fruitful and prosperous countryside. But how about Good Government in itself? He had to represent it in the form of an allegory as an idea that was abstract and composite, at the same time covering a vast surface. The problem was one of conception as well as of expression. The allegory was certainly no novelty in this first half of the fourteenth century; Assisi had seen allegorical representations of Franciscan virtues, and the Arena Chapel at Padua was adorned with allegorical figures by Giotto. But these were isolated figures or scenes which only required a simple caption to explain their meaning. The huge composition demanded of Ambrogio, in which every figure, while possessing an individual explanation, had to form an element in a complex ensemble, based moreover on reality rather than imagination—proved to be an obstacle he could not surmount. He therefore felt the necessity to provide each figure with a legend explaining what it was all about, and he contented himself with a flat and uninspired composition. The unharmonious and disappointing ensemble of this first fresco is relieved by some success in the detail, particularly in the fine allegorical figure of Peace which, with the procession of the twenty-four citizens of Siena moving before the figure of Concord to arrive at the throne of Good Government, alone merits our attention.

And this, not only for its indisputable plastic beauty but because in itself alone this figure sums up all the aspirations and the whole ideological programme that the fresco was intended to illustrate. About this time, 1338-1340, when the work of decorating the Palazzo was being carried out, Siena was governed by the Council of Nine which represented the "good merchants of the Guelph party" to the exclusion of any other party or faction in the town. The previous policy, under the Ghibelines, had in fact resulted in disaster; the last representative of the line of Frederick, Conradine, defeated and executed, the Imperial party suffering a series of defeats throughout the length and breadth of Italy. The great military victory which Ghibelline Siena had won over Guelph Florence at Montaperti in 1260 produced quite trivial results and indeed seemed to have favoured the rise of the conquered rather than that of the conquerors. Faced with this great triumph of the party which was hostile to them, the Popes withdrew their custom from the Siena bankers and gave it to their Florentine rivals.
Frustrated in their commercial and financial activity, the rich merchants of Siena joined the Guelph party and succeeded in imposing their government, which was to last up to the middle of the fourteenth century. Their principal object was to forward the causes of commerce, prosperity and peace. From this time on, as was the case in Florence, they were to resort to mercenary soldiers for any military task they needed, but the time when such imprudence was dearly bought had not yet arrived. Meantime civil war between factions of noble houses—that of the Salembeni on one side and the Tolomei on the other—which had turned Siena of 1315 into a regular scene of street fighting, had finally disgusted the people of Siena with anything that smelled of the profession of arms. Peace at home, peace abroad was their only desire. And in the years 1338-1340, the moment seemed to have come when this aspiration was about to be fulfilled. The feudal armies that encircled the town were held in check; the Black Death of 1328 and the famine which ensued were merely an unpleasant memory, and a new era of prosperity was opening up for a period of time which was destined to be brief, though they did not know it. Full of confidence in the future and desirous of proclaiming their present success, the Council of Nine commissioned the work of decorating its Palazzo as a gesture of confidence in the excellence of their regime. These then were the first fruits of the commission given to Ambrogio. The Good Government was the one that brought peace, the Bad that which produced war.

The frescoes representing one, the Allegory of Good Government, the other, its effects are the only two signed by Ambrogio. The third, showing the Allegory of Bad Government and War, perhaps did not interest him or he had not sufficient time to devote to it. He had to delegate it to his pupils and it has not the quality of the new and masterly frescoes, twice its size, which Ambrogio lined up on the right of the first allegory to represent the effect of the former, that is to say Peace reigning over town and country.

The novelty of this work lies in its general conception: for the first time in the history of Italian painting, the artist no longer undertakes to symbolize a town and piece of countryside but to represent them. To neither Giotto nor Martini had such an idea occurred. An architectural feature, an edifice, a church or a castle sufficed to indicate that the scene took place in a town. A tree, or a flower indicated the country. In any case, however picturesque or painstaking the setting was, it never took precedence over the subject, that is the action or the event represented. In Ambrogio's work we see a complete reversal of this. It is the town itself and the rural landscape—the grandiose spectacle of the country of Siena seen from a distance and taken in from above—which are in themselves the real subject and main preoccupation. Where the artist has shown his mastery is in his immediate grasp of the problem set by this conception. Both
parts of the fresco extend before the spectator like a vast panorama in which the effect of the whole is the first to be taken in by the eye. The second, more leisurely view allows us to enjoy the manifold activities which take place within the first spectacle. Everything has already been said about the charm, suitability, elegance, picturesque element and feeling of reality of these scenes which insinuate their way into the streets of the town, bury themselves in its depths, harmonize with the contours of the country without mutual interference, without upsetting or interrupting for one moment the equilibrium of the vast ensemble which embraces them. They combine and sum up everything that half a century of painting gave both to Siena and Florence. But it is not these traditions which constitute this artist’s true greatness. It is rather as an inventor of a new vision of the world around that we should pay homage to Ambrogio Lorenzetti, the last creative painter of Siena at the moment of its greatest glory.

AMBROGIO LORENZETTI
THE EFFECTS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT IN TOWN AND COUNTRY - FRESCO - CENTRAL PART
PALAZZO PUBBLICO, SIENA
1338-1339 (?)

82
The Dominican Diversion

If the first third of the fourteenth century in Florence as in Siena is one of progress and prosperity, the second third takes place under the sign of catastrophe. From 1341 to 1343 a series of bankruptcies brought ruin to big banking and industrial houses which shared a monopoly of the power. The Baroli, the Peruzzi, the Acciaiuoli, involved in the bankruptcy of the King of England who owed them enormous sums of money, disappeared from the scene for ever, causing social and political repercussions by their fall which for two generations weakened the strength of the reigning oligarchy. To add to this, in 1348 the Black Death, which descended on the whole of Tuscany, reduced the popu-
lation of Florence to an extent estimated by widely differing accounts at between one half to three-quarters. It is difficult to arrive at definite figures of the death roll; Giovanni Villani estimates that the population of Florence was reduced from 90,000 to 45,000 inhabitants; Boccaccio speaks of 100,000 dead, Stefano’s Chronicle of 96,000. We must differentiate between accounts that deal only with the number of inhabitants within the walls of the town and those that include the immediate environs. In any event the loss was terrible although perceptibly less than in Siena, and the repercussions of this drastic diminution of the population were enormous.

As opposed to Siena which bowed to the catastrophe, Florence reacted to the situation with speed and energy. It flung the city gates wide open to all who, coming from the neighbouring countryside, wanted to transplant themselves there, and repealed the extremely strict laws concerning the freedom of the city which were in force before the plague. It is estimated that within the space of a few years, thanks to these new additions, the population of the town was increased by a third. The situation was important in a different way too. Florence was searching for possible causes of the scourge and endeavouring to find a safeguard against its recurrence. As in Siena, the general feeling prevailed that the visitation was to be interpreted as a chastisement from Heaven; the two cities in question had been too arrogant about their prosperity; their wealth had been wickedly acquired and badly spent. But whereas Siena, exhausted, sought her comfort in a weak kind of mysticism, Florence conceived the idea of atoning for her sins and indulging in the active virtue of penitence. This provided her in the most difficult period with a kind of moral stimulus, gave her the illusion of being active and therefore alive.

It is self-evident that such a frame of mind could not have progressed beyond a more or less confused stage of panic, had there not been someone to canalise or direct it. It fell to the Dominicans—quite naturally, in view of their vocation—to accomplish this task. For a long time their Order had only been waiting for favorable conditions to try and seize the stronghold of Franciscanism that Florence had been for nearly a century. Systematic austerity, penitence, education by a teaching based on dogma, the idea of obtaining salvation by comprehension of the Divine will—this was their special domain and the particular article of faith of their doctrine. They had no difficulty in taking the lead of the movement.

They possessed, furthermore, the material means. During and after the Black Death countless benefactions, on a scale which has never yet been recorded, flowed into the religious Companies’ coffers for the purpose of exorcising the scourge and avoiding its recurrence. New fortunes, the result of an unwonted concentration of great wealth in a few hands owing to the many deaths, also
ATTRIBUTED TO ANDREA DA FIRENZE - THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH - FRESCO
PART OF THE DECORATION OF THE SPANISH CHAPEL - SANTA MARIA NOVELLA, FLORENCE
1366-1367
materialised, and their possessors, feeling ill at ease, usually began by allotting a good share of it to the Church, thereby hoping to win redemption for themselves and enjoy what remained in peace. Many of these fortunes were squandered by the Brotherhods whose state of confusion was no less than that of the general run of mortals. The Dominicans used the share which fell to them for the propagation of their doctrine.

Two means seemed to them most suited to serve this end: word and image. The Preaching Brothers therefore redoubled their activity and flocked everywhere where there was a chance of collecting a congregation. The leaders of the Order were busy finding artists to cover the walls of their churches and chapels with pictures which, no longer merely narrating the Scriptures and legends of the saints to the faithful, would teach them the true way to live and conduct themselves before God and the Church.
Now, even to reach that stage it was necessary to maintain people in the salutary state of fear which would make them turn to the Church as the only way to salvation. The scenes of horror which the town had just lived through must therefore be for ever fixed on the walls so that there should be no risk of their becoming blurred in the memories of future generations. And so the emphasis was laid on themes which lent themselves to the representation of scenes of death and terror. In *Last Judgement* scenes the torments of the damned figured prominently; the themes of *Hell* and the *Triumph of Death*—which was no longer, as in the Middle Ages, individual but collective death, a monstrous charnel house, accompanied by slaughter and processions of the diseased—became the dominating subject which was imposed on painters and was soon to be stipulated also by the Franciscan authorities.

Following the resumption of activity in the towns after the Plague had died down, two artists specialised in this kind of painting: Andrea Orcagna at Florence and an artist working at Pisa, in all probability Francesco Traini.

From the artistic point of view Pisa and Florence had for some time now formed a unity. Since 1347 there had been a pro-Florentine government which saw its hand strengthened after 1369. Artists were now given commissions, first in one town, then in the other. At Pisa, as in Florence, countless benefactions were received by the religious societies after the Black Death and they used them largely to pay for the decorating of the interior walls of the Camposanto—the town cemetery. It was there that Traini, possibly with the help of a Bolognese artist, Vitale da Bologna, executed the two famous large frescoes, the *Triumph of Death* and the *Lives of the Hermits*. At Pisa, as at Florence where Orcagna was at that same moment painting for the Franciscans a *Triumph of Death*, a *Last Judgement* and a *Hell* in the church of Santa Croce, the Dominicans of the monastery of St Catherine controlled and inspired the execution of the two works.

The most noticeable tendency among the Dominicans of Pisa, however, was not altogether the same as in Florence. In the latter town where the tradition of Franciscan observance was particularly alive, even the Dominicans allowed themselves to be won over by the ideal of the contemplative life which replaced in their eyes the life of active propaganda. Without altogether falling into line with their Florentine brothers, they preferred to substitute for the theme of the omnipotence of death the refuge provided by the hermit's life, the life of contemplation and prayer, far from the traffic of the world. The second Traini fresco corresponds to this doctrine. In it are depicted hermits, the only serene human beings capable of facing the inevitable with peace in their hearts, the only mortals destined to attain a ripe old age. The literary source of the fresco is to be found in the book on the *Vita contemplativa* written, significantly enough, by a Dominican of the monastery of St Catherine, Fra Dominico
Cavalca, author of another book on the life of the saints which was to inspire the painters of Saint Anthony the Hermit, Lorenzo Monaco and Gherardo Starnina.

The Dominicans did not think of preaching the gospel of the solitary life in Florence, knowing very well they were unlikely to win over more than a handful of the faithful. In Florence the order of the day was to appeal to the masses, and the stakes were considerable, for Florence was the very centre and heart of a peril whose gravity the vigilant eye of the leaders of the Order wasted no time in revealing. The peril in question was the predilection the élite of Florence were beginning to show for antique paganism and rationalist humanism, the most virulent aspect of which was represented by the names of Petrarch and Boccaccio, and all the more disturbing because it followed on Giotto’s and Dante’s propaganda, the former introducing reason into art, the latter traditionalism in the Church. Beside this danger all other threats seemed harmless; the mysticism of Siena could easily be canalized, and in the event it proved so, for the Order succeeded in checkmating St Catherine, the Inquisition being quite able to cope with heretical sects. But more considered steps were needed to deal with a movement like the one that was taking shape in Florence. It was the chief reason why the Preaching Order removed itself from Siena to Florence to make it the principal theatre of their operations.

Teaching by word of mouth was to be supplemented by the use of the image. While his brother, Nardi di Cione, was executing a representation of Hell on the wall, Orcagna himself was commissioned to undertake a large altarpiece at Santa Maria Novella for the Strozzi family chapel, one of the members of this family being a prominent Dominican and an eminent theologian educated at the Sorbonne and later a Prior of the Church of the Order at Florence. Orcagna’s altarpiece sums up the whole Dominican doctrine in a concise and symbolic form: a Christ in Majesty—in accordance with the formula which prevailed before Giotto—offers St Thomas a Book, enjoining him to spread the gospel, and to Peter he hands the key of Paradise, designating him and his Church as the true instrument of salvation. The Navicella of the predella takes up the same theme of salvation through St Peter.

It was only a beginning. A much more ambitious enterprise was to be undertaken some ten years later. In the years following the Black Death, a Florentine merchant, Buonamico di Lapo Guidaloti whose wife had been among the victims, bequeathed a large part of his fortune to the Dominicans of Santa Maria Novella for the building of a new chapel which later became the chapter-house of the Order. Shortly before his death in 1355, he added three hundred and twenty-five and then another ninety-two florins to have the walls covered with frescoes, though these were not completed until 1366-1367.
The execution of the chapel which is usually known today as the Spanish Chapel was entrusted to an artist who had just been elected member of a delegation of artists to serve as advisors for the elaboration of plans for decorating Santa Maria del Fiore, the new cathedral at Florence. Significantly enough, his name did not figure first on the list of those chosen but second, after that of Taddeo Gaddi. The Dominicans rejected Taddeo; they had no wish to have orthodox Giotto pictures.

The doctrine as developed and amplified in the Strozzi altarpiece is revealed in eight huge ensembles on a monumental scale which cover the walls and vaulting of the chapel. Opposite the entrance, a Crucifixion, no longer presented as the symbol of suffering but as the revelation of the divine nature of Christ; the spectators, including the Virgin, do not weep but raise their arms in adoration. The entrance wall is covered with six scenes from the Life of St Peter the Martyr, the most fiery combatant against the Heresy of all the Dominican saints. On the left-hand wall of the entrance we see the Teaching of the Church and on the right, the Government of the Church or the Via Veritatis, constituting the pièce de résistance of the decoration. In it we are shown, under the aegis of
the Pope, the Emperor, cardinals and bishops, the flock of the faithful guarded by the *Domini canes*—the dogs of the Lord, which protect it against the wolves, the heretics,—moving along, guided by St Thomas Aquinas, St Peter the Martyr and St Dominic in the direction of the Gates of Paradise whose key St Peter holds out in his hand. The *Navicella* on the vaulting takes up the theme of salvation by the Church, the *Resurrection*, the *Pentecost* and the *Ascension*, affirmation of faith in the Divine Joy, a pledge of reward and a promise of eternal felicity only for those who, confident in the teaching of the Church, the sole dispenser of truth, would allow themselves to be led by her to the end of their earthly life.

When a spectator—not so well versed nowadays in the language of symbolism which he can decipher only with difficulty—looks at this prodigious ensemble, the first thing that strikes him is that the Giottesque spirit, as in the Strozzi altarpiece and the Pisan frescoes and the fragments which remain in Santa Croce, is completely banished. Orcagna's altarpiece, as if Giotto's had never existed,
shows a return to the thirteenth century; the Pisa frescoes, exuberant and filled with picturesque details, tie up with the archaistic side of Sienese art, the Crucifixion by Pietro Lorenzetti, that by Barna, and the great allegories executed in Pietro’s entourage; the frescoes of Andrea da Firenze in the Spanish Chapel also turn their back on Giotto. But they enclose, on the other hand, a new element which was the artist’s own and which had not perhaps necessarily been intended by those who commissioned the work. It is the appearance for the first time in the history of Florentine art, in a spirit less narrative than formal, of vast, monumental ensembles, composed for, and related to the architecture which supports them. The drawing, which is somewhat prosaic, in no way detracts from its merit as an original creation that even the art of the Florentine Quattrocento which directed its efforts chiefly in that direction, rarely equalled.

Andrea’s monumental work is a landmark in the development of Italian painting. He successfully accomplished what Ambrogio Lorenzetti, whose pictorial qualities and sensitivity are nevertheless infinitely superior, had never managed or perhaps had not even aspired to realize; harmony between painting and the architectural support, so hard to achieve. His frescoes do more than fall in with the lines which determine the volume of the chapel, though success in this, compared with attempts before him, marks a considerable advance; they respect the plastic integrity of the walls. Balanced and enclosed in limited depths, they do not make holes in the surfaces of the walls; they do not burst through the structure of the edifice. Such a solution however, could no longer be guaranteed, with the advent of linear perspective, which requires large horizons and profound depths.

It is hardly necessary to add that although they were the biggest influence on the period, the Dominicans failed to set the direction of the whole of Florentine painting and that other currents persisted.

The best representative of Giottism in the second half of the fourteenth century is Giovanni da Milano who was completely indifferent to the current of didactic and terror-inspiring expressionism launched by the Santa Maria Novella school. Florentine by adoption, he had come from a Lombardy which was already taking shape under the mixed influences of Giotto, the Sienese and the Gothic North. As when in 1365 he carried out the only known works of his which are dated and undisputed, the frescoes of the Rinuccini Chapel in the Church of Santa Croce and the Pietà of the Accademia in Florence, he is strongly under Tuscan influence, that is in the true tradition in which the Giottesque is tinged with the Sienese manner, but there is no doubt that it was his early Lombardic training which saved him from the path of servile imitation.
Perhaps he did not come to Florence until after the Black Death—his presence in the town was not noted before 1350—and never knew the terrors of the epidemic and the famine; for his compositions, skilfully organised and revealing great colourist qualities, all possess a serenity combined with an elegance which is imbued with mystery. At all events we are in a world that is very different from that of the Spanish Chapel. No other symbols than those of the Christian legend to which age-old practices have accustomed us and which are considered less from that point of view than as anecdotal or narrative elements now that they are to be met with everywhere, a Birth of the Virgin, a Meeting at the Golden Gate, an Expulsion of Joachim. A mature and non-militant wisdom that scorned didacticism was here
cherishing and transmitting the seed sown by Giotto while at the same time his professional traditions were being maintained, thanks to the great industrial workshop of Agnolo Gaddi, Taddeo’s son, with its large army of artisans. They were traditions which, in the first twenty-five years of the Quattrocento were to be codified before they disappeared, by a disciple from this same workshop, Cennino Cennini.

Side by side with the Dominicans who were extremely active and the Franciscans who, losing all their initiative in matters concerning art, continued the Giotto tradition or occasionally imitated the manner of their rivals, the Benedictines, faithful to old, and now consecrated habits of refinement, were anxious to shed lustre on their Order by employing artists who enjoyed the public esteem. Their favourite themes were concerned with the hermit’s life. Their star saint, or co-star with Saint Benedict was of course St Anthony the Hermit. This explains why they commandeered Gherardo Starnina, who having done a Temptation of St Anthony, in a Franciscan series, carried out by Agnolo Gaddi and his disciples in the Castellani Chapel of Santa Croce, specialised in representations of St Anthony. The Thebaud at present in the Uffizi, was long attributed to him, after previously being ascribed to Lorenzo Monaco, a successful painter who divided his work between the Benedictines and Camaldolites. Whether it is by him or not, it at any rate proves the existence of a movement. As far as Monaco is concerned, he is generally considered as being follower of Spinello Aretino, a talented painter, and native of Arezzo, but working mostly at Florence and Siena, whose services were monopolised by the Benedictines and the great family of the Alberti who were their patrons. Spinello is, above all, the illustrator of the history of the Order and of the legend of St Benedict. He worked for the residence of the Alberti at Antella, near Florence and for all the important Benedictine centres, Parma, Lucca, Monte Oliveto, Siena, San Miniato di Firenze and San Miniato al Monte, taking everywhere with him his elegant manner, the fruit of a skilful harmonizing of the Giottesque with the Sienese style, along with his exuberance as a colourist, on every occasion when he was commissioned to paint more than the white robes of his patrons—for the execution of the latter unfortunately presented this lover of bright colours with an unsurmountable difficulty.

The Dominicans then were not successful in radically changing the direction of Florentine painting. There is no doubt that their influence acted as a brake on the growth of rationalism to which Giotto had opened the way, but they made the mistake of trying to turn the clock back rather than seeking new solutions. They retarded the advent of rationalist doctrines by fifty years. However, during that half-century the Giotto tradition survived, marking time, it is true, but nevertheless making a bridge between Giotto and Masaccio.
Gentile Da Fabriano and Pisanello

The end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century mark the entry of new elements into Italian art.

Hitherto Siena and Florence in the realm of painting, Pisa in that of sculpture, that is, Tuscany alone—Rome having abandoned all activity after the transference of the papacy to Avignon—presided over its growth. This did not mean that there were no other artistic centres in the rest of Italy, but it was Tuscany alone that gave evidence of the creative faculty and showed herself capable of exercising an influence that crossed both local and regional boundaries.

Giotism, with a strong Sienese flavour, finally penetrated to the North and East of the Apennines, and, mingling with local traditions particular to each of the regions in question, gave rise to a provincial art of imitation in the various states which were being perpetually parcelled out between a few dominating rival families. This art varied from one centre to the next according to the environment and potential contacts with the world outside that each one of them possessed, but the fundamental basis was visibly the same.

It would, in my opinion, be exaggerating, to give this artistic contribution the importance that one contemporary school of thought is endeavouring to bestow upon it and treat it on a par with that made by Florence, Siena or Pisa. In point of fact it was precisely owing to the lack of originality of its own art, which increased its receptivity to various external contributions, that the art of the regions beyond the Apennines became by the end of the century the meeting-place of currents wider and more cosmopolitan even than those of Tuscany which were so homogeneous. Enriched with new elements, it became a kind of vehicle of international values, transposing them in a wholesale manner derived from a very rough and ready imitation of the school of Giotto and the Sienese. One day the material elaborated in this way was to have repercussions in Tuscany itself.

Seen from this angle, the artistic centres of Northern Italy did not all play an equal role. Rimini, although very active, remained particularly submissive to the Sienese and Giottesque influences. This ancient papal town had retained permanent traces of the fleeting visit of the Roman school of the early part of the Trecento which had left a similar impression in Bologna. The latter place, more open to external influences, thanks to her position on the trade routes and her famous university which attracted scholars and students from the whole of Europe, remained essentially within the orbit of genuinely Italian art. With Venetia and
Lombardy it was a different story. Venice, an ancient and flourishing centre of Byzantine art, continued to maintain a close commercial connection with the East. The Byzantine tradition lingered on there much longer than anywhere else, very superficially modified by that mixture of Giottism with the Sienese manner which we may describe as Tuscanism. She was thus in a position to transmit to future generations, at a very late period, a whole series of elements belonging to the Byzantine style, a taste for striped and embroidered cloths, for example, the graphic character of the drawing and crowded conception of space in which the air does not appear to circulate.

At the other end of the plain of Lombardy, the Duchy of Milan offers a case which is precisely the converse of that of Venice. A seat of the power of the Visconti family which by force of arms raised it to the rank of a great regional power, rising up from the maelstrom of invasions and a late-arrival in the Italian community, the kingdom of Milan was free from all local tradition—at least, in the realm of painting. It opened itself up more therefore to external contributions, especially those which, by the fortunes of commerce or of war, came to it from beyond the Alps. Nowhere in Italy was the influence of French Gothic and Franco-Flemish art as alive, whether in the art of miniature-painting or architecture. And if, contrary to what happened in Venice, Milan did not create any enduring school of her own, her contribution to the spread of the Gothic spirit was by no means negligible.

Fluctuating with the perpetual seesaw of political events between these two towns, Verona, Padua and Mantua escaped to a large extent the extreme characteristics which differentiated the two powers which were fighting for their possession. Tuscanised though they were, they extended a welcome to whatever came along: all influences from Flemish realism to Venetian sumptuosity, with a glance at the French chivalrous tradition en route, can be detected in their work. And it was from this heterogeneous and cosmopolitan milieu that appeared the only artist worthy of comparison with his Florentine and Sienese contemporaries and capable of playing a role equal to theirs on the stage of national Italian art by sheer force of natural genius. This man was Pisanello, the incomparable inventor of the modern medal, painter and portraitist who, though he has a niche apart, must also be counted among the best artists of this period.

Pisanello is not the first however to bring the specific contribution of Northern Italy into common circulation. That honour belonged to an Umbrian, Gentile da Fabriano, through whom the real link between the North and Tuscany was forged.

In any case the two names are indissolubly linked. Although he was not a pupil of Gentile in the narrow sense of the word, Pisanello several times collaborated with his older friend and on two occasions continued and finished a work
which the former had begun. Gentile, who came from Umbria and whom we meet for the first time in Venice in 1408, owed his knowledge of Gothic to the same milieu which Pisanello had left behind and doubtless also to Pisanello himself who was more deeply imbued with the spirit of this idiom than his master of the Marches.

There has been considerable argument about the nature and training that Gentile received. Was it Umbrian, Sienese or merely Lombardic? The last hypothesis seems unlikely. Even if we advance the date of his birth from 1360 to 1370, and even if we admit that by the year 1408 Gentile had already been established several years in Venice, he must have been some thirty years old at the time of his arrival. Furthermore, at the beginning of the Quattrocento artists did not leave Central Italy for Venice in order to find masters and serve apprenticeships. Gentile certainly went there to work and not to learn, and the best evidence lies in the fact that in the year 1409 he had been already entrusted with the decoration of the Hall of Great Council in the Palazzo Ducale. Unfortunately the fresco which he executed there, representing a Naval Battle

GENTILE DA FABRIANO - FLIGHT INTO EGYPT - PREDELLA PANEL OF THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI - DETAIL - UFFIZI FLORENCE
ATTRIBUTED TO PISANELLO - PORTRAIT OF GINEVRA D'ESTE (?)  
TEMPERA ON WOOD - LOUVRE, PARIS  
1435-1440
between the Venetians and Otho III, which would allow us to judge his style at this early stage of his career, is irremediably lost, for from 1479 it has been covered up by other painting.

We can however be quite certain that Gentile made a prolonged stay in the North. In 1414 we find him at Brescia, commissioned by Pandolfo Malatesta to decorate a chapel which was also destroyed in the following century. According to the documents indicating the progress of his work year by year, he remained there up to the year 1419. There is furthermore no doubt that this prolonged contact with Lombardo-Venetian circles in which Gothic and Byzantine, Emilian and Tuscan currents met, deeply influenced his manner of seeing and painting. What did he derive from it? What works and men impressed him most immediately? We are unable to arrive at any conclusion, for all Gentile's work corresponding to the period of his sojourn in Northern Italy, is in point of fact lost. What works we have are probably those which belong to the first stage of his career, prior, doubtless, to his departure for Venice: the Berlin Madonna of 1395, the Valle Romita Polyptych in the Brera, Milan, or those which cannot go back further than the beginning of his stay in Venice, if we accept certain attributions and hypothetical dates.

A pleasant painter, gifted and ready to welcome every convention, appears in these works. So much so, that the first source of his talent is lost in an ambiance of complex eclecticism, without our being able to say precisely whether he is most under the influence of the Sienese manner, the Gothic spirit or the Florentine style. There is in fact an element of all these in his pretty Madonnas, tender, gentle and insignificant. The four saints of the Valle Romita Polyptych, at present in the Brera Museum at Milan, if we consider them as a group, provide us with the eloquent picture of an artist who is sure of his means, capable of emerging with triumphant virtuosity from any given task, but palpably hesitant as to which path to follow: St Jerome is a fine figure of realist inspiration and almost mundane; the Magdalen has the 'S'-shaped waistline and likewise the drapery of Gothic Madonnas; St Francis is a close relation of the Sienese of the school of Taddeo di Bartolo; as for St Dominic he is an uninspired figure, composed of dry and conventional elements.

When after this we turn to masterpieces dating from the last years of Gentile's life, the conclusion to which we are forced is that the shock which decided his true vocation took place during his stay in Venice and in Lombardy when he was in contact, on the one hand, with the Gothic and on the other, the Byzantine-Venetian current.

We must remind the reader that some links in the chain of his development are missing. But if we make an effort to reconstitute the general atmosphere, it would perhaps be as follows: Gentile arrived at Venice already equipped as an
artist, technically, but still hesitating about the style to adopt, trying first one and then the other of many solutions which presented themselves to him during these last years of the Trecento, when styles and currents, to some extent everywhere, had reached their maturity and any artist interested would have no difficulty in recognising them.

But in Venice on the other hand he found himself plunged into a new world. From their permanent contact with the East the Venetians retained habits of luxury which extended into painting. In it the Byzantine traditions were still very much alive. For a long time they had found it quite natural to represent their Madonnas clothed in those brocades and gold-embroidered cloths, the wearing of which was already familiar to them at a time when the fashion was only just beginning to spread to the other Western countries. In the other Northern provinces, in the regions parcelled out among several families in power
who vied with each other in luxury no less than in political ambition, reigned a court atmosphere widely different from the ambience of Tuscany and even of Umbria in the fourteenth century. Rites, costumes, ceremonial, attitudes all bore the transalpine imprint. The French romances of chivalry which enjoyed an immense vogue, were transcribed by Italian scribes and illuminated by local miniaturists. Aware of what was being produced outside, the artists showed, like their fellow-artists in the French provinces, the Basins of the Danube and the Rhine, an increasing taste for studying real elements in the life around them, accompanied by religious exaltation and a refinement of form which was in no way hostile to it.

In the court circles they found an admirable ground for direct observation which satisfied their desire for elegance. They loved to make sketches of courtiers with affected costumes and carefully studied attitudes, acquired, as one can see, by long practice. Likewise in the realm of nature, they sought out those elements of beauty which lend themselves to direct observation, that is noble or rare animals, decorative birds and insects. The two dominating passions of the period—the study of the beautiful woman, almost transformed into a work of art already by the assumption of a costume that stylises her, and the study of the noble or exotic animal—correspond to one and the same need to seek out an isolated element of beauty to which they could apply direct observation in an easily accessible field of vision. For artists had not yet reached the stage of exploring vast areas of nature, taken as a whole, for faithful transcription in their work. A picture for them was not copying nature. Their “realism” did not go beyond the imitation of an isolated object. Once they had laid hold of it, digested and stylised it, they integrated it into an arbitrary composition in which art alone dictates its laws, and the relationships of position and space are bent to the exigences of the aesthetic conception of the work and not to those of a scrupulous representation—or what might be claimed as such—or reality. It needed all the vast artistic culture of the dying Gothic tradition before this integration could operate harmoniously, and rare indeed are those works which attained this difficult result outside the natural home of Gothic art.

Gentile da Fabriano who succumbed, as we can see, to the seduction that the Gothic art he had glimpsed in Lombardy exercised over him, was one of those who did achieve such a work. This was when, having left Brescia in 1419 to settle first in Fabriano, then in Florence, he crystallised some years later the whole of his new artistic experience in his famous Adoration of the Magi (1423) which we are bound to regard as a synthesis, in the absence of all the intermediary stages.

The Adoration is none the less the work of an eclectic. The figuration borrows all the elements on which the artist had fed his imagination during his stay in the North: the Byzantine-influenced brocades of Venice in the procession, the horses, the dogs and the exotic animals which were likewise the delight of
Pisanello’s entourage, the realism of the heads, the study of the female figures in fashionable attitudes, the prancing horsemen who evoke the galant cavalcades of the Limbourg brothers. Nor does the picture reject the memories of the past, before his arrival in Venice, for the Virgin is a twin sister of the Berlin and Milan versions. It looks boldly also into the future, for in the predella, the landscape of the Flight into Egypt and especially the whole panel of the Presentation in the Temple, are without any doubt the echo, and one of the first realisations of the theories which were already circulating in Florence about the merits of linear perspective and the new role which architecture was to assume in a system of representation, based on scientific laws concerning the evaluation of space. What gives the picture, moreover, its incomparable value as a whole and sets it apart from works prior to Gentile’s stay in Venice and confers a very modern and almost universal value upon it, is the fact that the artist understood and put into practice the principle of integrating all those different elements into a closed composition which, dominated by the noble figure of the young king, possesses its own rhythm, its own space, its own passage of time—the whole thing forming a complete universe in which every object, every personage, every episode finds its logical and inevitable place. Such a degree of success is rarely attained by any artist, and Gentile himself perhaps only succeeded once, that is, if we are to judge by those of his works belonging to the period which separates the Adoration from his death. Unfortunately the last great ensemble of frescoes which he undertook at San Giovanni in Laterano in Rome during the last year of his life is lost, like those at Brescia and at Venice. All we know is that the works begun by Gentile and interrupted by his death were resumed and completed by Pisanello, that authentic Northerner who was so close to the Umbrian in outlook and achievement.

The intellectual adventure of Pisanello is, however, of an entirely different order from that of Gentile. Pisanello was northern by natural right. Though his father came from Pisa and he himself made it a point of honour to sign himself Pisano, even if he was not born at Verona he was at least brought up there, and it was there, at all events, that he received his training. He had antecedents in the northern branch of the family from which he sprang: a Giovannino de’ Grassi who in his turn was connected with a school of miniaturists that had links with the Paris circle of the thirteenth century, and pursued studies on plants and animals either with a view to doing decorative illumination or illustrating technical books on botany, zoology or calendars of saints; also a Stefano da Verona who was perhaps Pisanello’s immediate master and whose agreeable talent found an outlet in costumes, hunting scenes, exotic animals and vertical compositions in the Gothic vein. Furthermore he had an entourage of artists of his own generation in Northern Italy: a Michelino da Besozzo whose interests were centred on the
same subjects, and others as well. Finally he made contact with Gentile da Fabriano and collaborated with him. The origins of his art then are clear and logical and have their explanation in the indisputably international and eclectic society which existed in Lombardy at that time. As far as this artist is concerned, the problem is not to trace the source of his marked predilection for animal or costume studies, or even portraits of which he was the unrivalled master south of the Alps, for here again from the French portraits of Jean le Bon and the Duke of Anjou, the antecedents are obvious. Our problem lies elsewhere.

We must take into account the fact that Pisanello was active in the second quarter of the fifteenth century—from 1424 to 1450, roughly speaking—and that he was therefore the contemporary of Masolino, Donatello, Brunelleschi, Uccello, Filippo Lippi; that Masaccio had produced all his work by the time Pisanello was at the beginning of his career; that, furthermore, in view of the permanent relationship between Tuscany and Northern Italy, and that Donatello was to come and work at Padua and that he himself probably stayed in Florence on more than one occasion, he could not ignore the magnitude of the new current which was developing in that town and which was destined to upset the whole of the existing aesthetic system of Europe.

Why then did Pisanello not join in the Florentine movement? For if this point is disputable where the medal is concerned, it is patently clear that neither Pisanello, the painter, nor Pisanello the draughtsman adopted the new manner of seeing and representing the world—a manner we cannot fail to note in the experiments made by his Florentine contemporaries.

It was certainly not for lack of any technical equipment. The artist who was famous throughout Italy, the man with multifarious gifts and infinite curiosity, whose portraits—that of Ginevra d'Este, Lionello d'Este and King Sigismund for example—were not inferior to Masaccio's one portrait, the accomplished draughtsman who could pass with equal facility from a study from the antique to one of a wild animal, had nothing to fear from the change in style that was to come.

Might he then be one of that number who through mere attachment to tradition reject the art of the future? The hypothesis is certainly unjust to the inventor of the medal and no less so to the painter who could substitute his own personal experiments for those of the Florentines.

But his experiments belong to the order of free and empirical observation: Pisanello observes and reproduces reality, but—and this is what marks his divergence from the Florentine conception—he refuses to integrate this reality into a system subservient to, and deduced from, mathematical laws. He insists on leaving room for imagination and fancy. As for Fra Angelico, his other contemporary, space for him is a place in which objects and human figures are disposed, not a
reality in itself, governed by fixed laws. Whether he conceives the said place in the manner of an Arras tapestry, like the famous fresco of Sant' Anastasia of Verona, representing *St George delivering the Princess*, or in terms of an unreal and imaginary landscape, peopled with animals, the latter being realistically observed as we can see in the *Vision of St Eustace*, or as a simple decorative canvas against which a portrait stands out, he intended to make his own decision concerning the depths and relationships.

Furthermore, he did not reject *en bloc* all the ideas of the Florentine innovators. Among his drawings are many drawn from the antique, executed with
the same affection, the same art and the same knowledge that informs his treatment of traditional subjects. But he treated an antique model merely as a model and nothing else; that is to say as an object forming part of reality. He studied it and rendered the detail, but he did not try to come to any conclusion concerning a general and permanent vision of the world and space. By accepting the antique and rejecting linear perspective, Pisanello took his stand and condemned a method.

Occurring as it did when the old and new ideals existed side by side, his case is by no means an isolated one. Indeed during the transition it was to become the normal state of affairs. The extraordinary feature of this period is the quality of the rival schools, unique perhaps in the history of civilisation For, normally, those who refuse the art of the future become indifferent artists, producing work which in the modern jargon we characterise as \"pomper\". But Pisanello was not narrowly academic, nor did all those who, like him, refused in one way or another, wholly or in part, the new doctrine—the Sienese of the Quattrocento, Dürer in Germany, Fouquet in France—qualify either for this appellation.

This resistance on the part of several great artists is certainly not a meaningless phenomenon. It proves, on the one hand, that the Gothic ideal was not really moribund and that it had not yet lost its creative powers, and that under its new form in which empirical realism was accompanied by a freedom of spatial interpretation, it had not yet said its last word and that it was still capable of generating authentic values. It proved too perhaps that these artists were not blind to the dangers of excessive systematisations, the seeds of which lay hidden in the Florentine Renaissance from the start, and after only one century of creative efflorescence were to result in empty academism.

**Fra Angelico**

Contemporary of Pisanello, Fra Giovanni da Fiesole, known as Fra Angelico, introduced an individual note into Florentine painting which was due, this time, not to training received outside the orbit of Florence but to an extraordinary artistic personality.

It is particularly difficult to speak of Fra Angelico without having the feeling that one is not getting to the root of the matter. An examination of his style reveals none of those striking peculiarities which allow us, even if too often purely superficially, to put our finger on an artist’s distinctive characteristic. Fra Angelico liked to use the repertory of forms elaborated by past tradition—whether it was the miniature, French Gothic art or the manner of Siena—nor
did he disdain the formulas with which the modern currents of his Florentine ambience provided him; he did not revolutionise the existing rules of composition. And yet his charm is profoundly personal, and the emotion that we feel when faced with his work is quite different from that experienced either before or after him. The difficulty seems to have been felt by all critics from Vasari on, ever since the latter, his first biographer, hesitated as to whether he should attribute his inspiration to the study of Masaccio frescoes or only to the religious ecstasy into which, according to tradition, the painter plunged before undertaking even his most insignificant work. This doubtless helps to explain the tremendous variety of aspects in which critics have tried to present the painter of San Marco to the public.
In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Angelico escaped the discredit cast on all the painters dubbed "Gothic" or "primitive"; even in that period, so diametrically opposed to his spirit, and though he was considered as one of Giotto's successors, he was admired and experienced as someone different from his contemporaries; travellers' tales and observations of the time prove that people went to see his works when they were neglecting those of other artists. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was round Fra Angelico above all that the cult of the new German and English Pre-raphaelites revolved, while the Romantics, returning to the theme of saintliness, proclaimed that his art was dictated by divine inspiration. This interpretation found adherents right up to the early years of the twentieth century. It even inspired a biography of Angelico in a collection entitled "The Saints". However, at the same time, this interpretation in more secular circles was doing the artist a disservice. He was considered as a chapter-house picture-maker, an agreeable illustrator outside the movement of his time, a "kindly monk without malice... blissfully sprinkling the Antique with his holy water"; and Berenson has denied him "Giotto's profound feeling for either the materially or the spiritually significant". Rehabilitated as an artist by Ruskin and Langton Douglas, Angelico has become the favourite painter of the neo-Franciscans of the beginning of our century. Inconsolable at knowing him to be a Dominican and powerless to deny his membership of that odious Order, modern admirers of the poverello of Assisi who curiously enough were at the same time enthusiasts for the Sienese style, contrived to present the monk as "the most Franciscan of the Dominicans" and the artist as the pupil of the great Sienese tradition which, during Fra Angelico's stay at Cortona where he shared exile with his Fiesole community, had left, they claimed, an indelible mark on all his development as a painter.

More modern critics, neglecting somewhat the study of the significance of his work, have concentrated on defining the historical Angelico, on distinguishing between him and his assistants and pupils and establishing the authenticity of each of his works, in short, on providing him with the most accurate identification papers possible. Quite recently, however, one of their number, Giulio Argan, has published a small volume on Fra Angelico which is an extremely serious and discerning analysis of the painter-monk's aesthetic system.

The Italian scholar's thesis begins with an examination of the historical facts. For him Fra Angelico is first and foremost a Dominican monk. Fervent and cultivated, respectful of the doctrine of his Order and trained to the Thomist ideology to which he owed his religious faith, Angelico's whole conception of the visual and earthly kingdom is the result of that background. His aim was "a return to the true sources of Christian thought", to which he intended to convert the public through painting, for his undisguised propaganda intention was what
his Order had always intended it to be. It was such an atmosphere and sense of “return” that prevailed at that time in the community of Fiesole under the new impulse the Order had received from the Blessed Giovanni Dominici of whom Argan quotes a text describing the kingdom of heaven which has affinities with the tone and idiom of Fra Angelico that no one could fail to observe. “Here is the blessedness of the Angels, the jubilation of the apostles, the ball of the Martyrs, the dance of the Confessors, the choir of the Virgins, the joy of the Elect. Here is the true sun, the morning star, the flower of the heavenly field, the lily in the Valley of the Just, the rose that never withereth, the violet which never fadeth, the pink, cinnamon flower and balms with all the perfumes of the Heavenly Kingdom. Each happiness findeth its source in God. There is no happiness which cometh not from Him.” Some of Angelico’s panels like the great Coronation of the Virgin or the two Last Judgments, seem really to be illustrations of this text, including the principle of enumeration. Others however in which bareness and simplicity are more in evidence than eloquence—the frescoes of San Marco in particular—are perceptibly further removed from them.

Argan attributes the main elements of Angelico’s style likewise to the Thomist ideology: that is, his conception of space, form and light. Fra Angelico was not ignorant of the rules of perspective and he did not systematically refuse to apply them. But, like the good Thomist he was, he could not envisage them as a geometric system of space. For him space, as for Alberti, could not have a real existence and follow constant laws. For him there was only one “place” where events come about, and thus it was that the representation of space with this painter could be reconciled just as well with current scientific methods as with those bequeathed him by tradition—with the sole proviso that the final effect produced the best possible result.

For his essential preoccupation was not with a faithful representation but with beauty and harmony. He was trying to define an ideal of beauty, and the ideal of the beautiful tends in him to be associated with form. Without rejecting sensory experience, he wanted to perfect it by eliminating all contrast, that is to say, evil and ugliness. With this search after an ideal of beauty was closely associated the desire to illuminate things.

Light—in accordance with the Thomist philosophy—is a real substance. It emanates from celestial bodies and illuminates the earth as it passes from one object to the next. In Fra Angelico’s representations, it is the sacred figures therefore which are the source of light, and the whole group derives its luminosity from them according to the degree of diaphaneity of the bodies represented. In this way Fra Angelico inaugurated an original system of light-perception, a light-concept which was the equivalent of Alberti’s space-concept that later influenced Piero della Francesca and was to make Fra Angelico a great innovator and
FRA ANGELICO - NOLI ME TANGERE - FRESCO
CONVENT OF SAN MARCO
between 1429 and 1448
one of the chief founders of the new system of the Renaissance, with a claim equal to that of a Masaccio or a Donatello. Introducing what G. Argan calls a "religious naturalism" into the realm of space and form, Fra Angelico, by a kind of compromise or rather reconciliation between the formulas of the past and those of his own time, was to find a niche among the great initiators, thanks to his original and fruitful conceptions of light.

In his masterly exposition, the dramatic surprises of which we follow with interest — although the somewhat abstract deductions present a strange dissonance with the essentially simple work of Fra Angelico — only one point seems genuinely contestable. It is has to do with this same problem of light, on which we are in full agreement with G. Argan in considering it as Fra Angelico's essential contribution to the evolution of painting at the beginning of the Quattrocento.
According to G. Argan, it is the celestial figures in this artist’s pictures which constitute the source of light. Now, and I think there is no exception, the celestial figures are invariably placed more or less in the centre of the picture, which is tantamount to saying that the source of light is interior. If, however, we examine the work, we see that this is by no means the case. When we look at the divisions of the illuminated parts and the disposition of the shadows in any one of his panels or frescoes, we note that the source of light, is, on the contrary always exterior, and very clearly defined. It is true that sometimes there are two sources. In that event, one is visible and interior—taking the form of a brilliant light—but it is not this that plays the role of providing the illumination; it is the other, the invisible source, situated outside the picture, whose direction can be followed by the high lights and shadows in the composition. This light is sometimes directed like a spot-light, at others it is diffused. It is white, that is to say its function is not to regulate the reflections between the colours. It is content, as in Cézanne’s paintings, to “devour the colour” if not the form. Let us examine more closely the Cortona Annunciation which Argan has also used as an illustration. The light emanating from the angel is represented by a halo of golden rays, but it is not that which illuminates the scene, since the angel is within the porch and the columns of the latter also have their shadow on the inside. The Virgin herself is illuminated from the opposite side to that from which the celestial rays pour down. Thus it is evident that the lighting of the composition comes from the outside, where the spectator is standing, from an invisible source. Let us now turn to some of the other pictures reproduced here with this in mind; the Vocation of St Nicholas of Bari, for example, from the predella of the altarpiece at Perugia. The whole scene is violently lit up by a light which enters from the spectator’s left, while a strip of paler colour in the sky would appear to indicate a source of light from another quarter. In the Decapitation of SS Cosma and Damiano in the Louvre we observe the same phenomenon: the light, which is very strong, comes this time from the right-hand side, and the sky is lit up by a brilliance from the opposite direction.

Quite obviously from this time on if Fra Angelico, in order to conform to the Thomist doctrine, surrounds, as he frequently does, some of his figures with an aura indicated by golden rays, the said light plays no part in his plastic system. Nor does the natural light which he is often pleased to represent. He uses an artificial light for his lighting effects, guided by purely aesthetic considerations. The result is most felicitous and endows his work with that extraordinary luminosity which has never ceased to impress his admirers.

To a painter, however, the problem of light is inseparable from that of colour, for it is by colour and by colour alone that he can express light. It is then by examining Fra Angelico's colour that we can get closest to the secrets of his superiority.
Fra Angelico paints in clear colours. Not in the manner of Spinelli Aretino, who applies white paint for his white and obtains a dirty chalk effect; but in the manner which, in the nineteenth century, struck the Impressionists when comparing it with the practice of preceding schools of painting. In Fra Angelico there are then neither pure whites nor pure blacks. When he wants to represent white he composes it by means of a skilful juxtaposition of all the rainbow colours. Look at Christ's shroud in the Lamentation in the Museo di San Marco in Florence; it is entirely composed of the reflection of multicoloured garments in which the persons surrounding Christ's body are clothed. The range of the whites is therefore extraordinary. There are warm tones—tinged with pink or beige,
and cool tones—with blue or mauve reflections. The artist obtains his effect by the opposition of these tones, as he does in the admirable _Transfiguration_ of one of the cells in the convent of San Marco, which is a harmony of different whites. The blacks are a deep grisaille in which colour plays its part by giving them a blue, violet or green tinge. Moreover they are always used as effects and never as background colours. In frescoes in which the general tonality is less vivid, softer, more golden and possibly more luminous than in the altar-frontals and _predelle_, the black cloak of the Dominicans becomes grey-blue.

The elimination of white and black does not exhaust his colour effects. There is also his way of treating the shadows and areas of colour. The choice of colours is dictated by the immediate proximity of another colour. Thus a piece of blue drapery sometimes has green shadows, sometimes violet, according to the colour context of the area; the lighted parts are similarly tinted with pink if there is a red patch in the vicinity, with yellow if there is a bright yellow close by, white with a faint tinge of blue if it is strongly exposed to a particular white light. The same rule applies to the greens which assume a golden, bluish, rose tint, or move towards grey or even violet. It comes less forcibly into play for the reds, the homogeneity of which, sustained by a scale of values, is almost always respected. Blues and reds are the predominating colours in altarpieces and _predelle_, and in this we are immediately struck by their affinity with the French miniatures and paintings of the Paris region in the fourteenth, and beginning of the fifteenth century. But almost always these reds and blues scattered throughout the whole composition in an infinity of combinations, are organised in relation to a single green or yellow area which brings them out. It is indeed as if the artist’s intuitive genius had caused him to divine all the laws of simultaneous contrast and the breaking-up of white light by the spectrum about which so much has been said since the second half of the nineteenth century, and which, after all, existed for the artist’s eye without waiting to be formulated.

Fra Angelico was skilled in finding a tonality appropriate to the nature of every category of his work. The _predelle_ in general have a strong and bright colour in which we can discern the training of a miniaturist who is anxious to keep the greatest possible clarity of form in the smallest subjects. The large panels of the altarpieces are no less effective in their softer and lighter tonality. The San Marco frescoes offer a harmony of light and golden ochres in which the reds, used sparingly, play only a secondary role and in which the accents are carried by blue or mauve grisaille. This clear and luminous harmony in which the colour is subdued makes an admirable accompaniment to the sober nature of the subjects offered to the meditation of the monastery friars.

The Vatican frescoes, the work of the last years of his life, form a separate stage in the painter’s career. In them he seems to have accepted the formulas
FRA ANGELICO - VOCATION OF ST. NICHOLAS OF BARI - PREDELLA OF THE ALTARPIECE OF PERUGIA - FRAGMENT
VATICAN MUSEUM, ROME
1447
of linear perspective, the triumph of which was being asserted everywhere in Florence towards the middle of the fifteenth century. For, even if the frescoes—which illustrate the Legend of SS Stephen and Lawrence—are not entirely by his hand, that is, if some of his pupils, including Benozzo Gozzoli, one of the future great painters in the new manner, executed part of them, perhaps those pieces of architecture which in themselves alone stand as a manifesto of the new programme, it was Fra Angelico who supervised the work as a whole.

Fra Angelico is the man who accepts. The painter in him is not opposed to the monk trained in the ways of obedience. He takes whatever his period has to give him—space, subject, forms—and accommodates himself to them without demur. During the period of time when traditional formulas and the new conception of space carried equal weight, he made use of both indifferently, and his unexpected, but always perfectly harmonious juxtaposition constitutes one of the specific charms of works such as some of the panels illustrating the Legend of SS. Cosma and Damiano or the Deposition. When the day came for the triumph of the new doctrine, it did not occur to him to oppose it; he accepted it as he accepted its predecessor, and he continued to carry on his work as a colourist within the new framework. For it happened that one of the elements of painting—colour—was not dictated to him by his period. At that time, when an old style was being overthrown and all attention and all passions were absorbed by problems of space and the definition of a visual reality, there was little preoccupation with colour. The old rules of the craft, emanating from Giotto and handed down by the workshops of Taddeo and Agnolo Gaddi, meticulously codified by Cennino Cennini, were gradually losing their interest for the men of the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century. Alberti in his writings was already according little space and still less of his innovator’s passion to the problem of colour, and up to the time of Leonardo the matter was scarcely mentioned. It was a realm free from doctrine and rule and Fra Angelico was able to indulge his own wishes. Left to his own devices, he invented to such effect that his lesson remained uncomprehended. Like the recomposed realism of Pisanello, like the findings of the Sienese of the Quattrocento, like the ideas of Fouquet about space, his attempt was to be one of those which were not to be followed up in the immediate future because they did not correspond to the general preoccupations of the time. More pressing ideas forced themselves on the Renaissance which was now under way. As ever when a new movement arises, it becomes more defined by setting itself limits. Fra Angelico’s modern chromatism was one of the latent but undeveloped possibilities. The content of the Renaissance, as it took shape in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, had to be used up and exhausted before men could return to these neglected potentialities.
The Resistance of Siena

The great works of the Lorenzetti brothers, the famous frescoes of the façade of the church of the Hospital of S. Maria della Scala, in which they both collaborated and which were painted in 1335 and destroyed in 1720—Pietro’s Birth of the Virgin and Ambrogio’s Allegory of Good and Bad Government, proved to be the last spark thrown off by Siena before the series of disasters which, in the middle of the fourteenth century, altered the course of its history. The successive bankruptcies in which the great banking-houses of the Bardi, the Peruzzi and the Acciaiuoli who ruled the town came to grief in Florence in 1343, as we have already seen, had no less disastrous consequences for the big Sienese houses, and almost the whole of the Guelph party in Siena was ruined. The financial catastrophe might perhaps have been surmounted had not the terrible plague of 1348, the virulence and extent of which was unprecedented in the annals of the city, enormously reduced the population. In the case of Florence, testimonies regarding the extent of the casualties vary. According to Giovanni Villani the population of Siena within the walls was reduced from 42,000 to 15,000. Agnolo di Tura, the Sienese chronicler, mentions 80,000 dead and 10,000 survivors, including the town and its immediate surroundings. Taking the most optimistic account, we can assume that three quarters of the population perished within the space of a few months.

The results of this depopulation in which a considerable proportion of the rulers, artists, doctors and lawyers disappeared, were more noticeable in Siena than in Florence. For whereas the latter, richer, more active and not quite so hard hit, reacted immediately, and tried, as we have said, to remedy the causes and effects of the plague, Siena sank back in a kind of apathy which expressed itself on the one hand in a flash of mystic illumination, and on the other in a reinforcement of an instinctive conservatism which for a whole century remained intent on safeguarding everything from the immediate, glorious, completed past that could be handed down.

A halt was called to all the town building. The scheme of reconstructing the Cathedral, which had been begun in 1339, was abandoned and the surviving artists, men like Barna and Bartolo di Fredi, now found opportunities for their great enterprises only outside their town, at San Gimignano, Volterra, Montalcino. Companies of mercenaries, forming themselves into bands of marauders, profited by the weakening of the towns and ceaselessly attacked and pillaged their
territories. This continual and omnipresent threat meant that the horrors of the Black Death were now replaced in popular imagination by scenes of plunder and slaughter. For if Florence defended herself with desperation, Siena was content to pay vast ransoms for the illusory security of her contado—continually jeopardised by the increasing boldness of the Companies of mercenaries secretly maintained by the Duke of Milan, who was plotting to lay hands on Tuscany in general and in particular on Siena, which was an easier prey.

Under these depressing conditions, artists—that is, those who had survived—re-attached themselves, according to their temperaments, to one of the two possible schools of thought; either they could continue the lesson of the great masters of the past and turn away from reality; or, alternatively, they could endeavour to adapt themselves to the new conditions and satisfy the taste of a badly or indifferently educated public—which had been modified by the new element brought in from the country and which was ready to follow any lead—spreading everywhere in a town given up to anarchy and religious, moral and social disorder.

In point of fact both schools followed—though with diminished talent—the masters of the first half of the century. Barna, the direct disciple of the great masters, sometimes borrows from Duccio but most frequently from Simone Martini; Andrea Vanni paints as an academic pupil of Martini's; Luca di Tommè first goes to the Lorenzetti, then, he too, returns towards Martini. Bartolo di Fredi belongs to the school of the Lorenzetti, as far as composition is concerned. The effort to adapt themselves to the new public consisted on the part of some above all in introducing uncompromisingly popular elements in the representation of the figures or objects—Nicolò di Buonaccorso excelled in it and Barna strove more and more in that direction as he progressed in his career—and also in the insistence with which they repeated themes hitherto rarely, if ever treated.

Not unsurprisingly, the theme of collective death which haunted people’s minds appeared on every side, accompanied by that of suffering—chiefly symbolised by the trials of Job. And although we can point to nothing in the Sienese school of the scale and importance of the Triumph of Death at the Campo Santo in Pisa, we have among works by Bartolo di Fredi a Death of Job's Children, or a Crossing of the Red Sea, strewn with corpses, from Barna’s brush, and from Taddeo di Bartolo’s a Hell filled with scenes that recall Dante’s Inferno. But while Florence concentrated on the idea of atoning for its sins and elaborating an at any rate theoretically reformed way of life, Siena sought salvation in escape. Hence the success of the Assumption—which is essentially that of the Virgin born human but escaping death and the horrors of the corruption of the body—and the success of intimate scenes, closed interiors. Pietro Lorenzetti’s Birth of the Virgin was there to provide the model and pretext for imitation: a room, intimate and
enclosed, in which a woman has just given life to a new-born babe, women lavishing care on the mother and child, children spreading the happy news, a decorative bed, homely objects, a peaceful setting isolated from the outside world. This theme with every possible variation was taken up scores of times, first by Bartolo di Fredi and by the second generation of painters—Taddeo di Bartolo, the most important of the group, Andrea di Bartolo, Gualtieri di Giovanni; Giovanni di Fei, next, who was to transmit it to the fifteenth century when it culminated in the masterpiece at Asciano. Elsewhere, Catherine of Siena’s action and her
ardent passion for identifying herself with the saint of Alexandria who bore the
same name, the sermons of the Blessed Colombini, the other mystical preacher of
those troubled times, found an echo in the artists and their patrons. An ever-
increasing interest was shown in St Catherine of Alexandria who was gradually
merging into the Saint of Siena, long before the canonisation of the latter, which
did not take place until 1461.

The legend of St Catherine; the Assumption—symbolic of the triumph
over death;—the "intimate" birth-scene of the Virgin, popular figures, consciously
or unconsciously distorted, all the themes of the Sienese Quattrocento, so individual, so specific, are already present in the second half of the fourteenth century,
ready to be used. All the period lacked was great artists.

But they came in the fifteenth century in their hosts, a clear indication of
the partial recovery of the stricken city. A recovery, however, that was not
that of a healthy organism. Florence, after feeling her way for half a century,
found new reasons for living and creating. Siena had no real renewal; she continued to live obstinately in the past, committing every possible error. She was
anxious to re-start the wool industry at a time when the world wool market was
falling and Flanders and Northern France were becoming the masters. She dropped banking and financing at a time when these activities were making a
new fortune for Florence. She was unable to set up a homogeneous government and
remained torn between clans and factions which, whenever occasion demanded, did
not hesitate to invite foreigners to intervene in their town affairs. There was indeed a
comparatively rapid return to prosperity. Nevertheless, for reasons which go further
into the past than the catastrophe of 1348, and are hinted at in the nervous expressionism of a Pietro Lorenzetti, the mainspring of the city was irremediably broken.

In this town on which the decline had set its seal, there was an art which
flourished, however, during the whole of the fifteenth century, as if that bruised
society wanted to give its measure for the last time. Stefano di Giovanni di
Consolo, called Sassetta, Sano di Pietro, Giovanni di Paolo, Domenico di Bartolo,
Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio, all of whom were born at the end of the four-
teenth century or beginning of the fifteenth, form a strictly contemporary, closely-
knit group, often working together, to the extent that criticism is confounded
when it comes to the attribution of unsigned works, assigning them first to one
and then another. The imprint of Siena of this period is always so strongly
marked that we never have any hesitation about the local origins of any one of these
works. To these masters must also be added others whose names have been
lost but whose works survive, exquisite, profound, enduring, showing the same
stylistic tendencies and the same preoccupations.

At the very moment when Florence was discovering a new vision and
deliberately following the path which was to lead her to the revolution of the
Renaissance, the Sienese group was engaged in founding a new art on ancient bases. It was new in its emotional and spiritual contents, extremely sensitive to all the subtleties of the tragic ambience of the city. On the other hand, with the now century-old principles of the great masters of the Trecento, piously handed down by the group of their disciples as a basis, it was the traditional vision that the Sienese artists took as their starting-point for pictorial experiment. We may take the view that the town was not, from many considerations, as retrogressive as some are pleased to think. And, indeed, it was a course embarked on in full consciousness. The Sienese of the Quattrocento were by no means ignorant of the
new Florentine experiments. Each of her artists, with the possible exception of Sano di Pietro, could show, when necessary, that he was able to understand, apply and even exploit them in an original way. But all of them, to a man, met the Florentine lesson with a refusal, an unequivocal rejection. The fact was that such an essentially illusionist and scholarly lesson ran counter to their own preoccupations, their outlook, their intellectual and sentimental life and their whole conception of art. They held themselves aloof from the Florentine system because they did not want an intellectual art established by mathematicians, supported by scientific research, the practice of which necessitated a more theoretic than practical apprenticeship. Moreover, they did not wish to give pride of place to the material appearance of things which they felt to be too terre à terre. What they wanted was freedom to express values without feeling tied down by rigid laws.

Even if we leave out of consideration their particular turn of mind in which reason dominated, the Florentines were more in a position to take the leap forward. Since Giotto no binding spell, no powerful genius had appeared among them to anchor them to their attachment to the plastic system of the Trecento. After a century of more or less perfect applications, the Giottesque system had had time to exhaust itself, and those who now came along to seek out new solutions, the Masolinos, the Angelicos, the Masaccios, the Uccellos, the Pieros, for the perfect diapason of a city which was nursing schemes for increasing expansion, found the field open to them. In Siena, half a century of very noble, varied and personal art which still embodied the spirit of the town was present to stir up the embers of nostalgia for the past. It was the very spirit of the Trecento, living and intact, which was thus being maintained more than the technique, and which suggested to the artists all the unexplored possibilities latent in it. In a city resigned to its fate which saw the future crumbling away, and sought consolation in the emanations of a soothing and ineffectual mysticism, in the corruption of manners and a refinement of the formal elements in life, complex but unconstructive, the allurements of that spirit were bound to, and did in fact prevail.

Sassetta is one of those who subjected the new Florentine contribution to a most scrupulous examination and never quite brought himself to eliminate it completely from his own works. In practically each one he reserved a place for some fragmentary application of linear perspective, in accordance with the good Florentine rules: in the altar-frontal of the chapel of the Arte della Lana at Siena for example, beside hieratic figures standing in the oldest traditional manner, is a Last Supper, enclosed in a scenographic cube with converging lines formed by the architectural elements arranged in a series of planes; similarly in isolated scenes such as the Prayer of St Thomas and several others. In the Madonna of the Snows we have a predella composed of three panels, all three of which are constructed in a three-dimensional space with converging lines, a horizon at the
proper height and even an attempt at atmosphere. In the Polyptych of St Francis of Borgo San Sepolcro we see an attempt to reconcile and juxtapose the two systems: a combination in the same panels of hieratic figures, more traditionally so perhaps even than the most rigid of Martini's, with backgrounds in perspective in the Florentine manner. A still more attractive combination is revealed in the panel of St Francis and the Poor Knight; it shows a landscape, composed entirely in accordance with the rules preached by Florence, abruptly intersected in the foreground by a Giottoesque compartment which encloses a Dream of the Saint which defies them all—plane, values, unity of time and of place.

All this is carried out without zeal or love. It is as if the artist in drawing his squares was carrying out some academic exercise. The emphasis and zeal must be looked for elsewhere. What interests Sassetta is not knowledge of the world or its appropriation or any attempt to adapt it to the scale of the human mind, but the human soul in its reactions on the weak or frail body which it inhabits. In this he is a faithful son of Trecento Siena. Duccio had already shown how he could render treachery by the sinuosity in the torso of a Judas, and Pietro Lorenzetti had enjoyed creating a morbid Madonna. Simone Martini, using a more varied scale, imbued his personages with an inward life, and the tradition of psychological introspection had entered so deeply into the lives of Sienese artists that even Barna produced amazing results in that domain. Sassetta took this introspection to its logical extreme, reflecting the troubled atmosphere of the city in his time. Look at the characters in the Madonna of the Snows, the Virgin suffering from an hallucination and filled with mystery staring at the Stranger with a vacant eye, the figure of St John in semi-darkness, with a glint of cunning in his eyes and an uneasy smile on his lips. See what becomes of the gentle St Francis under Sassetta's brush. A harsh, anxious, neurotic, wrinkled creature, possessed of a desiccated and feverish vivacity! What thoughts are concealed behind that brow! In the Cortona Polyptych which we have every reason to assign to him, we find the same predilection for the unusual but calmer tonality: a St Michael of supreme elegance and great beauty recalls certain figures of Simone Martini's, but is frailer and more etiolated. A St Margaret, likewise very beautiful, has affinities with the figure of the Madonna of the Snows: wide-open eyes under semi-circular eyebrows, broad, convex brow, elongated face but as wide in the lower part as in the forehead, staring, mysterious. The hydrocephalic Madonna with a triangular face of the Siena Pinacoteca is plunged in a sorrowful dream, the Poor Knight of the Borgo San Sepolcro Polyptych could serve as a model for all future Don Quixotes, so touching is his ridiculous stiffness, to such an extent does his mournful, careworn, yet proud head bear the particular characteristic that one associates with the state of soul of a noble but fallen being, despairing but not resigned, rebellious yet docile. With what a mixture of amia-
SIENNESE SCHOOL - THE BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN
ALTARPIECE THE COLLEGIATA OF ASCIANO ASCIANO MUSEUM
Between 1400 and 1450
bility and raillery does the St Francis in the same polyptych deride the spectators of his encounter with the Wolf of Gubbio; with what mental reservations of ambiguous constraint does he likewise regard the vision, pleasing though it is, of the Three virtues which are henceforward—as the Legend requires—to be his absolute mistresses. All these figures, complex and equivocal, can never be forgotten by any one who has looked at them, be it only once. That was Sassettà’s world, the realm of his explorations. What power could the categorical speculations of an Alberti have over him, compared with the moral chasms which he could see around him?

Three works which are among the most beautiful and ambitious in scale of the Sienese Quattrocento have long been attributed to Sassettà. They are the Triptych of the Convento dell’ Osservanza just outside the gates of Siena, dated 1436, but unsigned; a Birth of the Virgin which is in the Collegiata at Asciano and which is reputed to be by the same hand as the triptych; and finally panels, now dispersed, of an altarpiece that was doubtless dedicated to St Anthony since the seven panels—out of ten—which are still preserved tell the legend of that saint. They have been ascribed to him for a long time on account of the beauty and high quality of the works which therefore required a great artist as their begetter. Today, however, this attribution has been withdrawn, for, masterpieces though they are, not only do the three works not display Sassettà’s striking characteristics, but it seems doubtful whether they can all three be by the brush of the same artist. The Osservanza triptych and the Asciano Birth of the Virgin are patently distinguishable from the panels of the St Anthony altarpiece. We are bound therefore to admit that side by side with Sassettà and Giovanni di Paolo there were one or two other great artists whose names we shall perhaps never know, nor anything concerning their careers. C. Brandi has recently tried to annex all this work for Sano di Pietro, but his arguments do not carry conviction. Graziani, a young Italian scholar who died young, tried for his part to reconstitute the personality of an artist whom he called the “Master of the Osservanza” after the triptych of 1436, and to whom he attributed, in addition to the Birth of the Virgin at Asciano, several other works, including the St Antony altarpiece, which is more doubtful. His deductions are plausible, but proof is lacking, and until we possess further information it should not be made into an article of doctrine.

Fortunately, in the absence of names, the works themselves are there which have not only men but a whole society behind them. Even if individual factors are missing, it is always fascinating to discover, from the evidence of the work, the various tendencies, currents of thought and sensibility which inform it. The Birth of the Virgin of the Asciano Collegiata is the superb climax of a long series of paintings that deal with the same subject and were inspired by the same spirit. First there are the Lorenzetti with Pietro’s Birth of the Virgin and
the fresco, illustrating the same theme, on the façade of the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala in which both brothers collaborated. The former, the only one preserved and now in the Cathedral Museum, represents a closed room with very little depth, the most apparent novelty of which is that it is a middle-class interior. There is a further innovation: two out of three panels represent the same space. A St Anne, heavy and solid, lies facing the spectator on a bed covered with a check counterpane. The same decorative pattern—brightly coloured tiles—is continued in front of the bed, on the floor, where a woman is bathing the new-born child. This motif of the bed-decoration and the floor extending it evokes the atmosphere of a cosily padded interior, and it was to become the most persistent element in the evolution of a theme which underwent innumerable variations. Bartolo di Fredi turned the bed round in which the mother was lying and placed it along the side. Giovanni di Fei restored the bed to the frontal position, retained the tiles but gave the room depth by raising the middle distance. The Master of Asciano brought most harmony into the formula, making it into a perfect composition. He restored the bed to its position at the side, the check pattern—possibly under the influence of Gentile da Fabriano—became a brocade motif, the parquet floor a marble mosaic. A third plane significantly made its appearance at the back of the room, glimpsed through bays in the walls which open on to a courtyard and a garden surrounded by a low, arcaded wall. Thus, without losing any of its intimate character, the picture becomes more airy and creates more than ever the vision of a calm, peaceful, well-ordered dwelling, offering the varied sources of an opulent and comfortable domestic existence. A figure coming from the background and framed in the open bay makes a charming link between the foreground and distance. An atmosphere of solemnity before the importance of the event which has just taken place surrounds the women who people this interior; two of them, those near the bed, one standing, the other seated, are extremely beautiful and have that hint of mystery and enigma in their expression with which no Sienese artist of the period could dispense.

The success of the theme and its perfect realisation round about the first third of the fifteenth century is due, beyond all doubt, to the peculiar atmosphere of withdrawal into a small, warm enclosed world, an ambience of human refuge, of joyful and solemn truce that all the artists who embarked on this theme tried to render and none more successfully than the Master of Asciano. That is why, much more than because of any technical reasons—for we often find even more archaic elements in the complex Sassetti than in the Asciano Birth—the stern, anxious, tormented Sassetti is unlikely to be the author of this apotheosis of serenity which, in the setting of the time, represents a nostalgic hope rather than reality.

He is equally unlikely to be the author of the other anonymous masterpiece, which we possess in the form of scattered panels, representing the Legend
of St Anthony, the Abbé. The luminosity and affecting charm of these scenes do not belong to his world and, furthermore, several of them show experiments in spatial composition which were foreign to him. It is not a matter of experiments in perspective in the strictly Florentine sense, but of a kind of synthesis between
the notion of distance and the teachings derived from the Trecento. In short, the Master of St Anthony in some of his panels—the two Temptation scenes and the Flagellation by the Demons—makes the discovery of space curving in depth. Placed very high, as in the productions of the Middle-Ages, the horizon is curved. The moving-away effect of the road—an effect inspired by the Florentines—is obtained just as much by curves characteristic of an entirely different approach. Like Fouquet about the same period in France, the unknown master has realised possibilities of extending a mediaeval optical experiment in the direction of a non-linear perspective system and a non-cubic three-dimensional space. As in the case of Fouquet his attempt was not followed up, submerged as it was by the Florentine system right up to the beginning of the twentieth century when artists like Dufy were to take up experiments of the same order.

When after considering these fine works which C. Brandi would attribute to Sano di Pietro, we pass on to the attested products of this master, it seems really difficult to agree that the same man could have conceived both. We possess a sufficient number of signed and dated works by Sano to form a pretty clear idea of his personality. It is beyond all doubt that he belonged to the group of artists that is engaging our attention. He was certainly a pupil of Sassetta’s—whose last work, interrupted by the death of the master, he completed—and he collaborated, on occasion, with Giovanni di Paolo. It does not follow from this that he possessed either the genius of one or the temperament of the other. What we may consider his masterpiece is a Polyptych from the Jesuit monastery preserved in the Pinacoteca in Siena, signed and dated 1444. It is a notable work but it derives essentially from what we may call a “Trecento academism”, that is to say, it is inspired by all the principles elaborated by the masters of the first half of that century, very detailed and meticulous in execution, but without contributing any fresh element of conception or sensibility. The predella of this altarpiece which is in the Louvre and recounts the Legend of St Jerome is very pretty: neat, laboured, studied, rather dry in drawing, like everything that comes from Sano’s hand. He appears to have made a career in Siena that led him to prosperity, and his atelier, filled with plenty of clients, must have resembled those industrial workshops in which pupils work under the vague direction of the master, a custom which was beginning to spread, similarly in Florence with Agnolo Gaddi. We know that they proved a success.

The only time when Sano arouses our interest is when he allows himself to paint ingenuously. In this genre The Virgin appearing to Pope Calixtus III, the two Sermons of St Bernhard, showing their popular effect in a public square, as also the panels of a predella representing the Miracles of St Blasius, are quaint and not without charm, especially considered as the expression of a certain popular simplicity.
The case of Giovanni di Paolo is infinitely more complex. Here is an artist to whom is now attributed, as formerly to Sassetta, a considerable and varied body of work which would make him one of the richest geniuses of his period. Ironically enough, however, it is not the signed and dated works which constitute the finest jewels in his crown, but the rest, those about which we can only be conjectural.

Italian critics expend infinite ingenuity in their efforts to establish some sort of order in this obscure domain, the Sienese Quattrocento, with the aim of affixing names to works, re-organising, dating and establishing the provenance of ensembles that have been dismembered and scattered among all the galleries in the world. So skilful are they that on each occasion we are inclined to let ourselves be persuaded. But, as the conclusions are sometimes at variance, the impartial reader is compelled to suspend judgment. Fortunately, and we cannot insist on this too much, the works themselves are there, beautiful and personal. For the convenience of the present account, let us then allot to Giovanni di Paolo all the works that any of the critics claim as his, on the understanding that we shall make no attempt to draw conclusions concerning the personal evolution of the artist and man, but limit ourselves to seeing what they represent per se and what general affinities exist between them.

Some of them are signed and dated but they are mostly unfinished. They are listed in the Notes. It must be admitted that four of them hark back rather to what we have just defined as Trecento academism. These are the Virgin and Child of 1426 which is now at Castelnuovo Berardenga and formed the central panel of a polyptych, also the Virgin of the Humility. Likewise the central and only existing panel of the Branchini Polyptych of 1427, and the St Nicolas Polyptych of 1453 preserved in the Pinacoteca at Siena. Another signed work which would appear to have been painted between 1447 to 1449, is in too poor a condition to judge the artist by. It is a Presentation in the Temple, central panel, and once more, the sole existing one of a large altarpiece commissioned by the Rectors of the Arte dei Pizzicaiuoli for Santa Maria della Scala, the church attached to the Hospital of Siena. The contract stipulated that the central scene should be inspired by a model which must have been the Presentation in the Temple, formerly done by Ambrogio Lorenzetti for the Hospital of Monna Agnesa, in Siena (at present in the Uffizi). It is in point of fact a faithful reflection of it, except of course in technique, and it tells us little about the artist’s personality. Finally, the two last signed works, the Pienza and Stagia altarpieces which belong to the last years of the artist’s long life, mark a development towards heavy forms, distorted bodies and grimacing faces, revealing a sort of affinity with another current, already pretty widespread in Siena and mainly represented by Domenico di Bartolo and to a lesser extent by Pietro di Giovanni da Ambrogio, a pupil of Sassetta’s, and Giovanni di Paolo himself.
To this somewhat deceptive balance-sheet of signed works, however, may be added a series of works of the highest order, that have been attributed to this artist though they bear no signature. We can discern in them some of the artistic habits which allow us to do some re-grouping by affinity. First we have a series of representations of Christ. It begins with an extremely fine picture in which a *Christ in Torment* is set side by side with a *Christ Triumphant*, an iconographic rarity which has been emphasised by E. Carli. To these are added a *Crucifix*, at San Pietro di Ovile, Siena, and a fine *Crucifixion*, now in Vienna. The latter was attributed to Giovanni di Paolo on an analogy with the one at the Pinacoteca of Siena which being, in fact, more monumental and more interesting, it surpasses in every point. To this group representing suffering, we may add both from the ideological and plastic point of view the moving *Madonna of the Sorrows* of the church of San Giovannino near the Duomo at Siena, which, with a St John which goes with it, is doubtless a fragment of a painted cross.

Austerity and sorrow have completely vanished in the delightful *Flight into Egypt*, one of three panels—with the *Presentation in the Temple* and a *Crucifixion*—preserved in the Pinacoteca in Siena and which are unanimously considered as remains of a vaster ensemble by the hand of Giovanni. The holy caravan, freed from all sense of fear, moves on its way over an extensive landscape background, built upwards according to the best Trecento principles. The work of the fields proceeds around it, birds flit across the sky, a large decorative sun darts starlike rays, a castle—amazingly like the one attributed to Ambrogio—is silhouetted against the bank, separated from the foreground by a gentle stream whose lines make nonsense of any rules of perspective. Gentile da Fabriano’s *Flight into Egypt* has been mentioned in connection with this picture, and it is true that there are similarities and the same peaceful gentleness emanates from both pictures. It should be noted, however, that the disposition of the planes is different, that Gentile’s personages are indeterminate, those of Giovanni well defined, that the landscape of the one is all bosses and that of the other built up of a pattern of ridges, that the soft outlines of the blossoming trees of the painter of the Marches makes a contrast with the detailed silhouettes of the still purely symbolic vegetation of the Sienese painter, that Giovanni keeps his lights in gold, quite close to the background gold; in short, one looks to the future, the other back to the past.

If, however, we examine a second panel—at Siena itself this time—that of the *Presentation in the Temple*, what a surprise we have ! The situation is reversed, Gentile has likewise painted one in which, like Giovanni, he has placed a delightful *tempietto* in the centre of the composition. Only, his is flanked by two buildings which enclose the scene, whereas the air circulates freely round Giovanni’s, placed as it is alone in the centre of a space which is neither that of the
dawning Renaissance nor that of the fading Trecento, but one of those isolated, individual creations of genius which transition periods not infrequently produce.

C. Brandi was eager to add a fourth to the three Sienese panels, an *Adoration of the Magi* of the Kröller-Müller collection, so as to reconstitute round a figure of St James of the Siena Pinacoteca a polyptych reputed to be that of the Fondi family, seen and described in the seventeenth century in the church of San Francesco of Siena by a witness. This would allow us to assign the whole work to the year 1436 and situate it chronologically therefore in the whole corpus of Giovanni di Paolo's work. The *Adoration of the Magi* is drier and more conventional than the *Flight into Egypt*, as we can see, but Giovanni di Paolo's vagaries in style are so numerous that we can no longer consider them as an obstacle to hypothesis of this kind.

Another somewhat dogmatic reconstitution on the part of C. Brandi has been made with the aim of integrating famous scenes from the *Legend of St Catherine*, shared between New York, Brussels and Minneapolis, into the Pizzicaiuoli altarpiece. On the other hand, concerning the no less celebrated scenes from the life of *St John the Baptist*, divided between Chicago, London, New York, Münster and the Carvallo collection of Tours, all likewise convincingly attributed to Giovanni di Paolo, up to the present it has not been found possible to arrive at a soundly argued provenance. It is, nevertheless, one of the most extraordinary works that it has been given us to admire. It belongs entirely to the realm of fantasy, and the most complete liberty is taken by the artist to express the character of the illuminated personage of the saint as he impressed himself more and more on the minds of the period, including the Florence of Donatello. The artist places an aerial figure—which is doubled on occasion to indicate two successive actions in the same panel—in a fantastic landscape composed of craggy rocks
and plains represented with long oblique lines intersected by darks and lights, a strange and bold distortion of the Florentine principle of converging lines, willy-nilly modified. This unique landscape—whose atmosphere is to be found in the environs of Siena—can be seen taking its shape in a less finished stage in the background of hills extending behind in the Blessed Humility in the Pinacoteca at Siena, and one can guess that the first idea came from the vast background of country which is so characteristic of the immediate environs of Siena as it appears in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Good Government. The Blessed Humility—as also an Adoration of the Magi, preserved in the National Gallery, Washington—certainly preceded the St John the Baptist in which the method reached its full development and in which, far from being a mere background screen against which any scene or personage could be placed at will, it forms an integral part of the general conception of the work.

Once again in this small panel representing the Miracle of St Nicholas of Tolentino—the rescue of a drifting ship—we are confronted with a dream. It is the brother of the San Procolo St Nicholas of Bari, projected into the realm of pure imagination. Thus with Giovanni di Paolo his roots in the past play a role equal to the unfettered blossoming forth of his own originality.

With the Paradise, one of the three panels of the predella of an unidentified polyptych, we go back to the domain of calm poetry in which we once more find a very Sienese care for elegance. Something of this finds its way into the San Galgano predella in which a certain knowledge of Ghiberti's low-reliefs has perhaps played some part. The range of the last Sienese artist is singularly wide.

With Giovanni di Paolo a wonderful source dried up. With him Sienese resistance to the encroachment of Florentine teaching comes to an end in the plastic and aesthetic domain, as it had practically done so already in the realm of politics. It was the period when Siena definitely renounced her preponderant place in Tuscany and helplessly looked on while her century-old rivalry with Florence was resolved to the latter's advantage.

At the same time she renounced all claims to an art of her own. Starting off with premisses which, after all, were in her favour, she had been unable to construct a new system, as coherent and valid as that of the Florentines, which could hold its own against the latter. She had no other alternative than to fall into line. Already Matteo di Giovanni, even in Giovanni di Paolo's lifetime, had adopted the Florentine idiom in some of his works. Siena was now turning away from a past to which her devotion had proved fatal. But it was too late; the future to which she was now about to give herself up was not of her own making; it came to her from without, and henceforward the history of her art was no longer to be her own history but that of the whole of Italy, under the tendentious but indisputable control of the Florence of the Medici.
NOTES

Roman and Byzantine School

PIETRO CAVALLINI (circa 1240-1270 to circa 1434-1364).

Some authorities put his birth about the year 1270, others between 1240 and 1250. It is not certain that he was born in Rome. A document of 1273 mentions a certain Petrus dictus Cavallinius de Cerenibus but there is no reason to identify him with our artist. First known date: the execution of the mosaics at Santa Maria in Trastevere, signed and dated 1291. Next, a document of 1308 testifies to the fact that he went to Naples to work at the invitation of Charles II of Anjou who paid him thirty ounces of gold. Apart from these dates, the oldest testimony concerning Cavallini's activity is Ghiberti's.

Vasari, in the first edition of his Lives, states that Cavallini died in 1344 at the age of seventy-five. In the second, he corrects it to 1364, and eighty-five. Furthermore there is in the Vatican a biography of Cavallini by Cardinal Jacopo Stefaneschi, brother of Bertholdo Stefaneschi, donor of the Santa Maria mosaics, which confirms his death at the former age. Finally, Cavallini's son had an inscription put on his tomb at S. Paolo fuori le Mura which is no longer visible but had previously been noted down; this declared him to be a centenarian. It seems beyond doubt that Cavallini had a following in Rome even if he did not possess a large atelier, and we can link his name with the mosaicists Jacopo Torriti and Filippo Rusuti.

Signed or documented works:

Mosaics of S. Maria in Trastevere; 1291. Signed.
Seven panels representing scenes from the life of the Virgin. (Ghiberti).

Last Judgment, existing part of the fresco at S. Cecilia in Trastevere. Authenticated by Ghiberti. According to Raimond Van Marle's reconstituted chronology, they may be put somewhere between 1316 and 1334. There are some modernised fragments left.

Lost works:

Scenes from the Old and New Testaments and the Life of Saint Paul.
Frescoes in the interior of S. Paolo fuori le Mura, authenticated by Ghiberti. The nave was destroyed by the fire of 1825, but there exist in the Vatican XVIIIth century water-colours which give us some idea of them. According to Van Marle, their execution was spread over three periods: 1) 1270-1279; 2) 1282-1287; 3) 1294-1303.

According to Ghiberti, Cavallini also did paintings at St. Peter's, San Crisogono, and San Francesco in Rome.

Works attributed to Cavallini:

Christ, Virgin and Saints. Considerably damaged fresco in the apse of S. Giorgio in Velabro in Rome. Carried out to the order of Cardinal Jacopo Stefaneschi about the year 1296.

Fresco above the tomb of Cardinal Matteo d'Aquasparta, died 1302, in S. Maria in Aracoeli, Rome. Various attributed to Cavallini or his School.

Mosaics at San Crisogono, Rome. Lionello Venturi attributes it to Cavallini himself, other experts to his School.

Series of frescoes at S. Maria di Donna Regina, Naples. Bertaux attributes these to the School of Siena. Since the discovery of the S. Cecilia frescoes, they have been related to the document of 1308 and have been sometimes attributed to Cavallini himself, sometimes to the school he is supposed to have set up on the spot. In any case, his personal share is very slight.

JACOPO TORRITI or JACOPO DA TORDIDA

Our knowledge of Torriti is based on a single work: the mosaic in the apse of S. Maria Maggiore, Rome, signed and dated 1295. That of S. Giovanni in Laterano, executed in 1291 in collaboration with Fra Jacopo da Camerino has been almost entirely worked over. Today, the greater part of the Roman frescoes of the upper section of the nave at Assisi is attributed to Torriti.

FILIPPO RUSUTI, or ROSATI, or ROSSUTI

Known for his mosaic signed and dated 1308 which is to be found on the façade of S. Maria Maggiore, Rome. On analogy of style, he is credited with the fresco of the vaulting above the last bay of the upper section of the nave of the church at Assisi.
BONAVENTURA BERLINGHIERI (circa 1215 - after 1274).

Born circa 1215. Mentioned several times in Sienese documents. In 1235, signed and dated an altar-frontal, dedicated to St. Francis. In 1244 painted frescoes at Lucca and, 25th November of the same year, he gave a written promise to a certain Signor Paolo to begin the decoration of a room, including the ceiling on which bird-motifs were to figure, in three days time. In 1250 he is mentioned in two contracts in which he is mentioned as guarantor for a work, a miniature, to be carried out by his brother Marco who was then a minor. In 1266 -as we discover from documents concerning him and his family— he was about fifty years of age. His name is quoted for the last time in 1274.

Signed work:
St. Francis and scenes from his life. Altar-frontal, painted in 1235 for the church of San Francesco at Pescia where it still remains.

Works attributed to him or of his School:
On analogy of style a certain number of works have been attributed to Berlinghieri or to his School. The best known are the following:
Crucifix. Lucca Museum.
St. Francis and his Legend. Altar-frontal with compartments. Santa Croce, Florence.
St. Francis receiving the Stigmata. Accademia, Florence.

CIMABUE

CIMABUE (1240-50 - 1302-3).

Name: a tradition established by Vasari gives us the name Giovanni, called Cimabue (ox-head) which is pretty certainly a nickname. A document found at Pisa enables us to discover his real name; it is a receipt for payment received 5th November 1301 in which the painter is designated as 'Magister Cenni dictus Cimabue pector condamus Pepi de Florentia', that is: Cenni di Pepi (or Pepe), and not the 'Giovanni' of tradition.

Date of birth: on the evidence of Vasari, born in Florence, 1240. There seems to be no reason for Italian historians to put this date ten years forward. The oldest document relating to Cimabue that we possess is that of 1272 (published by Strzygowski, Cimabue und Rom, in 1888); it was discovered among the archives of S. Maria Maggiore, Rome. It concerns a convent of the Order of S. Damiano which was to be placed under the protection of Cardinal Otto-boni Fieschi. Among the witnesses who signed it we find the name of "Cimabue pictor de Florentia" and- curiously enough—the other five witnesses are high church dignitaries. For a painter of Florence to appear in such illustrious company, whatever be the reason, he must have been well known already, hence no longer altogether young, and have made a prolonged stay in Rome. These requirements hardly fit in with the age thirty-two, and there seems no reason to diminish it by a further ten years.

We have no further details of this stay in Rome and we lose all track of him until we come to the years immediately preceding his death. He is supposed to have returned to Florence about the year 1282 where Mario Salmi has revealed his probable collaboration in the Baptistery. He appears to have had an atelier in Florence. The great Uffizi Madonna was painted — approximately — during the time preceding his departure for Pisa. By 1301, we find him back in Pisa. He was there in charge of the execution of a mosaic begun by a certain Francesco intended for the Duomo at Pisa. Every week regularly from 1st September, 1301 to January, 1302 there was a wage-shect. Finally on the 13th February, 1302, we have a document specifying the mosaic figure representing St. John as his creation. Two further documents from Pisa inform us that he, together with a certain Nucholis, was commissioned to produce a Maesta and a Crucifix for the Church of the Hospital of Santa Chiara. The first document, dated 1st November, 1301, is the actual order and specifies the subjects to be represented and the materials to be used, the second, dated 5th November, is a receipt for the payment previously quoted and bears his name. It informs us further that Cimabue was at that time 'de populo (which corresponds to a parish) Sancti Ambrosii' of Florence. There is now no trace of the works recorded in these two documents. Lastly, a final document, dated 4th July 1302, discovered in Florence, shows us him as a member of the society of the Piovuli and proves that he returned to Florence before he died. The year of his death is thought to be 1302 or 1303.

Documented Works:
St. John, Absidal mosaic in the Duomo, Pisa, 1302.

Attributed to Cimabue:
Madonna with Angels, Panel originally in the Church of the Trinita, Florence. Unanimous attribution. Between 1282 and 1301. (Uffizi).
The choir frescoes and the frescoes in the two transepts of the Upper Church at Assisi.

b) North Transept: St. Peter curing the Lame man before the Temple. Martyrdom of St. Peter.


d) On the vaulting: The Four Evangelists.

e) Lower Church: Madonna and Child surrounded by Angels, with St. Francis.

Vasari attributed all these frescoes to Cimabue as well as those of the Upper Church with the exception of the St. Francis cycle which he assigned to Giotto. Ghiberti attributed them to Cavallini. Today it is generally agreed that they are by Cimabue.

The Crucifix. S. Domenico, Arezzo. Assigned to the artist's first period of activity, between 1272 and 1301. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, J. Douglas Langton and Adolfo Venturi have attributed it to Margaritone. O. Sirén gives it to Coppo di Marcovaldo. Nowadays it is unanimously attributed to Cimabue (Berson, Toesca, Lionello Venturi and E. Sandberg-Vavala who has made a serious study of the question in his work: La Croce dipinta italiana, Verona, 1929).

Attributed to the atelier of Cimabue,

The Crucifix of Santa Croce, Florence.

Madonna enthroned (Louvre). This seems however more Roman in style, with affinities with the school of Cavallini.

GIOTTO

GIOTTO DI BONDONE (Ambrogiotto? Angiolotto?) [c. 1266-1337].

Born in 1266 or 1267 either in Florence or more probably in the immediate neighbourhood, at Colle di Vespignano, in the Mugello. Of humble origin but perhaps not as humble as has been made out. Family of artisan or peasant stock, comfortably off and anxious to educate their children. Practically nothing is known about his youth and training. According to a tradition that goes back to Ghiberti and is repeated by Vasari he was a pupil of Cimabue but there is no trace of such an influence in Giotto's work. We have little information about his frequent moves. He appears to have gone to Assisi for the first time about the year 1295, before being summoned there by Giovanni di Muro, General of the Franciscans, to paint a series of frescoes on the subject of St. Francis. We owe this information to Ghiberti and Vasari; there is no reason to doubt it. Giovanni di Muro was elected in 1296 and remained in office until 1302. Giotto's arrival at Assisi must then have been between those two dates. Did he go to Rome between-times? That had long been the belief, and his stay had been connected with the Jubilee of 1300. But Lionello Venturi has thrown doubt on the date of his Roman journey, commenting that there was no mention of that date until we come to seventeenth century accounts. We learn that he became the owner of a house in Florence in 1301. By his wife, Cluita di Lapo del Pela, he had eight children, four sons and four daughters. We know for certain that in 1304-5 he worked in the cappella Scrovegni, usually known as the Arena. This Chapel, begun in 1303, was consecrated in March 1305, and the building was nearing completion when Giotto carried out his decorations. Moreover, according to the Compilato Cronologico of Riccobaldo da Ferrara which ends in the year 1313, he also decorated the Palazzo Communale in Padua, and later witnesses (the Anonymo moreliano, Ghiberti, Vasari, Michele Savonarola) mention frescoes by him in the Church of Sant'Antonio (known as 'Il Santo'). Was this important group of works by his hand the fruit of one period in Padua or are we to suppose a return there between 1305 and 1313? It is still an open question. However Giotto seems to have gone to Rimini in 1311 and to Verona in 1314 (Riccobaldo and Vasari). His normal abode was Florence where we pick up traces of his everyday life. In 1312, for example, he joins the Corporation of Medici e Speziali (Physicians and Apothecaries which also included painters); in 1313 he authorises Benedetto, son of Pace, to collect from Filippo di Rieti, in Rome, effects and instruments that he had left there, which proves at any rate that he had been to Rome before that date. Once again, in 1314 and 1315, we find records in Florence of powers of proxy given to notaries, and papers relating to a lawsuit. According to Vasari and Benvenuto Cellini 1316 was the year of his return from a journey to Avignon, but neither mention the date of his departure from Florence. Ferrara and Ravenna in 1317. After which, except for a brief stay in Lucca in 1322, he settled down more and more in Florence. He was working in the Church of Santa Croce, enjoying prosperity and the esteem of his fellow-citizens; he acquires property near his native Colle, pays off his debt within two years, and in 1324, is put in charge of restorations and

* This Church has the altar at the West end.
paintings in the Palazzo del Podestà. In 1326 he marries off his youngest daughter, Chiara. It is possible that during this same year he returned to Assisi where — though this has been questioned — he decorated the Chapel of S. Maria Maddalena and perhaps carried out other work. Did he suffer a set-back in 1329? He certainly let one of his farms and then, in 1331, sold some land and a hamlet. After that, we see him leaving for Naples to take up service with King Robert of Anjou. One wonders whether these two events are in some way connected. Nothing is known of his activity in the South. In 1334 he is back again in his native Florence. On 12th April the Commune confers upon him the title, a strange one for a painter, of 'master mason of the works of S. Separata' and 'superintendent of the city walls and fortifications'; hence the hypotheses about Giotto's activity as an architect. He seems to have ceased painting in Florence, but we find him going to Milan in 1335 to decorate the palace of Azzo Visconti. All that remains of this work are some later descriptions.

He died 7th January, 1337, in Florence and was buried in S. Sepurata. He appears to have enjoyed a very great reputation during his lifetime to which a number of his contemporaries testify; these include Dante, Riccoaldo di Ferrara, Antonio Pucci, Antonio Bili, Bevano da Imola.

— Important questions concerning his life.

a) The Stay in Rome.

The question at issue is the Roman work of Giotto — the Navicella mosaic, now completely restored, transformed and unrecognizable and an altarpiece destined for St. Peter's Rome and commonly known as the Stefaneschi Polyptych. It was traditionally believed that the two works had been commissioned from him in 1298 by Cardinal Jacopo Gaetani di Stefaneschi, nephew of Boniface VIII on the occasion of the Jubilee of 1300. The belief was based on a text taken from a book of the Benefactors of St. Peter's. But Lionello Venturi casts doubt on the date 1298-1300 (La date dell' attività romana di Giotto, 'L'Arte', 1918, p. 299 et seq. and La Navicella di Giotto, 'L'Arte', 1922) drawing attention to the fact that it did not figure in the text and appeared only in the seventeenth century in an account by Baldinucci. Moreover, the 1603 Index of the Vatican Library by Jacopo Grimaldi assigns the Navicella to the year 1320, the date adopted also by Lionello Venturi both for the latter and the Stefaneschi Polyptych. Nor does the 'Compilatio Chronologica' of Riccoaldo da Ferrara, which stops in the year 1313, and refers to Giotto's activity at Assisi, Rimini and Padua, make any mention of Rome. On the other hand, the document of 1313, published by Luigi Chiapelli (Nuovi documenti su Giotto, 'L'Arte' 1922) proves conclusively that Giotto went there before that date, and a number of critics (Enzo Carli, Pietro Fedele, C. Brandi) continue to defend the traditional argument.

b) Journey to Avignon.

Second important question: did Giotto make a journey to France? All we possess is Vasari's vague reference to, and Benvenuto Cellini's mention of, a journey to Avignon. They are naturally bound up with the discussion of the influence of French sculpture on Giotto in particular and on Italian painting of the Trecento in general, although this influence is apparent enough, whether or not Giotto made a journey into France. There are two opposing arguments: according to the first, outlined by Berenson, then taken up by Romdahl, followed by Erwin Rosenthal and the majority of the French and German critics, Giotto was influenced by French sculpture, if not directly, at least through the intermediary of Giovanni Pisano and by drawings. The second, the Italian thesis, with Cesare Brandi as chief protagonist, fiercely defends the absolute independence of Giotto of any interior or exterior influence, accepting with the greatest caution all Vasari's information relating to Giotto's movements.

— Works.

The only completely documented works of his are the following:

The Angels of the Navicella. Mosaic at St. Peter's Rome, 1298-1300 or 1320? — The Angels are the sole recognisable part of the mosaic as it was originally painted. Numerous restorations and additions have, moreover, entirely changed its appearance. Andrea da Firenze's fresco in the Spanish Chapel of S. Maria Novella in Florence which is either a copy or a transposition gives perhaps some idea of the original work.

The Altar Painting, intended for the tribune of St. Peter's, at present in the Sacristy, commissioned in the same period by Cardinal Gaetani di Stefaneschi, nephew of Boniface VIII.

Madonna enthroned. Originally in the Church of Ognissanti in Florence, now in the Uffizi. 1303? 1309? 1317?

Frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel, Padua, known as the Arena (1305-1306). Enrico Scrovegni, son of the patrician Reginaldo Scrovegni, a money-lender whom Dante imprisoned in the seventh circle of his Inferno, built an exploratory chapel close to his palace which rose up on the ruins of the Roman amphitheatre in

These scenes cover the side-walls of the nave and that of the choir arch. They are bounded by borders of ornamental foliage intersected by quadrilobate medallions. The latter depict small Scenes from the Old and New Testaments. Fourteen allegorical figures representing the Vices and Virtues, are distributed over the painted base of the frescoes. At the summit of the choir arch, a Saviour adored by the Angels, and on the other side of the façade a Last Judgement. The interior of the choir was decorated by one of Giotto's pupils.

Frescoes of the chapels in the Church of Santa Croce, Florence.

Between 1317 and 1320. Of the four decorations by Giotto in the family chapels of the Bardi, the Peruzzi, the Giugli and the Tosinhi-Spinelli respectively, only the first two are preserved. They have been restored; they had been completely lime-washed and only brought to light in 1841. The Bardi Chapel seems the most ancient. It contains an effigy of St. Louis of Toulouse, canonised in 1317, which proves that the frescoes are later than this date. It contains further six Frescoes of scenes from the Life of St. Francis. 1) St. Francis renounces the World. 2) Confirmation of the rules of the Order of St. Francis. 3) Ordeal of fire before the Sultan. 4) The Council of Arles. 5) Death of St. Francis. 6) Two subjects: left-hand side Vision of Fra Agostino, right-hand side, St. Francis appears to the Bishop of Assisi in a vision. On either side of the window: four Franciscan saints: St. Louis, King of France, St. Louis, Bishop of Toulouse, St. Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, and St. Clare. On the ceiling four medallions, three of which represent the Franciscan Virtues: Poverty, Chastity and Obedience and the fourth a St. Francis in glory. Over the entrance-arch, eight medallions enclosing half-length portraits of the Evangelists and Doctors of the Church — and, on the exterior wall, above the entrance, the Stigmata of St. Francis.

The Peruzzi Chapel contains six large compositions, likewise much restored. Three concerning St. John the Baptist: 1) Zacharias at the Altar. 2) Birth of John the Baptist. 3) Herod's Feast; — three concerning St. John the Evangelist: 1) Vision of the Evangelist at Patmos. 2) Raising of Drusiana. 3) Assumption of the Evangelist. On the ceiling: the Symbols of the Four Evangelists. On the ornamental frieze: ten medallions containing heads which have every appearance of being portraits of the Peruzzi family.

Works attributed to Giotto:

The Problem of the Assisi Frescoes.

Although it seems certain that Giotto worked at Assisi round about the year 1297, it is much more difficult to establish his share in the pro- digious decoration of the two naves—the Lower and the Upper—which compose the church of San Francesco. Vasari attributes the whole of the decoration of the Upper Church, with the exception of the St. Francis cycle, to Cimabue; Ghiberti to Cavallini, and whatever conclusion one comes to, one cannot rule out the possibility of a collaboration of pupils or followers.

The controversy about the attributions has a bearing on Giotto in so far as the following points are concerned:

a) During a first stay at Assisi, circa 1295, did he collaborate in the execution of the Roman cycle of the Old and New Testaments? Luigi Coletti, in a recent work (Primiatti, Novare, 1946) thinks that Giotto was actively concerned only in the last of the three periods previously mentioned.

b) Is the cycle of the Life of St. Francis in the Upper Church by him? Giotto's authorship of
these frescoes, traditionally established by Riccobaldo da Ferrara and Vasari, was first disputed by Wickhoff, then, and above all, by F. Rintelen (Giotto und Giotto Apokryphen, Munich-Leipsiz, 1912), followed by the larger part of German criticism and again, in 1939, by R. Offner (Giotto -non Giotto, 'Burlington Magazine' 1939, LXXIV and LXXV). Italian critics come out in support of the thesis of the authenticity of the work, although admitting that some of the frescoes, particularly the last four, are probably the work of disciples, among whom they favour the name of the Master of the S. Cecilia. At the present time we more or less agree that a very large part of the St. Francis cycle which comprises the twenty-eight frescoes in the following list was executed by Giotto himself or under his general supervision:

1) St. Francis honoured by an inhabitant of Assisi lays his cloak at his feet. 2) St. Francis gives his cloak to a poor man. 3) His vision of a palace and weapons. 4) Warned by a crucifix in San Damiano. 5) He renounces the World. 6) He appears to Pope Innocent III in a dream, supporting the Lateran Church. 7) Approval of the Rule of the Minor Brothers by Pope Honorius III. 8) He appears to his brethren in a fiery chariot. 9) His vision of his appointed seat in heaven. 10) Francis expels evil spirits from Arezzo. 11) He prepares to undergo the ordeal of fire. 12) Ecstasy of St. Francis. 13) Christmas at Greccio. 14) Miraculous production of a spring of water. 15) He preaches to the birds. 16) He predicts the death of a nobleman of Celano. 17) Preaches before Honorius III. 18) He appears at the Council of Arles. 19) He receives the stigmata. 20) His funeral. 21) Fra Augustine and the Bishop of Assisi are informed of his death in a dream. 22) Jerome of Assisi is convinced by the stigmata. 23) The body of St. Francis transported to San Damiano of Assisi is received by St. Clara. 24) His canonisation. 25) He appears to Gregory IX. 26) He cures a wounded man in Spain. 27) Raising of a dead woman. 28) The liberation of a repentant heretic, Pietro of Assisi.

c) Are the frescoes of the Chapel of S. Maria Maddalena and those of the ceilings above the tomb of St. Francis, in the Lower Church by him? The attribution was made on the strength of a sentence written by Ghiberti: “dipinse tutta la parte di sotto” and on a corroboration on the part of Vasari. But some writers, Supino for example, think that Ghiberti was referring thus to the Lower Church, whereas C. Brandi, with the approval of the majority of art-historians, asserts that the ‘parte di sotto’ (and not ‘la chiesa di sotto’) refers to the lower part of the Upper nave and that the information relates therefore to the cycle of St. Francis. In general, there is a tendency to abandon the theory that Giotto executed the decoration of the Lower nave and stick to the idea that he supervised the whole work.

Other works attributed to Giotto:

The Crucifix of Santa Maria Novella. 1303 (?) A document of 1312 mentions a crucifix by Giotto for S. Maria Novella, but we possess no proof that it refers to the present one.

The Rimini Crucifix, in the Temple of the Malatestas. Much disputed, despite the testimony of Riccobaldo.

Altarpiece for the Franciscan church of San Fermo, Verona. 1314? Attribution by E. Cecchi.

A Franciscan Saint. 1318? Berenson Coll. Attribution by Berenson. It is supposed to be a fragment of a polychy of S. Croce.

The Virgin asleep 1318? Provenance; Church of Ognissanti, at present in Berlin. Probable, though questioned attribution.


Last Judgement. Two frescoes of the Palazzo del Podestà, Florence, both almost entirely destroyed now. Very probable attribution through it may be only from Giotto’s studio.

Giotto’s studio:

Three signed works are now considered as having come from Giotto’s studio:

St. Francis receiving the stigmata. Pane intended for Pisa, at present in the Louvre. Signed: Opus Joccti florentinit.


Documented and lost works:


Frescoes in the Curia and in the Duomo of Arezzo (Vasari).


Miracles of St. Anthony: Sermon to the fish. The mare kneeling before the Host. Two frescoes in the church of S. Francesco, Rimini. (Vasari).


Frescos of the Palazzo della Scala, Verona. 1314. (Vasari).

Frescos of the Giugni and Tosinchi-Spinelli Chapels, Santa Croce, Florence (Ghiberti, Vasari).

St. Martin. Lucca. (Vasari).

The Pillaged Commune, fresco in the Palazzo del Podestà, Florence 1324. (Villani, Pucci, Ghiberti).


Drawings for the tomb of Guido Perlati. 1327. (Vasari).

Frescos in the residence of the King of Naples. Castelnuovo. In the great hall: Alexander, Solomon, Aeneas, Achilles, Paris, Hercules, Simeon, Caesar, the Queen of Sheba, Andromeda, Dido, Polyxenes, Deianira, Helen, Delilah, Cleopatra. 1330-1332 (Ghiberti).

Scenes from the life of the Virgin. Frescoes in the Chapel of the Palazzo Visconti, Milan. 1335. (Vasari). In the great hall of the Palace: Mundane Glory. In other parts of the Palace: Port with ships and personages representing the Punic War. 1335. (Vasari).

**THE Giotto Circle**

**THE MASTER OF S. CECILIA**

(Active: end 13th century to circa 1320).

Painter of an altarpiece, originally in the Church of Santa Cecilia, Florence, at present in the Uffizi. Vasari had attributed this altarpiece to Cimabue, and it is recorded thus in the old Uffizi catalogues. The attribution was abandoned in the middle of the nineteenth century and the artist began to be known as the Master of S. Cecilia. He may be assumed to have been active between the end of the 13th and the first two decades of the 14th century; he was therefore a contemporary of Giotto and appears to have worked at Assisi at the same period or immediately afterwards. A hypothesis has been put forward that he had Roman origins (A. Parronchi, Attività del Maestro di S. Cecilia, *Revista d’Arte*, XVII-XVIII, 1939).

The central part of the altarpiece of S. Cecilia alone survives: a large-sized, enthroned figure of the Saint and eight scenes from her life.

The Church of S. Cecilia was burnt down in 1304 and rebuilt in 1341 but the work from the church was rescued and so this event does not enable us to date the altarpiece. It is usually assigned to the year 1304, or thereabouts.

Lionello Venturo would identify this anonymous master with Buffalmaco. The latter was a painter whose name has come down to us through ancient tradition without leaving any identifiable work. Buffalmaco, thanks to Vasari’s assertion, had long been credited with the Polyptych of the Blessed Humility in Faenza, later attributed to Pietro Lorenzetti and now once more considered to be from Florence or the Romagna.

Other work attributed to the Master of S. Cecilia:

**Santa Margherita and scenes from her life.** Altarpiece. In the Church of S. Margherita, Monticelli, near Florence.

**St. Peter enthroned.** Commissioned in 1307 by the Company of St. Peter of Florence for the Benedictine church of S. Pietro Maggiore (at present S. Simeone, Florence).

**St. Thomas.** Second cloister of S. Maria Novella, Florence.

**PACINO DI BONAGUIDA** (active, first quarter of the 14th century).

The sole mention we have of him: in February 1303, "Pacinus filius Bonaguidi pop. (olo, - parish) S. Laurentii de Florentia, publicus artifer in arte pictorum" broke the contract made a year previous with his colleague Tambo di Serraglio. This establishes Pacino as a contemporary of Giotto.

There exists a polyptych by him: a Crucifixion with four saints at the sides, at present in the Accademia di belle Arti, Florence, bearing the following inscription on the central panel: "Symon presbiter S. Florentii fecit pigui hoc opus Pacino Bonaguido Anno Domini MCCCX", ...and there is some dispute as to whether we should understand 1310, 1315 or 1320.

He was registered on the roll of Physicians and Apothecaries of Florence between 1320 and 1339.

On analogy of style the following works have also been attributed to him:

The Tree of Life. Polyptych inspired by the *lignum vitae* of S. Bonaventura. Painted for the Nunnery of the Order of St. Clare, Monticelli, at present in the Accademia, Florence. Unanimous attribution.

The diptych of the Straus Coll., New York: first panel.

Crucifix, portable crucifix of the Society Colombaria of Florence, circa 1320. Attribution by Mario Salmi.

A group of miniatures, some at Milan, others at New York, in detached, illuminated pages. Attribution by Oppen.

Virgin with Child and Saints. Accademia, Florence. Four panels. The saints are from the Benedictine abbey of La Badia, Florence; the provenance of the Virgin is unknown. Attribution by Salmi and Castelfranco.

TADDEO GADDI (died circa 1366).
Son of Gaddo Gaddi and collaborator with the Roman marble-masons, Torriti and Rusuti. Date of birth unknown. Giotto's most faithful pupil, possibly his godson, he was still a child when he entered the master's studio and became the one of the direct pupils who preserved his tradition for the longest time. According to Cennino Cennini, he worked with Giotto for twenty-six years. Circa 1355-1360, he was among the sole veterans of the master's circle. The first reference to him occurred in 1327. First known work — the decoration of the Baroncelli Chapel — 1332-1334. A letter informs us that between 1341 and 1342 he worked in San Miniato al Monte, Florence and at San Francesco, Pisa. In 1347 his name headed the list of the best Florentine painters, drawn up as the result of a kind of competition launched by Pistoia where they were looking for an artist to execute a polyptych for the church of S. Giovanni Fuoricivitas. He was given this commission and paid in in 1353. In the years 1349, 1352, and 1365, he is mentioned in the "libri delle gabelle" and in 1359, 1363 and 1366, he was a member of the commission of artists at the Opera del Duomo, Florence. In 1363 he received a payment for a fresco (since disappeared) at the Mercanzia Vecchia. We conclude from the relevant documents that he was dead by the end of 1366. He had a son Agnolo, a painter. Later the family received a title and other honours.

Works:
Scenes from the Life of Christ and St. Francis. Attribution widely accepted. The Cod. Magliab. mentions only the scenes from the Life of St. Francis, Vasari both series. Date uncertain. Probably youthful work. Composed of two half lunettes, each divided into two compartments, and of twenty-six quadrilateral medallions which constituted the decoration of the sacristy cupboards of Santa Croce. These items are now divided between the Accademia, Florence, the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin and the Ingenheim Coll., Reisewitz.


Deposition. New Haven, USA, Jarvis Coll., Yale University.

TADDEO GADDI AND HIS PUPILS

Allegory of the Cross. Enormous fresco in the refectory of S. Croce, it echoes the theme of S. Bonaventura's Tree of Life. Mentioned by Vasari.

BERNARDO DADDI (active: 1312-1348).
Identified by Passerini and Milanese with "Bernardus de Florentia" of the Virgin and Child of the Accademia, Florence, which bears that signature. Date of birth unknown. First mentioned 1312: his name is inscribed in the register of the corporation of Physicians and Apothecaries of Florence from 1312 to 1320, then in another book which covers the period 1320 to 1353. First known and dated work: 1328. In 1338 he painted a picture, which has since been lost, that was to surmount the altar of St. Bernard at the Palazzo della Signoria (Palazzo Vecchio). He acquired a house in Florence during the same year. In 1338, he executed an altar-frontal, with Three Saints, (Dominican) formerly at S. Maria Novella. In 1339 he is mentioned as councillor of the Company of St. Luke, and his name appears as a witness in a lawsuit. In 1340-1341, he painted one of the two pictures (now lost) which form-
erly were one in the choir and the other above the altar in the church of Santa Maria at Quarto. Died 1348.

Works:


*Virgin and Saints*. Polyptych above the altar of the first cloister of S. Maria Novella. An inscription has recently been discovered: "Anno dni MCCXLIII Bernardus me pinxit."

*Madonna*. Or San Michele, Florence. Mention of payment for this Virgin exists, dated March and June 1347.


Works attributed to Bernardo Daddi:


*Scenes from the Life of S. Cecilia*. In the Church of S. Cecilia, Pisa.

*Seven Scenes from the Story of the Holy Girdle*. Prato Museum.


*Scenes from the Life of St. Stephen*. Vatican Picture Gallery. All these Scenes constitute series of small pictures, the attribution of which is by no means certain. Also attributed to him is a whole series of various works on more or less sound evidence. The complete list is to be found in the Encyclopaedia Italiana, p. 773-774.

**JACOPO DEL CASENTINO** (mentioned between 1339 and 1349).

He figures as a councillor of the Company of St. Luke in 1339, the year of its inauguration. In 1347 a certain Nello di Chele Sartari left instructions in his will that Jacopo should carry out a Chapel decoration in S. Maria Novella, subject: St. Martin and Scenes from his Life. This Chapel was later identified by Finesschi. In 1349 it appears from the books of the Company of St. Luke that he was dead by that time, probably carried off by the Plague. He has sometimes been confused with the Master of S. Cecilia.

We possess the following works by him:

A signed triptych, with *Virgin and Child*, Cagnola Coll., Florence.

Works attributed to him:


*San Miniato and Scenes from his Life*. Altarpiece at San Miniato al Monte, Florence, formerly attributed to Agnolo Gaddi, then to the Master of S. Cecilia. The attribution to Jacopo made by R. Offner, Mario Salmi, Pietro Toseca, Bernard Berenson and Luigi Coletti.

**MASO DI BANCO** (mentioned between 1341 and 1353).

In the year 1341 took place a sequestration of property belonging to "Maso del fu Banco", painter, living in the parish of San Lorenzo in Florence, at the request of Rodolfo dei Bardi. This was the same Bardi family which about the same date commissioned him to do the frescoes for their family Chapel at S. Croce (not to be confused with another, first, of the Bardi family, decorated by Giotto). Maso's name is to be found inscribed on the register of the Physicians and Apothecaries from 1343 to January 1346, and in 1350 on that of the Company of St. Luke. We possess furthermore a reference, dating from 1353, to a Deposition begun by him by order of Drea, daughter of Albizio del Ricchio degli Albizi, and finished and restored in 1392 by Niccolò di Piero Gerini.

Works:


*The Coronation of the Virgin*. Fragment of a lunette, fresco-painting, formerly surmounting a doorway of the first cloister at S. Croce. (Museo del' Opera di S. Croce, Florence).

**GIOTTINO**

According to current theories, Vasari must have mistakenly identified three, if not four
persons with one name. He speaks of Tommaso di Stefano, a painter, called Giottino, whereas the facts are as follows:

1) Tommaso di Stefano, a sculptor, was active in the second half of the 14th century and registered on the roll of Physicians and Apothecaries in 1385. He does not come into the matter.

2) Stefano certainly had a son but he was not called Tommaso. He was called Giotto and known by the diminutive, Giottino.

3) A painter, Maso di Banco — not therefore a son of Stefano — actually did exist and work in Florence, mentioned between 1341 and 1353. He is the "Tommaso" in question. And he must not be confused, as has long been the case, with Giottino.

4) Works by another painter were named by Vasari as emanating from his collective personage and form a separate group both from Maso's and Giottino's. This artist's name has not been discovered up to date.

Since this disassociation of Maso from Giottino, the Pietà which was formerly at San Remigio and is now in the Uffizi is generally attributed to the latter. Luigi Coletti is further inclined to attribute to him the St. Gothard Crucifixion in support of his hypothesis concerning Giottino whom he considers a disciple of Maso.

Giottino's name is also associated with that of Giovanni da Milano in the list of Florentine painters who worked for Urban V, at the Vatican in 1369.

Duccio

DUCCIO DI BUONINSEGI A (circa 1250-60 to 1319).

The date of his birth is usually put between 1250 and 1260; his birthplace is unknown. First established date is 1278, the year when the Commune of Siena paid Duccio, already designated a painter, forty soldi for the decoration of twelve chests intended for the 'instruments' of the Commune. In 1280 he incurred a heavy fine for an offence which is not named in the archives, and we do not hear of him again until 1285, in Florence. A contract was drawn up there between the Company of Choristers (or Laude) of S. Maria Novella and Duccio Quodam Boninsegni for the execution of a large-scale Virgin "de pulcherima pictura". Back in Siena, and evidently on good terms with the Commune again, Duccio continued to work for it, its Cardinal camerlingo and four officers. He was chiefly concerned with the ornamentation of book and manuscript covers — thin wooden panels bound together by pieces of string (Biecherna). He seems to alternate continually between prosperity and poverty. At one time we hear of him being fined for debts (in 1295 and 1302), at another, we can find a record of a considerable purchase of wine. In 1302 the Commune awarded him a prize for a Maestà with predella for the Palazzo Communale (lost.) It is possible that he bought a vineyard in the neighbourhood of Siena at Castagnetto with this money in 1304. Other fines rained down on him, this time for conduct, which reveals his independent and fiery temperament: 10 soldi in 1299 for insubordination; 5 lire in 1302 for having authtid the Commune in some matter; 18 lire and 10 soldi immediately afterwards for refusing to join the municipal militia which was going off to fight in the Maremma, and 5 soldi a few weeks later for contempt of court. In 1308 the Commune of Siena commissioned him to do the great Maestà for the Duomo, and we learn in the same year that he owed the superintendent of the work the vast sum of 50 florins, probably an advance deducted from his payment for the Maestà which he undertook to repay. Side by side with debts and difficulties came honours. In 1296 he formed part of a commission instructed to find a site for a fountain; in 1298 he was elected a member of the "Rada" — a kind of consultative assembly of the Commune. And finally, the day of the delivery of the Maestà was one of great personal triumph. The whole population of Siena assembled in front of his house and bore the Maestà to the Duomo in procession, to the accompaniment of hymns. This triumph appears to have been followed by a brief period of prosperity. In 1313 Duccio lived at Stalloreggi where he had the joint ownership of a house with Bernardino and Picco di Ascanio. But when he died in 1319 his wife and children — two sons and one daughter — renounced the inheritance, the liabilities being greater than the assets.

Works authenticated by documentary proof:

Chests decorated for the Commune of Siena. 1278. Palazzo Communale.

Covers of books of the archives of Siena. 1279-1295. Palazzo Communale.

Maestà of the Palazzo Communale. 1302 (lost).

Maestà of the Duomo, Siena, at present in the Museum of the Opera del Duomo. 1308-1311. This altarpiece was made to be seen from both back and front. In its present form it is a reconstruction. The altarpiece comprises:
Front:

A Virgin in Majesty surrounded by four protectors of Siena: SS. Ansano, Savino, Crescentio and Vittorio. In rows, one above the other: St. Catherine, St. Agnes, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist. In the upper part: twenty angels and ten apostles.

Back:

Thirty-eight scenes from the Life of Jesus, three of which — the Crucifixion, the Kiss of Judas, the Prayer in the Garden of Olives — form the central composition and are larger than the others.

The predella:

Is composed of seven scenes in the front, divided off by figures of prophets, and of ten scenes at the back. The panels have been dispersed: the Annunciation of the front, Christ healing the blind and the Transfiguration of the back are in the National Gallery, London, the Nativity with Israel and Ezekiel of the front and the Visitation of SS. Peter and Andrew of the back, in the National Gallery, Washington; the Temptation on the Mountain in the Frick Coll., New York; Christ and the Woman of Samaria and the Raising of Lazarus in the Rockefeller Coll., New York; other existing panels: the Adoration of the Magi, the Presentation in the Temple, the Massacre of the Innocents, the Flight into Egypt, the Christ among the Doctors of the back and the Wedding Feast at Cana, of the back, in the Museo dell' Opera del Duomo, Siena. Two panels are missing.

Upper portion:

Six scenes of the front devoted to Appearances of Christ after the Resurrection. Six scenes of the back devoted to the Virgin. Museo dell' Opera del Duomo, Siena.

Works attributed to Duccio:

The "Rucellai Madonna". Uffizi, Florence. 1285 (?). Attributed to Cimabue by Crowe, Cavalcaselle, Strzygowski, Zimmermann, Roger Fry, Alessandro Chiapeili, Lionello Venturi. Identified with the Madonna entrusted to Duccio in 1285 by the Company of Christifiers of S. Maria Novella, Florence by Fineschi, Wickhoff, Richter, J. Wood-Brown, Adolfo Venturi, V. Aubert, Kurt Weigelt, Mather, R. Van Marle, Cesare Brandi. Some critics, E. Cecchi, Pietro Toscanelli, for example, do not rule out the possibility that it may be by one of Duccio's disciples, or even one of Cimabue's.

The Virgin with the Three Franciscans. Pinacoteca, Siena. Unanimous attribution.

Maestà, Bern Museum.

Triptych, National Gallery, London.

The last three works can be assigned to the period 1280 to 1290.


The Virgin of the Pinacoteca, Perugia. Between 1290 and 1308. Unanimous attribution.

The Virgin of the Stoclet Coll., Brussels.

The "Buckingham Triptych". Attribution uncertain.

Two Polyptychs of the Pinacoteca, Siena. (Nos. 28 and 47). Generally attributed to Duccio. However, C. Brandi, Duccio's most recent biographer, gives them respectively to the studio and the School of Duccio.

SIMONE MARTINI

SIMONE MARTINI (circa 1282-1344).

Name: Simone Martini or to be more precise 'di Martino'. Place and date of birth cannot be stated with certainty but it was, probably Siena about the year 1282. First known date 1315, that of the order for the Maestà for the Palazzo Communale. We do not know who his masters were. He may have worked in Duccio's studio but more likely in that of MEMO DI FILIPUCCI, the father of Filippo, or LIPPO MEMMI, his future brother-in-law. He set off for Naples in 1317, at the invitation of King Robert of Anjou who granted him a purse of fifty ounces of gold. In 1319 in Pisa he completed the Polyptych, signed, for the Church of St. Catherine, also in 1320, probably with the collaboration of Lippo Memmi, the Polyptych, likewise signed, for Orvieto Cathedral, and in 1321 he was back in Siena where he was entrusted with the restoration of the fresco of the Maestà of 1315. From that time on he must have resided permanently in Siena. In 1321 he executed a fresco-painting of a Crucifixion for the Chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico, then one year later, other frescoes, since vanished, for the loggia of the same Palazzo. He married in 1324 Lippo Memmi's sister, Giovanna Memmi to whom he gave a dowry. In 1326 he painted a picture which has since disappeared for the Palazzo del Capitano and between 1326 and 1328 he executed a fresco, the Guidoriccio da Fogliano which bears a date. At that time he shared a house with his brother DONATO in the Sant' Egido quarter. We find him in 1330 still in Siena, loaded with commissions and,
in 1333, he carried out and signed with Lippo Memmi the famous triptych, the Annunciation.

There are then three gaps in our information concerning the painter's activity: between 1324 and 1326, between 1328 and 1330 and between 1330 and 1333. It seems reasonable to assign the Assisi work, whose date is still the subject of controversy, to one of these periods. In relation to the general development of his work, the dates 1328 to 1330, would appear the most satisfactory, but there is nothing to prove that the Assisi frescoes were not spread over several comings and goings. If we are to believe the testimony of Father Guglielmo della Valle, who referred to it in 1782, he painted a fresco of the Maestà on the façade of the palace which rises above the piazza San Giovanni and was later given the name of Palazzo del Magnifico. It still existed in 1782. — There is a further gap in the documents up to his departure for Avignon in 1340, and some critics are eager to allot the Assisi frescoes to that period. In Avignon, along with his brother Donato, he was appointed representative of the rector of the Church of Sant'Angelo al Montone, Siena. There he stayed until his death in July 1344. We have no direct evidence, by way of date or work, of his activity in Avignon except for the half obliterated fresco in Notre-Dame-des-Doms in Avignon.

Documented works:


Virgin and Saints. Polyptych, central part of which — formed of four panels — is in the Church of S. Caterina, Pisa; the fifth panel and predella are in the National Museum of Pisa. Signed: (Provisionally reconstituted and exhibited in the Museum).

Virgin and Saints. Polyptych, signed by Simone but probably executed with considerable help from Lippo Memmi. 1320-1322 (?) Commissioned by Trasimundo Monaldeschi, Bishop of Savona, for the High altar of the Dominicans of Orvieto. At present in the Gardner Coll., Boston, USA.

Guidoriccio Ricci da Fogliano. Fresco in the Palazzo Pubblico (Palazzo Communale), Siena. 1328 (dated). This fresco was to be the first of a cycle commemorating a series of victories which had begun with that of Montemassi. Simone Martini was further commissioned to paint a fresco-portrait of the rebel, Marco Regoli and the castle of Maremmano di Archidosso and the Castel del Piano of which he brought back sketches from life, paid for in 1331. But the project does not appear to have been carried out.

Annunciation. Triptych. 1333. Dated, and signed conjointly with Lippo Memmi. The central part is assumed to be by Simone and the wings by Lippo. The old Gothic frame has been re-made. The altarpiece, formerly on the altar of Sant'Ansano in the Duomo, Siena, is at present in the Uffizi, Florence.


Very bad state.

Portable Polyptych of Cardinal Stefaneschi. We suppose, but cannot be absolutely certain, that it dates from the Avignon period (1340-1344). Dispersed and doubtless incomplete. Antwerp (Museum) possesses four panels; an Angel and a Virgin of the Annunciation, a Crucifixion and a Deposition (the background of the latter has been repainted in oils), bearing the signature, Simone Martini pinxit. These panels were acquired from Dijon in 1828, hence the Avignon hypothesis. It is supposed that another panel, the Ascent to Calvary, Louvre, and a sixth, the Entombment, Berlin, also formed part of it.

Miniature of the Codex Virgilianus which belonged to Petrarch. Avignon period. Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

Virgin of the Annunciation. Former Stroganoff Coll., Rome; at present in the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad.

Works attributed to Simone Martini:


Scenes from the Life of St. Martin. Frescoes in the Lower Church of San Francesco, Assisi. On the strength of a statement by Vasari, attributed up to 1328. In 1820, C. Fea (Descrizione della Basilica di San Francesco) assigned them to Simone Martini. This attribution is now accepted. The date is the subject of controversy, e.g.: 1322, 1324-1326, 1328-1330 and post 1333.
The decoration of the Chapel of S. Martino includes:

Kneeling figure of Cardinal Ganzino.
Eight figures of Saints.
Five half-length figures attributed to various painters.

Ten scenes from the Life of St. Martin:
1) St. Martin shares his cloak with a poor man.
2) The Dream of St. Martin.
3) The Emperor Constantius knights St. Martin.
4) St. Martin leaves the Emperor's army.
5) The Meditation.
6) The Miracle of the Mass at Albenga.
7) St. Martin raises a child from the dead.
8) He meets and converts the Emperor Valentinus.
9) Death of St. Martin.
10) His Funeral.

St. Augustine and his legend. Polypych in the Church of Sant' Agostino, Siena. Date uncertain. Attribution contestable and questioned. However, Enzo Carli claims that he has recently discovered the bases of the decoration — hitherto covered over with plaster — which will probably confirm the authenticity of this attribution.

Documented and lost works:

A Crucifixion in the Chapel of the Palazzo Publico. 1321.

Frescoes in the loggia of the same. 1322.
St. Christopher. Fresco in the hall of the Uffizi della Boccherna, Siena. 1322.

A picture for the Palazzo del Capitano, Siena. 1326.

Madonna enthroned. Fresco on the Palazzo façade. This palazzo was reconstructed later and named the Palazzo del Magnifico. It was above the piazza San Giovanni.

1335 (?). According to the testimony of Padre della Valle (Lettere Senesi, II. 98), it still existed in 1782.

THE LORENZETTI BROTHERS

PIETRO LORENZETTI (died circa 1348).

Date of birth unknown. First mention, 1306.

First dated work, the Arezzo Polyptych, 1320. He was probably absent from Siena up to 1326, for there are no records about him. It is known that he worked at Arezzo and Cortona. Then the documents seem to indicate a more or less permanent residence in Siena. We have, for example, a payment for a lost picture in 1326; in 1329 there is a contribution from the Commune towards the payment of the Carmelite Polyptych, intended for the convent of Santa Maria del Carmine; in 1333 occurs a payment for a lost fresco which was formerly above the Porta Nuova of the Cathedral; in 1335 there is an advance for an unidentified work (possibly the once famous frescoes of the former ospizio of Siena of which only the date remains: 1335); in 1337 reference to the execution of a panel since lost; and in the same year, a licence to carry arms. In 1342 Pietro and Ambrogio acquired two plots of land at Bibbiano and two years later, the former sold off a piece. After 1348 there is no further trace in the archives of Pietro or his brother, Ambrogio, and we must assume that they both died in the Black Death.

Documented works:


Virgin and Child between St. Anthony the abbot and the Prophet, Elias. Polypych with predella which represents the history of the Carmelite Order. 1320. Signed: Petrus Laurentii de Senis me pinxit anno domini MCCCCLXIII (Sienese style). Painted for the Carmelite Convent of Siena. Probably dispersed by the fifteenth century. The central panel and the corresponding part of the predella went to the Chapel of the Martyrdom of (S. Ansano), Dofano near Montaperti. It is for this reason that we have become accustomed to call it the "Dofana Madonna". These pictures have been repainted and are now in the Pinacoteca, Siena, where they have been restored to their primitive state. Other parts were exported in 1818. Two of the four side-wings and four panels of the predella have remained permanently in Siena. Today, therefore, the Pinacoteca groups them thus: the central panel, the two side parts and five panels of the predella. Two other panels of the predella are in America. (Rabinowitz Coll.)

St. Bartholomew, St. Cecilia and St. John the Baptist. Three panels forming a triptych. 1332. They are the side-wings of a polyptych of which the central part and the right-hand panel are missing. A defaced inscription, reconstituted by Cesare Brandi, gives the date and artist's name. Executed at the request of the vicar of the Church of S. Cecilia della Pieve, Greve in Chianti, near Murlo. At present in the Pinacoteca, Siena.

Maesta. 1340 (?), 1315 (?). Signed: Petrus Laurentii de Senis me pinxit anno D.MCCCXL. The inscription has been retouched: and the "L" is written in such a way as to be able to be
read as "L" or "V". Practically all the experts, with the exception of Berenson, read it as 1340 and not 1315. It is probably the work mentioned by Vasari as being intended for the Church of S. Francesco, Pistoia. At present in the Uffizi.

Birth of the Virgin. Triptych. 1342. Petrus Laurentii de Senlis me pinxit A. MCCCXLII. Intended for the altar of S. Savino in the Duomo, Siena. Two of the panels are lost. Now in the Museo dell' Opera del Duomo, Siena.


Works attributed to Pietro Lorenzetti:

Virgin and four Angels. Altarpiece in the Cathedral of Cortona which seems to have been its original destination. The majority of historians assign it to 1320 with the exception of Adolfo Venturi who assigns it to 1335. Vasari attributes it to Ambrogio.

Crucifix. Vasari attributes it to Ambrogio but it has sometimes been assigned to the School. Nowadays, Pietro is considered the artist. Date uncertain. Church S. Marco, Cortona.

The Blessed Humility, and scenes from the life of. Altarpiece made for the Convento delle Donne di Faenza, Florence. It was long attributed to Buffalmaco on the strength of a statement by Vasari. Next it was unanimously attributed to the Pietro Lorenzetti. Today this attribution is quite rightly, discredited. Dewald seems justified in attributing it to the Florentine School whereas Cesare Brandi attributes it to the Romagna School. Other art-historians claim it for Pietro. The work is dated, but as in the case of the Maestà, the inscription has been retouched, MCCCXLII, may be read either as 1316 or 1341. If the attribution to the Florentines is correct, it is more likely that 1316 is the right date. At present in the Uffizi, Florence.

Decoration of the south transept at S. Francesco, Assisi. Lower Church. Frescoes. They are assigned to the period 1320-1330. Vasari attributes the Crucifixion to Cavallini, the Stigmatization of St. Francis to Giotto and the Scenes from the Passion to Capanna Puccia. The first attribution — to Pietro Lorenzetti — comprising the whole decoration, was made by J.A. Crowe and G.B. Cavalcaselle, in 1864. Recently the work has been considered to be mainly the work of his followers.

Pietro is now credited only with:

The Crucifixion, on the wall that adjoins the nave.

The Virgin between St. Francis and St. John the Evangelist, below the Crucifixion. (Some writers maintain that the figure of St. Francis is the joint work of Pietro and Ambrogio).

Descent from the Cross. On the end wall of the transept.

The Entombment. On the end wall of the transept.

Crucifixion. Fresco in the Church of S. Francesco, Siena. Probably circa 1331. Of the three frescoes formerly in the cloister and now transferred to the interior, only the Crucifixion is attributed to Pietro. Reverting to Ghiberti's testimony, opinion has reassigned them to Ambrogio. It was Cavalcaselle who first attributed them to Pietro.

The Resurrection, fragment of a fresco, probably belonging to the same ensemble. Refectory, San Francesco.

To Pietro Lorenzetti is also assigned a series of Virgins and separate panels, entirely on stylistic grounds. The complete list may be found in I Lorenzetti, G. Sinibaldi, pp. 147-181.

AMBROGIO LORENZETTI (died circa 1348).

Date of birth unknown. First mention of him in 1319, the year when he executed a Virgin and Child for Vico l'Abate, near Florence. In 1321 he was still in Florence in a precarious situation, his property sequestrated for debt. His stay there must have been fairly lengthy. In 1324 he is to be found in Siena again, but we have no further news of him until 1331, the probable date, if we can trust the chronicler, Tizio, of the execution of the frescoes at S. Francesco, Siena. After this commission he returned to Florence. In 1332 he became a member of the Corporation of Physicians and Apothecaries. In consequence he settled there to work for some time. It was during that year that he produced, on the spot, the S. Procolo polypytch. The years 1338 and 1339 find him back in Siena. He was working at the Palazzo Pubblico in the Room of the Nine and received partial payments as the work progressed. This was doubtless the Allegory of Good and Bad Government and its Effects, but as, according to the chronicler, Angelo Tura, Ambrogio carried out other frescoes in the same hall, we cannot be absolutely sure. In 1340 he continued to receive payments from the Commune but this time it was for a Virgin and Child, painted in fresco in the Palazzo. Three further dates mark stages in his life in Siena: in 1342 he signs and dates a Presentation in the Temple, in 1344 an Annunciation. In 1347 he is mentioned in Siena for the last time as a member of the Council.
We assume that he was a victim of the Black Death of 1348.

Documented works:

**Virgin and Child.** Altarpiece in the parish church of Sant' Angiolo, Vico l'Abate, near Florence. 1319.

*The Effects of Good and Bad Government in Town and Country.* Two frescoes signed but undated: Ambrosius Laurentii de Senis hunc pinxit utrique. Payments were spread over the years 1338 and 1339, but we cannot be absolutely sure that they were for this work. Hall of the Nine, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena.

In the loggia, a *Virgin and Child*, fresco. According to the chronicler, Angelo Tura, it formed part of a larger ensemble. A payment in 1340 would tally with this.


**Annunciation.** Panel with original frame, dated and signed: XVI di dicembre MCCCXLIII (1344) fece Ambrogio Lorenzi questa tavola... in the Sala del Concistorio in the Palazzo Pubblico, then in the vestibule of the kitchen of the ushers (donzelli) of the Town-Hall and is currently called the **Annunciation of the donzelli.** Transported to the Pinacoteca, Siena, in 1839.

Works attributed to Ambrogio Lorenzetti:

**The Madonna and Child.** Virgin with the Infant Jesus at her breast. Cavalcaselle's attribution is pretty widely accepted. Date uncertain, but probably of an early period. Comes from the Church of the Convento di Lecce, At present in the Seminario di San Francesco, Siena.

**Maestà.** Altarpiece with Virgin enthroned and allegorical figures of Faith, Hope, Charity, Unsigned and undated but vouched for by Ghiberti, le Cod. Magliab. and Vasari. Attribution undisputed. Date controversial: some believe it to be a youthful work, others a very late work. Palazzo Pubblico, Massa marittimo. Bad state.

**St. Louis of Toulouse presents his obedience to Pope Boniface VIII; Massacre of the Franciscans at Cusa.** Frescoes in the Church of San Francesco, Siena. Probable date 1331. These frescoes were in the cloister of San Francesco and removed to the interior at the same time as the *Crucifixion* by Pietro when the cloister was demolished in 1517. Ghiberti who attributes them to Ambrogio, describes the frescoes which decorate the cloister, but he believes that they illustrate the legend of St. Francis of Siena and not that of St. Louis of Toulouse. These are the subjects as he enumerates them: 1) St. Francis assumes the habit of the Order. 2) St. Francis sets off on his mission — people have wondered whether this is not the subject of the remaining subsisting fresco in which we see St. Louis presenting his obedience. 3) His companions are beheaded — this is the present fresco which we know as the *Massacre*. 4) Storm at Sea, which Ghiberti considered outstandingly beautiful. 5) St. Francis preaches while suspended from a tree. 6) He is beheaded.

These frescoes have been attributed to Pietro, then to his School, but nowadays opinion has veered round in favour of Ambrogio; Lionello Venturi thinks that the two brothers collaborated in the St. Francis themes, that the St. Louis fresco is by Ambrogio and the Martyrdom of the Franciscans is by Pietro.

**Heads of Four Nuns.** Fragmentary fresco found in the Chapter-house of the Church of San Francesco in 1853. It doubtless formed part of a decoration by the Lorenzetti brothers. Most critics assign it to Ambrogio. The National Gallery, London.

**SS. Nicola and Procolo.** 1332 (?). Remains of the S. Procolo polyptych, Museo Bandini, Fiesole.

**Four Scenes from the Life of St. Nicholas of Bari.** 1332 (?) Paired-off panels which probably formed the wings of an altarpiece. Ghiberti, the Cod. Magliab. and Vasari all speak of a work by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Church of S. Procolo, Florence. Cinelli states that there was a *Virgin* by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, signed and dated 1332. Richa, on the other hand, mentions a *Virgin* *not* by Ambrogio but Giotto; the predella was probably by the former. The four panels were found in the Church of S. Procolo. They probably, formed some part of the work mentioned by Ghiberti, the anonymous Chronicler and Vasari. They are universally attributed to Ambrogio. At present in the Uffizi, Florence.

**View of a town near the sea; View of a Castle on a Lake;**

Two small panels of unknown provenance. They have been variously attributed to Pietro Lorenzetti, his School and even to Giovanni di Paolo or his circle. Nowadays they are usually attributed to Ambrogio. Furthermore, Brandi has proved that they
were never fragments of a larger composition but independent works. If the attribution to Ambrogio can be confirmed these works would be the first attempts at landscape—in its own right—Pinacoteca, Siena, Nos. 46 and 47.

Allegory of the Effects of Bad Government on Town and Country. Fresco forming part of the decoration of the Sala della Pace (Hall of the Nine) in the Palazzo Publico. No signatures. Ghiberti, the Anonymous Chronicler, Cod. Magliab, and Vasari attribute it, as they do the Allegory of Good Government, to Ambrogio but the quality is much inferior to the latter and it is probably a work of pupils. There is a series of Madonnas at the Pinacoteca, Siena, which—though there is no ancient documentary proof—have been attributed to Ambrogio. Among them, No. 65, provenance unknown; the triptych with the Virgin, S. Maddalena and S. Dorothea from the convent of S. Petronilla, Siena, No. 77; and the Madonna from the parish church of San Lorenzo alla Serre de Rolpallano, No. 605. For the remainder and for a series of panels split up and dispersed in various galleries and collections, consult the list drawn up by G. Sinibaldi, I. Lorenzetti, pp. 185-220.

THE DOMINICAN DIVERSION

ANDREA DI CIONE ARCAIGNOLO, called ORCAGNA or ORGAGANA (active 1343-1368).

Sculptor, architect and painter who had a large studio in Florence where he worked with his brothers Nardo di Cione, probably his junior, born about 1320, died circa 1365, and Jacopo, the youngest of the three whose active years were between 1365 and 1398. Date of birth unknown. Appears for the first time in the famous document in the Pistoia competition (see note on Taddeo Gaddi and the text) among the best five painters selected in Florence. In 1352 his name also appears among the sculptors in stone and in wood. In 1357 he signed and dated the altarpiece of the Strozzi Chapel, in the Church of S. Maria Novella. In the same year he submitted models of pilasters for S. Maria del Fiore in competition with Francesco Talenti whose designs were preferred. In 1358 or 1359 he completed the stone tabernacle for Or San Michele. He was appointed master-of-the-works of the Cathedral and in that capacity also inspected works in Orvieto where he remained up to the year 1362. In 1364 he appears in the Councils of S. Maria del Fiore and two years later he was one of the team of artists who provided the final design. In 1368 he began an altarpiece on the theme of St. Matthew and probably executed the central figure which was finished by his brother Jacopo. In the same year he did a Virgin for fall the Captains of Or San Michele, not to be confused with the one that is now in the tabernacle which he carved. This is the last we hear of him.

Documented works:

Christ handing a book to St. Thomas and keys to St. Peter. Altarpiece commissioned by the Strozzi for their family Chapel in S. Maria Novella where it is still to be found. Signed and dated: anno Domini MCCCLVII (1357) Andrea Cionis de Florentia me pinxit.

Work attributed to Orcagna:

St. Matthew. Central figure of the altarpiece executed in 1368, in collaboration with Jacopo di Cione. At present in the Uffizi.

Lost works:

Last Judgement, Hell, Triumph of Death. Frescoes in Santa Croce, Florence. There remains one inaccessible fragment of II. Described by Ghiberti without any details of date.

FRANCESCO TRAINI

The name appears in Pisan documents from the year 1321, but we cannot be sure that it is our painter. The first reliable information we have is in July 1345 when the St. Dominic altarpiece was completed. The major problem concerning this artist is whether he can be identified—as Milanesi has desired, against the opposition of Supino and Adolfo Venturi—with "Master Francesco who was in the studio of Andrea (Orcagna)" who figures among the names of the five best Florentine painters selected as a result of the Pistoia competition (see Notes on Taddeo Gaddi and text). The question is still open one. The problem of his origin is not settled either. According to some critics—Luigi Coletti in particular—he came from Emilia.

Documented works:

St. Dominic and Scenes from his Life. Altarpiece, finished in 1345. Dismembered and divided between the museum and the Palazzo Arcivescovile, Pisa.

Works attributed to Traini:

St. Thomas in glory surrounded by four evangelists, St. Paul, Moses, Aristotle and Plato. Attribution disputed, date uncertain.

Triumph of Death, Last Judgement, Life of the Hermits, Scenes from Christ’s Passion. Frescoes on the walls of the Campo Santo, Pisa, damaged in 1944 and today partially restored and on view in the cemetery chapel.
Vasari, in his first edition, ascribed the Triumph of Death to Nardo di Cione, in the second, to Orcagna. He attributed the Hermit of the Thebaid to Pietro Lorenzetti and in the second edition he attributed Hell, which forms part of the Last Judgement to Nardo. He placed these frescoes before those in Santa Croce, Florence. In our own time, Longhi has built up a Bolognese theory with regard to these works, according to which they are the work of Vitale de Bologna, belonging to period later than that of the last known work by this artist (1353). L. Coletti agrees about the Bolognese or Emilian character of the frescoes but objects to the attribution to Vitale. He himself inclines towards the theory that Francesco Traini, to whom he attributes the work, was of Bolognese origin, St. Catherine, St. George. Two frescoes in the Baptistry, Parma. Attribution by Meiss. Accepted by Luigi Coletti, rejected by Longhi.

ANDREA DI BONAIUTO, called ANDREA DA FIRENZE (active 1343-1377).

On the roll of Physicians and Apothecaries, Florence, from the year 1343. In 1366 a delegation of eight artists was created to serve as advisors "supra facto hedificationis ecclesie" at S. Maria del Fiore, the cathedral then in construction in Florence. Andrea's name appears second, immediately following Taddeo Gaddi. On the 20th August, the same year, he was commissioned to execute the scheme for the decoration of S. Maria. The whole of the Spanish Chapel of S. Maria Novella, painted 1366-1367, is attributed to him. It was doubtless the period of his great activity. In 1368 he went to Orvieto, then there is a gap in the documents up to the year 1372, the year when he was nominated councillor of the Corporation of Physicians and Apothecaries. Two years later we find his name similarly inscribed as a member of the Company of St. Luke. In 1377 he went to Pisa to paint the Legend of S. Ranieri. He received payment for these frescoes in November 1377, a few days before his death.

Documented works:
Three scenes from the Legend of S. Ranieri.
South wall of the Campo Santo, Pisa. 1377.
By way of proof we have an acknowledgment of payment received, published by Banalmi in 1846.

Works attributed to Andrea di Bonaiuto:
Frescos of the Chapter-house, S. Maria Novella, commonly known as the Spanish Chapel. (See detail in the text). Attribution by Cavalcaselle, on analogy of style with the Pisan frescoes. Unanimously accepted today.
Previously this decoration had been assigned to Taddeo Gaddi or Simone Martini. 1366-1367.

GIOVANNI DA MILANO (active 1350-1369).

Born at Caversio, in the region of Como. Went to Florence from Milan. He was a member of the guild in 1350 and was given the freedom of the city in 1365. The same year he worked in Santa Croce for the Rinuccini and executed the Pietà of the Accademia, Florence, the sole dated works of his that we know. In 1369, Pope Urban V, back in Rome, put him and Giottono in charge of the work of decorating the Vatican in which many artists, including several Florentines, participated. It is the last we hear of him.

Works:


Further works attributed to Giovanni da Milano:

An Altarpiece of the church of the Hospital of St. Barnabas of Mercy, Prato. Date might be 1354.

Marriage of St. Catherine. Triptych, Musée Fesch, Ajaccio.


Fresco decoration in the Palazzo Venezia, Rome:
Virgin, Angels, Annunciation, Nativity, Saints, Crucifixion and Pietà.

AGNOLO GADDI (?-1396)

Son of Taddeo Gaddi. According to Vasari there was a St. James among his early works that led people to suppose that young Agnolo would surpass all his father's pupils and his father too. But — continues Vasari — their hopes were disappointed, for later he devoted himself up much more to trading and trafficking of all kinds than to painting. Nevertheless, he received many very important commissions: the decoration (vanished) of the Cappella Maggiore of the Church of the Carmelites and later that
of one of the chapels in Santa Croce in which he painted a History of the Cross. In 1392 he was summoned to Prato to decorate the Chapel of the Holy Girdle in the Cathedral. This is authenticated by documentary evidence. For the rest, Vasari reminds us that he dealt in commerce more than art, undertaking several jobs at a time and being content to direct his assistants. He is in fact the head of one of the first great commercial studios which were destined to be very widespread later on.

We list here only the most important of his numerous works:

**Story of the Cross.** Chapel of the choir of Santa Croce. 1374.

**Saints.** The Castellani Chapel, Santa Croce.


**SPINELLO ARETINO** (circa 1346-1410).

Born in Arezzo between 1346 and 1350. Worked in his native town up to about 1380 and then went to Florence where he executed frescoes, now lost, illustrating the legend of St. John the Baptist, for the Chapel of the Manetti family in the Church of Santa Maria del Carmine. The Benedictines commissioned two large polyptychs from him — Virgin and Saints — the first for their convent of San Ponziano, Lucca where a few fragments remain, the second for the large Abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, near Siena. In the contract it was stipulated that the latter was to resemble the one done for Lucca which had been done some time before. He likewise painted for Parma the official theme of the Order: the Institution of the Order. In Florence he is the painter of the Alberti family which commissioned him to paint a cycle of St. Catherine in their country residence at Antella and to decorate the Benedictine church, San Miniato al Monte in which Spinello also painted a series of frescoes, illustrating the legend of St. Benet (1387). In 1391-1392, he worked at the Campo Santo, Pisa, and in 1407 went to Siena where he executed the frescoes illustrating the Story of Pope Alexander III in the Palazzo Pubblico. Died 1410.

**Works:**

- The Trinity. Pinacoteca, Arezzo. Youthful work.
- The Annunciation. In the Church, SS. Annunziata, Arezzo. Youthful work.
- Scenes from the legend of St. Catherine, Antella. Circa 1387.

**Virgin and Saints.** Polyptych. Fragments in San Ponziano church, Lucca. Between 1380 and 1384.

**Virgin and Saints.** Polyptych. Provenance: Monte Oliveto, divided between Budapest, Siena, Cologne and Cambridge (USA). 1384.

**Several Virgins.** Monte Oliveto. Date uncertain

**Scenes from the Legend of St. Benet.** Frescoes. San Miniato al Monte, Florence. 1387.

**Campo Santo frescoes.** Pisa. Destroyed or undergoing restoration. 1391-1392.


**LORENZO MONACO or LORENZO DI GIOVANNI** (1370 - post 1433).

Born in Siena, 1370, but lived and worked in Florence. He arrived there about 1390 and entered the Convent of the Camaldoli. He was still there in 1422, and this is the last we hear of him. Very productive as a miniaturist, quite apart from his painting. Very prolific work, of which the following are the chief examples:

- **Frescoes of the Convento delle Oblate.** Florence. Circa 1394-1395.
- **Nativity.** Predella panel. Accademia, Florence.
- **Annunciation.** Altarpiece. 1408. Accademia, Florence.
- **Adoration of the Magi.** Triptych. 1410.
- **Scenes from the Life of the Virgin.** Frescoes in the Church of Santa Trinita, Florence. Florence.
- **Flight into Egypt.** Fragment of an altarpiece. Altenburg Museum. And numerous Madonnas.

**GENTILE DA FABRIANO ET PISANELLO**

**GENTILE DA FABRIANO AND PISANELLO**

Date of birth uncertain; for a long time given as 1360, following Vasari's lead, and there has been a tendency to put it forward to the year 1370 or even later. A native of Fabriano in Umbria. Son of Nicola di Giovanni, scholar, mathematician and astrologer. God-fearing family, linked with the Benedictines of Monte Oliveto. We have no precise information about his training, and he is therefore the subject of
many hypotheses. We come across him for the first time in Venice in 1408 where he executed an altarpiece for Francesco Amadi. A year later he was entrusted with the fresco decoration of the Hall of Great Council in the Doge’s Palace which appears to have been continued by Pisanello. These frescoes are now lost to sight, covered as they are by other paintings. April 1414 finds Gentile at Brescia where he was summoned by Pandolfo Malatesta to paint a chapel which was destroyed during the following century. We learn of the progress of his work year by year up to September 1419 from contemporary documents. Then Gentile asks Malatesta to supply him with a safe-conduct, valid for a fortnight, for eight persons and eight horses. It was a matter of a journey to Rome at the invitation of Pope Martin V. The journey never took place. The artist returned to Fabriano where he considered settling permanently, for he requested an exoneration from taxation from the municipality, being “disposed to live and die and do his work as an artist on the soil of Fabriano” (dispositus vivere et mori et artem suam facere in terra Fabriani). However, a few years later, after making a journey to Siena, 1420–1421, he goes to live in Florence where we find him on the roll of Physicians and Apothecaries from November 1422 onwards. In 1423 Gentile signs and dates the Adoration of the Magi, executed for S. Trinità, Florence by the order of Palla Strozzi, and in May 1425, the Quaratesi Polyptych. June 1425 finds Gentile in Siena where he is working on the so-called De’ Notai Madonna, then he receives a payment for a fresco, a Madonna, and one year later he is back in Siena to finish the De’ Notai Madonna. From January to mid-July, 1427 Gentile received payments for fresco-work in the Church of San Giovanni in Laterano, Rome, which Pisanello was to complete after his death. These frescoes were destroyed during the restoration of the church by Borromini. Gentile died in Rome some time between August and October, 1427. After his death a payment was made to his uncle, Onofrio di Giovanni Massi, which would appear to be in connection with the lost fresco of the Virgin between St. Joseph and St. Benet above the tomb of Cardinal Alemano Aldimari in the Church of Santa Francesca Romana.


The Valle Romita polyptych, also known as the “Brera Polyptych”. Provenance: the Chiesa degli Osservatori in Valle Romita, near Fabriano; has been transferred at two different periods to the Brera Museum, Milan: the central part, — which is a Coronation of the Virgin —, and the four side-panels on which are painted St. Jerome, St. Francis, St. Mary Magdalene and St. Dominic respectively, in 1811; four small panels which are situated above the side panels, in 1901. The Coronation bears the signature: Gentile da Fabriano pinxit. It might well belong to the year 1400.

Adoration of the Magi. Altarpiece executed to the order of Palla Strozzi for S. Trinità, Florence (sacristy), now in the Uffizi. Signed and dated: Opus Gentili da Fabriano MCCCCXXIII (1423). The altarpiece consists of a predella composed of three panels: The Nativity, the Flight into Egypt and the Presentation in the Temple. The last mentioned panel is in the Louvre, Paris, and the version under the altarpiece in the Uffizi is a replica.

The so-called “Quaratesi” Polyptych. Executed for the Quaratesi family and destined for the Church of San Niccolò sopra l’Arno, Florence, the polyptych is now dismembered. The central panel, Virgin with Child and angels, is in the National Gallery, London. Formerly it bore an inscription, now lost. It had however been transcribed by Richa in 1762: Opus Gentilis da Fabriano MCCCCXXV mense mali (May 1425). The four side panels with St. Mary Magdalene, St. Nicholas of Bari, St. John the Baptist and St. George, joined in pairs, are in the Uffizi where they were taken directly from the Church San Niccolò sopra l’Arno, presented by the Marchese Quaratesi in 1879. They are therefore authentic works. This polyptych is also supposed to have had a predella, dismembered and reconstituted, consisting of five panels dealing with the legend of St. Nicholas of Bari four of which are in the Vatican Museum and one in the National Gallery, London. The attribution and reconstitution of the predella have been the subject of much difference of opinion.

Virgin and Child. Signature disfigured: Gent... Fabriano, in Gothic characters. Might belong to the year 1425. Provenance unknown; at present in the Jarvis Coll., Yale University, New Haven.

Virgin and Child. Fresco in the Cathedral of Orvieto. The payments are spread over the period October to December 1425.

Works attributed to Gentile da Fabriano:

St. Francis receiving the Stigmata. Easel picture which might be the Stigmata, seen in Fabriano in 1827 by a local painter (see Molajoli, Gen-


Virgin with two Angels. Circa 1410. Seems originally to have been in a private collection at Belluno. At present in the National Gallery, Washington. Attribution by Longhi.

Adoration of the Virgin. Circa 1415. In the Museum of Pisa whither it was brought from the Pin Casa della Misericordia. According to some authorities, the inscription, which adorns the Virgin's halo and which had long been thought to be Arabic, contains the words — from left to right — FABR. GEN.

Coronation of the Virgin. Panel-Banner? Heugel Coll, Paris. A possible date is the year 1423, or thereabouts. There is some controversy as to whether this is the picture which, along with the Stigmata of St. Francis, was in the Seminary at Fabriano in 1827. A replica exists in Vienna. The two pictures have been cut down in height and diminished at the sides. Nowadays the Paris version is considered to be the original and the one Viennese a copy.

The Archangel Michael. Stoclet Coll, Brussels. Attributed first to Andrea di Bartolo (Perkins), then to Sasseta (R. Van Marle) and now by Lunghi to Gentile, by Cesare Brandi to Antonio Alberti, a painter from Ferrara, and by Grassi to a Sienese painter of the school of Gualtiero di Giovanni.

God the Father, Virgin and Christ. Polyptych with side-panels showing St. Louis of Toulouse, the Descent into Limbo, St. Benet, SS. Coma and Damiano. In the Church of S. Niccolò sopra l'Arno. Attribution by Cavalcaselle, followed by Graziani and Lunghi. The work has been completely ruined by fire.

Virgin and Child and two Angels. Provenance, Church of SS. Coma e Damiano; it was given to Velletri in 1633 and is now in the Cathedral Chapter-house. Attribution by Lionello Venturi who dates it between 1425-1426.

Head and shoulder portrait (presumed) of Charlemagne. Provenance, S. Giovanni in Laterano. It is the sole surviving fragment of the frescoes begun by Gentile and finished by Pisanello. Attribution by Berenson, questioned by Luigi Grassi who considers it more likely to be the work of Pisanello. In the Museum of Christian Art in the Vatican. There are other, more doubtful, attributions. The complete list is to be found in the most recent monograph on Gentile: Luigi Grassi, Gentile da Fabriano, Milan 1953, pubd. Rizzoli.

Main documented works, subsequently lost:

Crucifixion. Part of the Valle Romita polyptych.


Frescoes in a chapel at Brescia, now destroyed, executed to the order of Pandolfo Malatesta between 1414 and 1419, as indicated by the relevant documents.

Virgin and Saints, Pietà and two Angels. Known as the De' Notai Madonna. Seen by Fazio (Historia senensis) at the Office of the Banchetti, Siena, 1425.


Virgin and Child between SS. Joseph and Benet. Fresco in the Church of Santa Francesca Romana, above the tomb of Cardinal Alemano Aldimari. Recorded by Vasari. A payment was made after Gentile's death to his uncle Onofrio di Giovanni Massi.

PISANELLO (before 1395-1455)

It is extremely difficult to ascertain the biographical facts. According to the latest version, unanimously accepted for the present, his Christian name was Antonio and not Vittore as he has been called — on the authority of Vasari — for four centuries, and he was the son of Puccio di Pisa and Isabella di Niccolò, a native of Verona, being himself born in Pisa but brought up in Verona by his mother. After the death of her husband in 1395 she returned to her native town where she took for her second husband another Pisan who had settled in Verona. He was probably born before 1395. He owes his surname, Pisanello, the little Pisan, as he is known in the archives, to his connections with Pisa, but he himself always signed himself Pisano. His middle-class background would guarantee him a careful training. It is very likely that his immediate master was Stefano da Verona, and everything leads us to suppose that before continuing the work, started by Gentile
After belonging some time to the family Costabili of Ferrara, it was given to the National Gallery, London. Signed Pisanello pl.

The Legend of St. George. Fresco above the entrance-arch to the Pellegrini Chapel of S. Anastasia, Verona. 1429-1430. Signed.

The Vision of St. Eustace. Tempera on wood, provenance unknown. Of no Pisanello picture are there in existence more preliminary drawings, which puts the authorship of the work beyond doubt. Date uncertain. At present in the National Gallery, London.

Works attributed to Pisanello:

The Virgin with the Quail. Attribution by Adolfo Venturi and B. Degenhart, unanimously accepted. Museo del Castel Vecchio, Verona.

Portrait of the Emperor Sigismund. Tempera on parchment. 1432-1433, the year when the Emperor came to Italy to take part in the Great Council. Preserved in the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna to which it was taken from the Castle of Ambras, near Innsbruck, which formerly belonged to the Holy Roman Empire. Attribution unquestioned.

Portrait of Ginevra d’Este. Circa 1438-1440. The attribution to Pisanello is no longer questioned, although it was for a long time considered to be a work by Piero della Francesca. The difference of opinion concerns who is represented. Most critics consider it to be Ginevra d’Este, wife of Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta of Rimini. Others, including B. Degenhart, think it is Margherita Gonzaga, daughter of Gianfrancesco Gonzaga and wife of Lionello d’Este, others again consider it to be his sister, Cecilia. Provenance unknown; now in the Louvre.


Resurrection. Fresco in the Church of Sant’Apollinare, Ferrara. Attribution disputed.

St. Jerome in the Desert. National Gallery, London. It was long attributed to Pisanello but is nowadays considered more likely to be the work of his pupil, Bono da Ferrara.

Main documented works, subsequently lost:

The Legend of St. John the Baptist. Frescoes in S. Giovanni in Laterano, Rome. According to the documents between 1431 and 1432, but doubtless begun by 1428, on the death of Gentile who was charged with the work.
History of Frederick Barbarossa and Pope Alexander III. Frescoes in the Doge's Palace, Venice, the commission for which was given to Gentile da Fabriano and part of which Pisanello is supposed to have executed — in particular, the scenes, Otho, son of the Emperor, pleading his cause before his Father. 1415 to 1422 or 1422 to 1427.

Frescoes in the Castle of Mantua. Frescoes in the Castle of Pavia.

FRA ANGELICO

FRA ANGELICO (1387-1455).

Guido or Guidolino di Pietro whose ecclesiastical designation was Fra Giovanni and who was nicknamed ‘l'Angelo’, was born near Vicchio in the high valley of the Mugello near Florence. According to tradition his date of birth is 1387, but there is now a tendency to place it several years later. In 1407 he went to the monastery of San Domenico, Fiesole with his brother, becoming one of the Order after a year's noviciate. The community of Fiesole had to leave Florence, having refused to recognise the election of the anti-pope Alexander V which took place in Pisa in 1409. According to tradition, Angelico followed the community into its exile, first in Foligno then in Cortona. If we accept the theory of a later date of birth, we must assume that he entered the Order only after the return of the Dominicans to Fiesole, which took place in 1418. However it may be, the first information concerning him is as late as 1432. It is a note of payment received for the execution of an Annunciation (lost) for the Church of S. Alessandro, Brescia. We have next the document containing the order for the Tabernacolo dei' Linaiuoli, dated 1433, and the proof of the date of the Perugia altarpiece of 1437. In July 1446 Angelico, with other monks of the monastery of Fiesole, signed the act of separation, separating the monastery of Fiesole from that San Marco, Florence. We find him at Rome the following year, seven days after the election of Pope Nicholas V, the 13th March, to be precise, and it is extremely probable that he went there at the invitation of the previous Pope, Eugene IV. With the help of several pupils, among whom was Benozzo Gozzoli, he undertook to decorate a chapel — since destroyed — in the Vatican. In June, the same year, he undertook to decorate the San Brizio Chapel in the Cathedral of Orvieto, work that began with Benozzo Gozzoli, only to be suspended and finally interrupted in 1449. In 1448 he worked at the decoration of the Chapel of Nicholas V in the Vatican. But the same year he was elected Prior of the monastery of Fiesole, an office he retained up to 1450. He probably divided his activity between Rome, Fiesole and Florence. In 1452 the town of Prato asked him to decorate the Cappella Maggiore of her Cathedral, which was later to have Filippo Lippi's frescoes. He kept visiting Rome up to the end of his life, and it was there that he died in 1455.

Attempts made to discover more about the composition of his workshop have resulted in the discovery of several names. The one that recurs most frequently is that of Zanobi Strozzi, in connection with activities in Florence, and that of Benozzo Gozzoli, outside that town.

Documented works:

Four painted tabernacles; vouchèd for by Vasari, the Bibliothèque Chronic (1570-1600) and later by Richius (1755); provenance, the Sacristy of S. Maria Novella; may be assigned to the years 1435-1440:

The Madonna of the Star, Museo di San Marco, Florence.
The Annunciation and Adoration of the Magi, Museo di San Marco.
The Coronation of the Virgin, Museo di San Marco.
The Death and Assumption of the Virgin, Gardner Museum, Boston Mass. The last two tabernacles are usually considered as emanating from Fra Angelico's studio.

Virgin and Child surrounded by Angels and Four Saints, Triptych transformed into a rectangular picture. Mentioned by Vasari. The predella and painting of the pilasters are probably not authentic. The date may well be prior to 1435. Provenance, S. Domenico, Fiesole where it still is. A St. Nicholas and a St. Michael exist in a private collection in Sheffield and, at Chantilly, a St. Mark and a St. Matthew which with six other small unidentified panels formed part of this former triptych (probably on pilasters, five at each side). According to Pope-Hennessy the predella representing Christ surrounded by Angels and Saints in the National Gallery, London, formed part of this altarpiece.

Last Judgement. Authenticated since 1482. Provenance, the Chiesa degli Angeli, Florence. Now in the Museo di San Marco. Date uncertain. Some critics see a considerable share on the part of his pupils, others — like Salmi, think it is almost entirely Fra Angelico's.

Coronation of the Virgin. Authenticated between 1482-1488. Provenance, either S. Egidio or S. Maria Novella; since 1825 in the Uffizi. Date uncertain. The predella is probably made up of two panels: The Marriage of the Virgin, the Funeral of the Virgin which are now in the Museo di San Marco.
Virgin and Child, and Saints. Triptych mentioned by Vasari and in a document dating back to 1430 (acknowledgement of outstanding payment which would situate the work between 1428 and 1429). Intended for the monastery of St. Peter Martyr, this triptych is now in the Museo di San Marco.

Tabernacolo de' Linaiuoli. The evidence is the order-paper which also gives the date: 1433. It comprises two folding-slutters painted on both sides and a predella. Now in the Museo di San Marco.

Deposition. Altarpiece with pilasters decorated with figures of saints and three painted pinnacles in which some see the hand of Lorenzo Monaco. Recorded in 1482 in the Sacristy of S. Trinità, Florence, this altarpiece is now in the Museo di San Marco. The date is doubtful: according to various critics it is between 1435 and 1446 which would hardly tally with the hypothesis that Lorenzo Monaco collaborated, seeing that he died in 1426.

Virgin and Child and four Saints. Triptych, recorded by Vasari. Uncertain date but probably a work of the first period. Intended for S. Domenico, Cortona, this altarpiece is still there today. Three predella-panels at present in the Diocesan Museum of Cortona, provenance, the Gesù, although considered to be works of his pupils, are linked up with this triptych.

Virgin and Child with Angels, four Saints, painted pilasters and predella. Triptych painted in 1437 for the Chapel of S. Nicola in the Church of San Domenico, Perugia. The date is recorded in an old chronicle of the Biblioteca Communale of Perugia (Bottonio 1770). The frame is modern and the whole as now presented is a reconstitution. The predella representing the legend of St. Nicholas of Bari is dismembered. Two panels are in the Vatican, the third in the Umbrian Museum, Perugia where the central panel is also to be found.


Virgin and Child with Angels and SS. Lawrence, John the Evangelist, Mark, Cosma, Damiano, Dominie, Francis and Peter the Martyr. Altarpiece painted for the high-altar of the Church of the Convento di San Marco, mentioned in all the sources from Manetti (1482) to Vasari. Executed between 1438 and 1440. At present in the Museo di San Marco.

There are also in existence fifteen predella-panels illustrating the Legend of SS. Cosma and Damiano. Six are thought to form part of the predella of the altarpiece of Annalena (see list of attributed works) and to be by one of Fra Angelico's pupils. This series is assembled in the Museo di San Marco.

Nine others: The Healing of Justinian and the Obsequies of the two Saints, of the Museo di San Marco; Cosma and Damiano before Lysias, the Exorcizing of Lysias, the Crucifixion of the two Saints and the Piaia of Munich; the Torture by Fire of Dublin, the Decapitation of the Louvre and The Cure of Palladia, Washington, are generally considered to be — wholly or partially — original parts of the predella of the San Marco altarpiece, mentioned above, the reconstruction of which nevertheless presents difficulties which are the subject of argument among the critics.

The Mystic Wheel; Scenes from the Life of Christ; Pentecost; the Coronation of the Virgin; the Last Judgement and the Tree of Love.

Six large panels, five of which are divided up into six compartments and one into five. Formerly they were part of a door of a silver-cupboard which stood in a small oratory of SS. Annunziata, Florence. All the most ancient sources refer to the work as Fra Angelico's, but today the critics, unable to agree on the question of authorship and the scenes to be ascribed to Fra Angelico himself, consider it to be largely the work of his pupils. According to the Chronicle of Florence by Benedetto Dei, the cupboard was commissioned in 1448 by Pietro de' Medici and probably executed about 1450 as Fra Angelico was in Rome in 1448. The six reconstituted panels are at present in the Museo di San Marco.

Virgin and Child between two Angels and Saints. Altarpiece mentioned in an old Chronicle and executed for the Franciscan monastery of S. Bonaventura in the Mugello, probably at the order of Cosimo de' Medici. There are also extant two predelle, which according to the divergent views of the critics might either of them be part of the ensemble of the altarpiece. One, divided between the Museums of Berlin, Altenburg and the Vatican represents the Legend of St. Francis. The other is reassembled in the Museo di San Marco; it is a Piaia and six saints, including St. Bernard, which automatically brings the date forward to 1450, the date of this Saint's canonisation.

Frescoes of the convent of San Marco. The convent of San Marco was put at the disposal of the Dominicans of Fiesole in 1436 and in 1437 its reconstruction was entrusted by Cosimo.
de' Medici to the architect, Michelozzo. The work lasted until 1452, and it is not known exactly at what moment Fra Angelico, who came to San Marco with the other Dominicans, began his decoration of the cells and the corridors. We may assume from the various stages of rebuilding that the first frescoes were executed about 1438-1439 and that the whole of the work extended between 1446-1447, the date of the artist's departure for Rome. Each of the forty-four cells was decorated with a fresco. There were, furthermore, two frescoes in the corridors, two in the cloister of St. Antonio and one in the chapter-house.

We can have no doubt that there was a good deal of collaboration on the part of his pupils in this vast undertaking. Among those quoted are: Zanobi Strozzi, Giusto Andree, Benozzo Gozzoli, Alessio Baldovinetti, Benedetto Bonfigli, F. Benedicti del Mugello and Giovanni and Marco. Some of the supposed collaborators, furthermore, are anonymous. Critics differ considerably about their participation and their actual share in the work accomplished.

**Frescoes of the Cappella Niccolò V**, in the Vatican.
The Chapel dedicated to the deacon-martyrs SS. Stephen and Lawrence, was restored by the humanist Pope and its embellishment was entrusted to Fra Angelico who probably worked there from 1447 to 1450, dividing his time between Rome and the monastery of Fiesole — of which he was appointed Prior in 1448 — and Florence. Three lunettes, containing six episodes, illustrate the Legend of St. Stephen: five rectangular scenes, the Legend of St. Lawrence, Benozzo Gozzoli and three pupils, whose names are mentioned only in this instance, collaborated with Fra Angelico, but we cannot determine with any certainty their precise contribution.

Works attributed to Fra Angelico:

**St. Zacharias writing the name of St. John the Baptist**, Predella-panel. Pre 1435. The attribution to Fra Angelico or one of his studio pupils is undisputed. Museo di San Marco, Florence.

**Virgin and Child surrounded by SS. Peter Martyr, Cosma, Damiano, John the Evangelist, Lawrence and Francis.**
The altarpiece which is universally attributed to Fra Angelico despite the lack of historical documentary proof, comes from the monastery of St. Vincent of Annalena, Florence. It is now in the Museo San Marco where are likewise to be found the six panels illustrating the legend of SS. Cosma and Damiano which in all probability formed part of his predella. (See list of undisputed works).

**Annunciation.** With predella comprising: the Marriage of the Virgin, the Visitation, the Adoration of the Magi, the Presentation in the Temple, the Death of the Virgin. On the sides: the Birth of St. Dominic, the Origin of the Dominican Habit.

Although we lack ancient documentary proof, this famous altarpiece is considered as one of the most authentic of the master and the original of numerous replicas, one of which is in the Prado, Madrid, another in the National Gallery, London — both considered as the work of pupils — another, which might well be by Fra Angelico's own hand in San Francesco, Montecarlo and a fourth in the corridor of the convent of San Marco. Date uncertain. Provenance: the Church of San Domenico, Cortona; now in the Diocesan Museum of Cortona.

**Last Judgement. The Ascension and Pentecost.** Gallery of Ancient Art, Rome. Attribution widely accepted.

**Christ on the Cross between the Virgin and St. John a Dominican Cardinal.** Altarpiece, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass. The attribution is accepted by Bernard Berenson, Muratoff, Tancred Borenius and J. Pope-Hennessy, date between 1449-1453.

**Temptation of St. Anthony.** Predella-panel, possibly circa 1440. Attributed to Fra Angelico by Bernard Berenson and J. Pope-Hennessy, to his studio by R. Offner. The other panels of the same predella have not been identified. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA.

**The SieneSE RESISTANCE**

**Barna, or BerNA, da Siena.**

Everything, including his name, is doubtful. Is he to be identified with the master Barna (Barbana) Bertini, mentioned in the archives of 1340? Did he die round about the year 1350 or, as Vasari wrote, in 1381 only? Bacci even questions whether Barna ever existed; but critics ascribe a series of frescoes to him and hail him as the best Sienese painter after the Lorenzetti and Martini.

Works attributed to him:

**Scenes from the New Testament.** Frescoes in the Cathedral (la Collegiata) of San Gimignano.

**Virgin standing, with Child.** Church of San Pietro, San Gimignano.

**Crucifixion.** Fresco, over-restored in Arezzo Cathedral. Mentioned by Ghiberti, the Anonymous chronicler, Cod. Magliab., and Vasari.
Chris bearing the Cross. Duveen Coll.
The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine. Boston Museum, USA.

BARTOLO DI FREDDI (c. 1330- c. 1409-1410).

Born in Siena about 1330. Belonged to the family, Battilori. In 1353 together with Andrea Vanni, he established a studio in Siena. Worked at San Gimignano in three spells. First time circa 1356, though this date is disputed; a second time in 1366; both occasions in La Collegiata. The third time was in 1390 at the Church of Sant' Agostino. In 1367 we find him in Siena. Then in the years 1372, 1381, 1382 and 1401 he takes part in the government of his city. In between times he worked for the Sacristy of Siena Cathedral and between 1383 and 1388 for Montalcino. In 1389 in collaboration with his son Andrea and another painter who, like him, participated in the government of the town, Luca di Tomme, he executed an altar picture for Siena Cathedral. The frescoes of Sant' Agostino in San Gimignano are his last known work. Died in 1409-1410.

Works:
Scenes from the Old Testament. 1356 or a youthful work. Frescoes in La Collegiata, San Gimignano.
Two Saints. 1366. Frescoes in La Collegiata, San Gimignano.
Scenes from the Life of the Virgin. Date uncertain. Frescoes in the Sacristy of Siena Cathedral. Bad state.
Adoration of the Magi. Pinacoteca, Siena.
Coronation of the Virgin. Pinacoteca, Siena.
Coronation of the Virgin. Large polyptych, signed and dated, divided between the Palazzo Municipale, Montalcino, — which owns the central panel: the Coronation and a side-wing showing the Deposition, — and the Pinacoteca in Siena which has assembled together, Four Scenes from the Life of the Virgin, 1388.

TADDEO DI BARTOLO (c. 1362- c. 1422).

Contrary to what was supposed, he is not the son of Bartolo di Fredi. The only documents we have concerning his activities are between 1386 to 1422. In 1386 he set up his workshop in Genoa and very quickly received the commission to do two large altarpieces for the Church of S. Luca. In 1393 he appears to have attempted suicide, but the same year he married a Genoese, Simone, daughter of Antonio di Monte, and returned with her to Siena which, from that time on, became his chief headquarters. In 1397 he supplied a Baptism of Christ (altarpiece) for the Church of S. Maria Assunta, Triara and in the course of the same year he executed frescoes in San Gimignano: Last Judgement and Characters from the Old and New Testaments. Very active in Siena between 1398 and the first decade of the XVth century. His best work belongs to this period. They are too numerous to be listed here. See Thieme and Becker, vol. XXXII, p. 395.

SASSETTA, STEFANO DI GIOVANNI DI CONSOLO, called (1392?-1450).

Date of birth given in a document as 1392; but it may refer to someone else of the same name. Birth-place: Cortona or Siena; his father was a native of Cortona, but Sassetta is always referred to in the documents as 'Sienese'.

For a long time it was believed that he had been trained as a painter in PAOLO DI GIOVANNI Futi's studio, but recent research has revealed that he was not a pupil of this master. He must have got his training by frequenting a circle of painters who were working at the decoration of the new sacristy of the Cathedral, particularly GUALTIERI DI GIOVANNI di Pisa, NICCOLO DI NALE DI NORCIA and BENCEDO DI BINO del Val d'Orcia, (See C. Brandi, I Quattrocentisti Senesi). We know nothing about his early work but in all probability he had contacts with Florence.

In 1450 he worked in the open air on his fresco for the Porta Romana in Siena. He caught a chill and died, leaving his work uncompleted and a wife and three children in poverty. Ten years later, SANO DI PIETRO who was probably a pupil of his, finished the decoration of the work that Sassetta had left in the drawing stage. This part, carried out by Sano, was destroyed by an explosion in 1944, whereas the part completed by Sassetta before his death remains, if not intact, at least in its former state.

Documented works:
Polyptych of the Palazzo dell' Arte della Lana. 1423-1426. Dismembered: several panels are in the Pinacoteca, Siena, others are divided between the Museum of Budapest, the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle and the Vatican Picture Gallery.

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Altarpiece of S. Francesco, known as the Borgo San Sepolcro altarpiece. 1437-1444. Commissioned in 1437 for the high-altar of San Francesco, Borgo San Sepolcro, this altarpiece which was to be painted in Siena and delivered within four years, was not finished until 1444. It is now divided between the National Gallery, London, the Musée Condé, Chantilly and the Berenson Coll., Settigniano.

Coronation of the Virgin. Frescoes on the Porta Romana, Siena. 1447-1450.

Works attributed to Sassetta:

Virgin, Saints (John the Baptist, Michael, Nicholas and Marguerite), Angels and Annunciation. Polyptych from S. Domenica, Cortona where it remained up to the last war, c. 1433. For several years now undergoing restoration in Florence. Unanimous attribution.

Virgin and Child. Panel from the Cathedral of Grosseto. Date uncertain. Museum of Sacred Art, Grosseto. According to Cesare Brandi it is a fragment of a larger ensemble. Perkins’ attribution, is widely accepted.


Adoration of the Magi. Chigi-Saracini Coll., Siena. A current hypothesis leads us to suppose that this panel formed part of the same ensemble as the previously-mentioned picture.

Madonna. Frick Coll., New York. Considered to be a late work.

Ascent to Calvary. Predella-panel, generally ascribed to Sassetta. Institute of Art, Detroit, USA., from the Hamilton Coll., Van Marle supposes that two other panels: Prayer in the Garden of Olives, Ashburnham Coll., Ashburnham, USA, and the Kiss of Judas from the Perkins Coll., at Assisi, and acquired in 1906 by the Institute of Art, of Detroit, formed part of the same predella. Brandi places them between 1440 and 1450.

ANONYMOUS SIENSE MASTERS of the XVth century

A series of unsigned works to which we can find no reference in the archives has resulted in a certain number of contradictory attributions. Granted that—for the moment at any rate—no indisputable proof can be advanced in favour of any of them, it seems advisable to classify them as anonymous until further orders.


Scenes from the Life of St. Anthony. Seven panels are now identified as forming part of one single ensemble. It is supposed that originally there were ten, grouped round a central figure, probably that of the Saint. The panels are dispersed among museums and private collections as follows:


St. Anthony flagellated by Demons. Jarvis Coll., New Haven. USA.

St. Anthony tempted by the She-Devil. Jarvis Coll., New Haven. USA.


The Meeting of SS. Anthony and Paul the Hermit. National Gallery, Washington. Cesare Brandi adds as a central figure to this ensemble:

St. Anthony, the Abbot. Head and shoulders, panel in the Louvre, and Young Knight hearing Mass, panel in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin where it is called the Mass of St. Anthony. Berenson and Van Marle ascribe it to Sassetta.

The Triptych from the Convento dell’Osservanza, the Birth of the Virgin (Asciano) and the St. Anthony series have long been attributed to Sassetta, following the lead of Cavalcaselle. J. Pope-Hennessy gave these attributions his support as recently as 1939. The first to doubt Sassetta’s authorship was
Longhi. Next, Alberto Graziani produced a hypothesis concerning a master distinct from those whose names we know, and called him the Master of the Osservanza, and attributed to him the 1436 Triptych, the Asciano Birth and St. Anthony. He supplemented these attributions with the following works:

Pietà, Serristori Coll., Florence.
Ascension to Calvary, predella-panel in the Sienese style, in the Johnson Coll., Philadelphia, which he associates with two other panels:
Flagellation, Bibl. Vat., Rome, and
Descent to Limbo, Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, USA.

Cesare Brandi attributes these last three panels to Sano di Pietro, Berenson to Sassetti; Van Marle gives the Ascension to Calvary to Giovanni di Paolo and associates it with two other anonymous panels, preserved in the Vatican Picture Gallery.

Prayer in the Garden of Olives and Deposition.

Pope-Hennessy does not accept the Master of the Osservanza theory. Brandi identifies this master with Sano di Pietro and, as a result assigns to him the whole series of works enumerated above, with the addition of two panels found in the Church of San Cristoforo, Siena;

St. George and the Dragon and St. Christopher bearing the Child Jesus.

GIOVANNI DI PAOLO (pre 1403-1482).

Giovanni di Paolo, also called Giovanni dal Poggio because he lived at Poggio Malavolti, in the Camollia quarter of Siena, was thought to have been born in 1403 but this date has had to be put back because documents have been found referring to payments for two important commissions in the year 1420. Numerous deeds of purchase and sale of houses in this Camollia quarter bear witness to the riotous days and financial misadventures of the painter. The first mention we have of him is dated 1420 and concerns the kind of activity referred to. Then, in 1423, we find an order for a small picture for the Hall of the Biccherna (lost) in the Palazzo Communale, and in 1426 Siena, for two pictures for the Church of San Domenica, Siena. In 1427 he signed the Branchini altarpiece. By 1428 his name is already to be found on the role of painters. In that same year he bought a house in the Terzo di San Martino which he sold in 1430. We have an order for a binding for the Biccherna dated 1427.

In 1433 he married a Donna Gabriella who brought him a dowry of two hundred florins. In 1436 he may have worked for the Fondi family which owned a family chapel at San Francesco, that is if the XVIIth century information which we possess about this Chapel really applies to him. In 1438 he was in contact with Giacopo della Quercia, a sculptor, with whom he collaborated over a small commission, and in 1440, he signed and dated the Siena Crucifixion. We also possess, belonging to the same period, an important commission for the decoration of Santa Maria della Scala, the payments for which extend up to 1441. In the December of that year Giovanni appears in the role of rector of the Arte dei pittori and we learn that he then lived in the Poggio Malavolti, popolo (parish) of San Gilio.

In 1442, he was still working—as the documents attest—in Santa Maria della Scala (Church and Hospital). From 1445 to 1447, according to the records, he collaborated with Sano di Pietro in the works for the Company of St. Francis, first of all, and then for the Company of St. Bernard. Unfortunately these works are now lost. On the other hand we still have, belonging to this period, part of the large altar-frontal, commissioned 11th April 1447 for Santa Maria della Scala by the rectors of the Arte dei Pizzicauoli (Pork-butchers) and completed 1st November 1449. In 1453 he signed and dated the St. Nicholas Polyptych. From 1458 to 1463 occur mentions of house-purchases, then, after 1463, their sales. By 1465 he had only two left in his possession, one of which was uninhabitable. In 1463 he signed and dated the Pienza Altarpiece, then worked again in the Sacristy of Santa Maria della Scala.

A ten-year gap in the documents does not allow us to catch up with him until 1475, the year of his last signed and dated work: the Staglia Polyptych. In 1477 he made his first will, bequeathing his estate to the Abbey of San Galgano and the parish church of San Gilio. From it we see that his fortune has dwindled away and is virtually limited to a house and garden. In 1482 he made a new will, having regularised his position with his housekeeper, Monna Domenica, who thereby became his universal-legatee, ashislawful wife, after endowing her with a dowry of 25 florins, exchange-value of a house in the San Gilio quarter. Shortly afterwards, 1482, he died.

Documented works:

Virgin and Child. Panel, Castelnuovo Berardenga, originally in San Domenica, Siena, 1426. Brandi puts forward the hypothesis that it formed part of a polyptych commissioned by the Peci family.

Virgin of the Blessed Humility. Signed and dated 1427. Central panel of the Branchini polyptych from the Church of San Domenico,
Sienna. The other parts are lost. Hirsch Coll. Basle.


St. Michael fighting the Dragon. Cover of an account-ledger in the Hall of the Bicherna, Siena. 1444.


Coronation of the Virgin, SS. Andrew and Peter. Triptych in the Church of Sant’ Andrea, Siena. Signed and dated 1445.


Presentation of the Virgin. Central panel, signed and dated 1449, of the altarpiece ordered on 11th April, 1447, for the Chapel of the Purification, S. Maria della Scala, by the Università dei Pizziacuoli. The contract has been published by Milanesi. It is stipulated in the contract that the “Presentation” is to modelled on a picture which is beyond all possible doubt the Presentation in the Temple by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, now in the Uffizi.


Virgin and Child and Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine. Two triptych panels from the Collegiata, Castiglione Fiorentino, signed and dated 1457. Today in the Museum in that town. The third panel is in Bagnoreggio.


Assumption. Central part, signed and dated 1475, of the altarpiece executed for Staggia.

Pinacoteca, Siena.

Works attributed to Giovanni di Paolo:

Crucifixion. Heyl Coll., Darmstadt. Brandi considers it to be Giovanni’s first work, dating it pre-1420. The attribution is disputed.

Christ suffering and Christ triumphant. Panel from the convento S. Nicola dei Carmelitani, at present in the Pinacoteca, Siena. Brandi dates it pre 1426. Iconographic rarity. It has figured under the name Giovanni di Paolo in the Pinacoteca catalogue since 1864.

St. John the Baptist, Pinacoteca, Siena.

St. Dominic. Pinacoteca, Siena.

Crucifixion. Altenburg.

Ascent to Calvary, Deposition, Entombment. Baltimore Museum, USA.

According to Brandi, these six panels, form part of the Branchini polyptych, the central panel of which, Virgin of the Blessed Humility signed and dated 1427 (see list of documented works) is now at Castelnuovo Berardenga.

Presentation of the Virgin, Crucifixion, Flight into Egypt. Three predella-panels. They possibly date back to 1436. Unanimous attribution to Giovanni di Paolo. Siena Pinacoteca.

Brandi thinks they belong to the polyptych of the Fondi family, seen in 1649 by Ugurieri in the family chapel in the Church of San Francesco, Siena. De Nicola likewise holds that these panels are fragments from it. Pope-Hennessy has attempted to reconstitute the Fondi polyptych by placing a Madonna surrounded by a St. Ursula, a St. John the Baptist, a St. Matthew and a St. Francis in the centre. Brandi does not accept this reconstitution. He considers that the polyptych, which was in a chapel dedicated to St. James, would itself be dedicated to that Saint and not to the Virgin. Consequently he would place in the centre of the polyptych:

The St. James of the Pinacoteca, Siena, completing the predella by the addition of: The Adoration of the Magi of the Kröller-Müller Foundation at Otterlo, and gives the whole ensemble the date 1436.


Scenes from the Legend of St. Catherine of Siena. Unanimous agreement about the attribution to Giovanni di Paolo. The seven panels which were formerly all grouped in the Hamboeck collection are today divided between New York (Lehman Coll. and Metropolitan Museum), Brussels (Stoclet Coll.) and Minneapolis (Institute of Art). There must have also have been an eighth panel, representing the Stigmata which has disappeared.

Brandi advances the hypothesis that these famous little panels were part of the Pizzicciuoli altarpiece, the central portion of which (the Presentation of the Virgin), signed and dated 1449, is in the Pinacoteca, Siena (see list of undisputed works). To the objec-
tion that in 1449, Catherine of Siena was not yet canonised, he replies that she was already deemed one of the 'Blessed' and that the representation of her wearing a halo does not therefore rule out the date 1449. He completes his reconstitution of the altarpiece by the addition of:

The Predella of the Crucifixion, of the Archepiscopal Museum, Utrecht to which he consequently gives the same date of 1449.

Scenes from the Legend of St. John the Baptist.
Seven panels, six of which are in Chicago Art Institute, and one, Ecce Agnus Dei, Caravaggio Coll, Tours. An eighth panel is probably lost. Provenance unknown. Unanimously attributed to Giovanni di Paolo. Date 1453, disputed.

Crucifix. San Pietro di Ovile, Siena.


Adoration of the Magi. National Gallery, Washington. It has every appearance of being by the same hand as the Scenes from the Legend of St. John the Baptist.

Last Judgement, Paradise and Hell. Constituted in one single panel, divided into three compartments, the predella of a polyptych now disappeared or unidentified. According to tradition it comes from the Church of S. Domenico, Siena and dates from 1445. Attribution to Giovanni di Paolo is old and unanimous. Pinacoteca, Siena.

Paradise. From the Palmieri-Nuti Coll., Siena, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. This representation is not an exact replica of the preceding Paradise.


St. Jerome. Large panel. Museo dell’ Opera del Duomo, Siena.

Scenes from the Legend of St. Dominic. Predella-panel in the Academy of Arts, Vienna.

SANO DI PIETRO (1406-1481)

Born in Siena, 1406. Inscribed on the role of painters in 1428, as a painter and miniaturist. In 1431 the office of captain of the 'Contrada' was conferred on him. In 1432 he acted as arbitrator concerning the price to be paid by Donna Ludovica to Sassetti from whom she had commissioned the Madonna of the Snows. In 1442 he was elected captain of the 'Contrada' for the second time. In 1444 he signed and dated the Polyptych of the Virgin, which, before its transference to the Pinacoteca, was in the Jesuit convent, in Siena. The latter, together with the large fresco representing the Coronation of the Virgin which the Commune had commissioned from him in 1445 for the Hall of the Magistrates of the Biccherna, in the Palazzo Communale, constitutes his best known work. In 1449 he executed, signed and dated a polyptych for the Church of San Biagio, Scroffano, in the neighbourhood of Siena. In 1455 a terrible famine afflicted Siena. Public prayers were offered up in the town, as the result of which the Virgin appeared to Pope Calixtus III in a dream, bidding him send supplies to Siena. The Pope sent a caravan of food which relieved the town of its suffering, and to commemorate this event, the Commune of Siena asked Sano to paint a picture illustrating the dream and its beneficent consequences. In 1475, Sano, now prosperous, with a large atelier at his disposal and numerous assistants and overwhelmed with commissions, enjoyed the full respect of his fellow-citizens. He was therefore called upon to arbitrate once more, this time in a lawsuit between Francesco di Giorgio Martini and Neroccio di Bartolomeo. He married twice. He died in 1481. E. Carli thinks he was a pupil of the Master of the OSServanza. Berenson and Brandi identify him with the Master himself and consider him to be a pupil of Sassetti.

He appears never to have left Siena and to have remained indifferent to, or ignorant, of the currents which agitated Florentine painting at the time.

Documented works:


Polyptych of St. Blaise. Signed and dated 1445. With predella. Provenance, the Church of
San Biagio, Scrofiano, near Siena, at present in the Pinacoteca, Siena.

Four predella-panels which formerly formed part of a large altarpiece, now disappeared, commissioned for the Chapel of the Palazzo Communale, in 1451. The four panels, identified by J. Trübner, are now divided between the Lindenau Museum, Altenburg (two panels) and the Vatican Museum. On the document which enabled us to identify the panels it was laid down that the predella scenes were to reproduce those that the Lorenzetti had painted on the façade of Santa Maria della Scala.

The Virgin appearing to Pope Calixtus III. Commemorative panel from the Commune of Siena, now in the Pinacoteca, the date, 1456, given by the Padre della Valle (Letterl Senesi) is questioned nowadays (see biography).

Works attributed:

It is self-evident that the critics who identify Sano di Pietro with the Master of the Osservanza, attribute to him all, or some, of the works which the partisans of the latter ascribe to the author of the Osservanza triptych. In view of the absence of conclusive proofs in favour of either thesis, it has seemed preferable — as we have seen above — to classify the works in question as anonymous, and we shall not take them into account moreover in the attributions made to Sano.

Apart, then, from the series of works mentioned, the following are attributed to Sano di Pietro:

Two Sermons of St. Bernard, one On the Piazza del Campo, the other Before San Francesco of Siena. Graziani, the inventor of the Master of the Osservanza, ignores them. Those who attribute them to Sano — Brandi, Trübner, Pope-Hennessy — consider it possible to give them a date pre 1444. St. Bern-

ard's first sermon was given in point of fact in the year 1427, the second in 1431. Palazzo Communale, Siena.

St. Jerome. Brandi bases his proof of the identity of Sano di Pietro with the Master of the Osservanza on this picture. However, as he is straightforward enough to admit himself, the picture figured in the old catalogues of the Pinacoteca under the label of the School of Giotto (maniera giottesca). Pinacoteca Siena.


Annunciation to the Shepherds. Attribution widely accepted. Pinacoteca, Siena.

MATTEO DI GIOVANNI (c. 1433-1491, approx.)

Born at Borgo San Sepolcro circa 1433. In 1453 lived in Siena with a studio companion, Giovannii di Pietro. In 1457, along with another painter, he decorated a chapel of the Cathedral dedicated to St. Bernard. In 1462 he signed and dated an altarpiece for the Cathedral of Pienza. The documents show that it was he who painted the figures of St. Peter and St. Paul of the polyptych of Borgo, the centre of which is constituted by the Baptism of Christ by Piero della Francesca, now in London. In 1482, he painted two Massacres of the Innocents, one for the Church of Sant' Agostino of Siena, the other which served as a cartoon for the paving of the Cathedral. He made two other replicas later, one for the Church of St. Catherine, Naples, now preserved in the Museum of that town, and the other in 1491, for the Church of Santa Maria dei Servi, in Siena.
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