

GIOTTO AS A PRECURSOR OF THE RENAISSANCE

BY

Carolyn
VIRGINIA DUDLEY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During the fifteenth century in Florence, the work of Giotto was considered a major contributing factor to the revival of the arts. This attitude, a continuation of that reflected in the literature of the fourteenth century, is expressed throughout the literature of the Renaissance, while justification for such an attitude is manifest in the art.¹

It has become standard knowledge that Giotto was "reborn" in Masaccio and Michelangelo. Numerous writers mention the fact briefly, in passing, while the exact nature of this rebirth often remains unstated, or vaguely implied. It is, however, in the work of these two artists that the most concrete evidence is found of a Renaissance fulfillment of Giotto's early fourteenth-century artistic prophecy. After Masaccio, the artists of the Renaissance were provided with a more immediate prototype to which to turn for such Giottesque elements as a monumentality of figure design and a close integration of figures and setting. Thus, although many of these artists incorporated specific Giottesque motifs, it is difficult to ascertain whether these motifs were derived directly or indirectly from the art of Giotto himself. There is, however, at least one artist in the interim between Masaccio and Michelangelo who appears to have returned directly to Giotto for inspiration, and that is Piero della

Francesca. A study of the fresco cycles of Giotto in comparison with those of Masaccio, Piero della Francesca and Michelangelo will disclose the precise character of Giotto's contribution to the Renaissance.

Familiarity with the characteristics of the art of Giotto aids in the understanding of his fame as it was recorded by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century poets and writers, and of the nature of his influence upon fifteenth-century artists of Florentine background. A consideration of Giotto's most important known and extant productions, the fresco cycles found in the Arena Chapel in Padua and in the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence, reveals a constancy of artistic principles and a tenacity of aim and purpose throughout. The variables which arise in each of the cycles result from a manipulation and development of the principles of the constant.²

A work of art by Giotto is a strict concentration upon the essentials of a universal human drama. The entire composition contributes to the effect. Figures, setting, and all accessory details work together to create, artistically and psychologically, one harmonious image. First of all, the composition holds the attention on the front plane where the drama is unfolding. This is achieved in part through a unity of space and plane in which space-creating devices are tempered with a geometric pattern on the surface composed of figures, the architecture, and the other elements of the setting. In this way, the integrity of the flat wall surface

is retained.³ The figure and its action on the front plane is an interdependent part of the entire composition, that is, it is subordinated to the unity and order of the whole. The figure is plastically conceived and broadly modeled in order to establish its physical and moral presence. And yet, it is relatively generalized and immobilized so as not to draw too much attention to itself. In the same manner, action and emotion are timeless rather than specific, and the individual expression of any one figure, while it pervades the entire body, is moderated to become "the projection of an abiding inner state rather than that of a momentary impulse."⁴ The purpose of such a non-naturalistic treatment is to emphasize the essential meaning which lies behind the actions played out by human figures, while the result is to lay bare the transcendent spiritual implications. This is intensified and made possible by the close interrelation of content and form which reflects an overall controlling ideal and which creates an order and a stability "directly symbolic of an eternal, unshakeable world. Thus being is emphasized over doing, eternity over the moment, idea over fact."⁵

The variables occurring among the three chapels are due, in part, to such factors as the nature of the fresco cycle itself--the subject matter, the number of scenes, and the overall arrangement--and to Giotto's own development towards a greater subtlety of composition and a broader expanse of space. Nevertheless, any one scene by Giotto is a full embodiment of the principles of the constant as described

above. For example, The Death of St. Francis (Figure 1) in the Bardi Chapel involves more than just a convincing portrayal of human grief. The restraint of emotional expression, the clarity and order of composition, the interrelation of figure and background all work together to produce an ultimately stable and timeless image, a still, of a universal truth. A specific grief, that of the Franciscan friars felt at the death of their leader, St. Francis, has been transformed by Giotto into a depiction which is the epitome of grief itself. The observer experiences a certain sense of immediacy with the painted image. The figures are modeled in such a way as to communicate their existence as tactile, weighty substances. Emotional reactions are varied and profound and sufficient space is suggested by the box-like room. And yet, the illusion of visual reality stops short of an actual accessibility to the observer. A penetration into depth is stopped by the strong horizontal of the wall, while the figures are placed directly on the front plane, leaving no room for the possibility of spectator participation. In other words, although the figures do not appear to be crowded, there is only enough space to contain them and the few objects of the setting. Thus, the figures are secluded, isolated, within their own spatial reality. This sense of aloofness is further stressed by the fact that despite the natural attitudes of the figures, the whole is essentially static. The composition is organized in a symmetrical fashion around the horizontal line of the body of St. Francis. The shape

of the room--a longitudinally oriented rectangle bounded at each end by a vertically oriented rectangle--is repeated by the arrangement of the figures, and the painted scene can be seen in terms of a flat geometric grid. Each figure, each object and each decorative element conforms to this pattern which intensifies the unity of the whole, and thus contributes to the expression of timelessness.

As will be evident in the ensuing discussion, a comprehension of the full statement of Giotto's art is not necessary for a true appreciation of the achievements of the master. Various levels of appreciation are possible as demonstrated by the ideas recorded during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and these different levels are at least partially dependent on the ever-changing historical context. Giotto's most immediate admirers see him in relation to the Italo-Byzantine style which was prominent in Italy during the Dugento. Thus to them his art, which has moved towards nature and away from the dematerialized abstractions of Byzantine art, is "naturalistic" and "realistic." On the other hand, certain admirers viewing Giotto from the vantage point of the Renaissance and its advances in "naturalistic" depictions, are moved by the underlying ideal, spiritualizing, and larger-than-life qualities of his art.

CHAPTER II

LITERARY EVIDENCES IN THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

Comment upon the revival of painting brought about by Giotto was begun during the master's own lifetime. His art was praised for its "modern" aspects, for those elements which broke with the past, for its quality of renewal. Specifically, he was recognized for his new vision of the world and of life--for the value he placed upon humanity and reality, combined with a rational "measure." Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch are among the first to make mention of this "renewal" in Giotto's art.

Dante Alighieri refers to his contemporary, Giotto, in Purgatorio (c.1319), the second book of the Divine Comedy. Purgatorio is concerned with an upward struggle of souls toward freedom and salvation. It is a transitional realm between the remembrance of sin and the hope of virtue. Each of the nine terraces of Purgatorio contains a particular class of sinners, and Giotto is found among those atoning for the sin of pride.¹ Oderisi da Gubbio, an illuminator and one of the penitent proud, speaks to the living travellers:

O empty glory of human powers! How short the
time its green
endures upon the top, if it be not overtaken by
rude ages! Cimabue thought to hold the field
in painting, and now Giotto
hath the cry, so that the fame of the other is obscured.
Even so one Guido hath taken from the other the glory
of our

tongue; and perchance one is born who shall chase both
from the nest.

Earthly fame is naught but a breath of wind, which
now cometh
hence and now thence, and changes name because it
changes direction.² (Appendix 1)

Karl Vossler points out that in this world of purgatory where all individuality seems to be obscured some individuals do, slowly and laboriously, become distinguishable. "All the artists, all the famous painters and poets, Oderisi d'Agobbio, Franco Bolognese, Cimabue, Giotto, Guido Guinizelli, Guido Cavalcanti, are mentioned here without merit of their own, dropped to the level of moralizing illustrations. That which lasts and endures is not the artists, but the art. The cause is greater than the individuals. So two motifs are intertwined in this canto: foolish pride, crushed by penance, human glory outshone by the splendour of its source."³

To Vossler, then, Dante has chosen Giotto as an example perhaps because he recognizes the greatness of the source of his pride, because he sees a positive value in the art of the man. On the other hand, the passage might be interpreted as a more or less negative comment on the transitory nature of fame alone, with no reference to the worth of the art itself. Millard Meiss supports this in his statement that "Dante was concerned first of all with reputation and renown, not with problems of criticism and value."⁴ In any case, Dante does acknowledge that the art of Giotto is at present in popular demand and that it has replaced Cimabue's in that respect. Cesare Gnudi interprets this as a precise understanding on

the part of Dante of Giotto's historical position vis à vis Cimabue. Each artist is outstanding and warrants mentioning, but Cimabue now belongs to the past, while Giotto is of the present, the new civilization.⁵ Also, many believe a warm friendship existed between the two men, and interpret Dante's mention of Giotto as a celebration of the artist.⁶

In all probability, Giotto and Dante, both Florentines in the public eye, were at least acquainted, and a case can be made for an actual friendship between the two men. Benvenuto da Imola⁷ (whose dates are c.1338-1390 and who thus did not know Dante personally) wrote a commentary on the Divina Commedia in which he makes brief biographical references to the state of friendship between Giotto and Dante: "Dante praises Giotto for his artistic skill. He does this because he was a fellow citizen, because his works deserved this praise, and because he was a friend." Benvenuto also records that Dante went to Padua while Giotto was there and not only watched him paint but also was received by Giotto with great honor and taken to his house.⁸ This information of Benvenuto's follows immediately after his mention of Dante's passage concerning Cimabue and Giotto, and it would seem to be purely objective information on the part of Benvenuto used to amplify and lend credence to Dante's reasons for including Giotto in the manner that he does.⁹ That is, supported by the factual material available, Benvenuto interprets the passage as a praise of Giotto on the part of Dante himself rather than in light of his own opinion. For, as will be

shown below, Benvenuto's own opinion is rather negative toward Giotto. (Appendix 10)

Further evidence of a friendship between Dante and Giotto is found in Vasari's life of Giotto in which he states no fewer than three times that Dante was an "intimate friend" of Giotto's.¹⁰ He also reports that the two were together in Ravenna: "Meanwhile, as it had come to the ears of Dante that Giotto was in Ferrara, he so contrived that the latter was induced to visit Ravenna, where the poet was then in exile, and where Giotto painted some frescoes..."¹¹

Most of the evidence, varied as it is, seems to point to the fact that although used as a "moralizing illustration," the mention of Giotto by Dante in his Purgatorio is not to be interpreted as derogatory, but rather as a positive recognition by the poet of this artist's standing at the time. This interpretation is further supported by the mention of Guido in the verses following those in which Giotto's name appears: "Even so one Guido hath taken from the other the glory of our tongue; and perchance one is born who shall chase both from the nest."¹² Both Benvenuto da Imola¹³ and Vossler¹⁴ identify this Guido as the poet Guido Cavalcanti, definitely known to have been a close friend of Dante's¹⁵ and it is highly unlikely that Dante would mention him in a detrimental manner.¹⁶

Giovanni Boccaccio, writing around the middle of the century and thus after Giotto's death, praises the artist in at least three of his literary works. The most significant

is the well known eulogy found in the Decameron of about 1350-52 in which Boccaccio presents an awareness of a renewal or "renaissance" caused by Giotto in the art of painting. The passage serves as a form of introduction to the artist in the Fifth Tale of the Sixth Day, an amusing story in which "Messer Forese da Rabatta and Master Giotto, the painter, returning from Mugello, laugh at each other's mean appearance."

The other was Giotto, whose genius was of such excellence that with his art and brush or crayon he painted anything in Nature, the mother and mover of all things under the perpetual turning of the heavens, and painted them so like that they seemed not so much likenesses as the things themselves; whereby it often happened that men's visual sense was deceived, and they thought that to be real which was only painted. Now he who brought back to light that which for many centuries has lain buried under errors (and thus was more fitted to please the eyes of the ignorant than the minds of the wise), may rightly be called one of the shining lights of Florentine glory.¹⁷ (Appendix 2)

Giotto revived classical art by turning to nature for inspiration, by not just imitating but by presenting "the very face of nature herself."¹⁸ He brought art down to earth with a palpable, solid and measurable style which thus appealed to man's understanding and comprehension--to "the minds of the wise"--as opposed to appealing to "the eyes of the ignorant" through a dematerialized, celestial beauty. Boccaccio repeats this equation of the art of Giotto with that of antiquity by stating in his Genealogie deorum (XIV, 6) that Giotto is the equal of Apelles.¹⁹

A third mention of Giotto by Boccaccio is found in the poem Amorosa visione, Chapter Four, in which he once again refers to "nature" in connection with Giotto's "skill." A room is described as having walls painted with more skill than could be done by any painter "except Giotto, from whom fair Nature hid no secret."²⁰ (Appendix 3)

Francesco Petrarca is a third great poet of Giotto's time who finds Giotto and his art worthy of acclaim and who, like Boccaccio, refers to Giotto in diverse writings. Cesare Gnudi calls attention to the fact that Petrarch's highly cultured and aristocratic point of view is more congenial with the art of Simone Martini;²¹ and yet, Giotto and Simone Martini share Petrarch's highest esteem.²² In a letter to a friend he says: "I have known two painters, talented both, and excellent: Giotto of Florence, whose fame amongst the moderns is great, and Simone of Siena."²³ (Appendix 4) A similar comment upon Giotto's "modern" quality is found in Petrarch's Itinerarium syriacum, a small guidebook for a journey to the Holy Land, in which he advises one to see, while in Naples, the royal chapel where "this fellow-countryman of mine, the prince of painters of our era, left great monuments of his hand and genius."²⁴

Giotto is mentioned again by Petrarch in his Last Will of 1370, in which he bequeaths to the "great princely patron of the last period of his life,"²⁵ Francesco da Carrara, Lord of Padua, the only thing worthy of him, a painting by Giotto:

First, then, to my aforesaid magnificent Lord of Padua, since he neither, by the grace of God, is in need of anything nor have I anything else worthy of him, I bequeath my panel or icon of the blessed Virgin Mary, a work of the eminent painter Giotto, which was sent to me by my friend Michele di Vanni /degli Albizzi/ of Florence. The ignorant do not understand the beauty of this panel but the masters of art are stunned by it. I bequeath this icon to my said lord in order that the blessed Virgin herself may intervene with her son Jesus Christ on his behalf.²⁶ (Appendix 5)

"The ignorant do not understand the beauty of this panel but the masters of art are stunned by it." This statement is almost identical to that of Boccaccio in the Decameron and it would seem to indicate that Petrarch also understood and fully appreciated the subtlety with which Giotto's human drama is conveyed not just to the emotions, but to the rational comprehension of the observer as well. Giotto, for him, was "modern" not only in relationship to what came before him, but also in comparison with his Sienese contemporary, Simone Martini. And because of this, Giotto was worthy of the title "prince of painters" of Petrarch's era.

A contemporary historian, Giovanni Villani, also presents an awareness of Giotto's supremacy in painting. Like others of his time, Villani bases his judgment on a comparison between the art of Giotto and the previous Byzantine art. It is for this reason that he ascribes the supremacy of Giotto to his realistic and natural renderings, and he thereby reaffirms the statements made by both Boccaccio and Petrarch. In his Cronica of Florence (1300-1348) Villani includes in the events of the year 1336 (stile fiorentino) the commencement

of the building of Santa Reparata's campanile, Giotto's role in this, and his death on the 8th of January. Villani adds to these facts the statement that Giotto was "the foremost master of painting to be found in his day, who depicted most naturally every figure and action."²⁷ (Appendix 6)

Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch and Giovanni Villani reflect in their writings the earliest reactions to the art of Giotto, reactions of Giotto's own generation and of that immediately following. A similar response to Giotto's originality is maintained and recorded in the later years of the fourteenth century by Franco Sacchetti, Filippo Villani and Cennino Cennini who thereby extend the tradition into the fifteenth century.

Towards the end of the fourteenth century, Giotto figures in the Trecento novella of Franco Sacchetti (1330-35 to c.1400). The work is a collection of three-hundred tales chronicling the lives and manners of Sacchetti's middle-class contemporaries. As the author himself says, these Trecento novella include "'all those tales, both old and new, which I have heard, and also some things which I myself did behold and was present at, and some which did happen unto me.'"²⁸

He takes care to remain true to nature in his selection and presentation of "the most curious, amusing, and original aspects of the daily life of his own times, and especially that of his own city," Florence.²⁹ His aim in this was not to gain literary merit, but rather "'to mingle a little

gaiety with the sadness and weariness of life,"³⁰ writing as he did during a period of war and plague.

Included among the characters used in these tales are actual historical figures, such as Giotto, who emerge as living personalities. As Gnudi says, "more than any other writer, Sacchetti echoes in his novelle the popularity surrounding Giotto's name, his figure as a man and his work."³¹ Two of the tales are concerned with amusing incidents directly involving Giotto,³² while a third alludes to his historical position, as an artist, at the time. In the latter, tale number CXXXVI, Giotto is mentioned in a conversation among artists:

In the city of Florence, which hath always been rich in extraordinary men, there lived formerly certain painters and other masters who were employed at a place outside the city, which is called San Miniato a Monte... When they had dined with the Abbot and had eaten well and drunk well, they began a discussion, and amongst other questions, one whose name was Orcagna...asked who was the greatest master of painting, not reckoning Giotto.³³ (Appendix 7)

The answers to this question were varied, but no one questioned that Giotto was the greatest master; thus, he had assumed, or continued to hold, the undisputed position of artist without equal.

Filippo Villani, a second historian of the century and nephew of Giovanni, wrote his Liber de civitatis florentiae famosis civibus in which he describes in brief fashion famous citizens of Florence, including artists. He is credited as being the first historian to raise the artist from anonymity

to a place of honorable recognition.³⁴ The section on Giotto emphasizes once again his quality of renewal in the art of painting. Villani states that Giotto was "not only equal to the ancient painters, but superior in skill and genius. He restored painting to its ancient dignity and to a great name, as appears in many works, especially in the doorway of the church of St. Peter's of Rome, a marvellous work in mosaic, and with great painted art."³⁵ Villani also praises Giotto as a man of learning and as the instigator of an emulation of nature which was continued by his followers. (Appendix 8)

A final item of evidence which testifies to the fame and worth of Giotto's art during the fourteenth century is Cennino Cennini's Il libro dell'arte (or The Craftsman's Handbook), written somewhere between 1396 and 1437.³⁶ This is perhaps the most important fourteenth-century source as regards the influence which the mention of Giotto's painting might have had on fifteenth-century painters. Cennino, an artist himself, was an artistic descendant of Giotto and the inheritor of traditional Giottesque workshop practices. (He was a pupil of Agnolo Gaddi who was the son of Taddeo Gaddi, himself the godson and disciple of Giotto.) However, no works by him exist today. Cennino's treatise, a guide for those who wish to enter the painting profession, discusses the materials and the practice of painting and contains within it both medieval and modern elements. For example, Cennino stresses the importance of learning from nature, and he also presents the first discussion of bodily proportions found in

a treatise on art since antiquity; and yet, his own knowledge of anatomy is medieval.³⁷ However, he is the first since the classical era to recognize artistic imagination, and this, when added to technical skill, "enables an artist to represent as reality that which is an imitation of nature."³⁸

Cennino's specific references to Giotto include instructions on how to lay in a face in buon fresco, the best method being that which Giotto used.³⁹ More important, however, is his recognition of the precise nature of Giotto's contribution to painting. He says in his introductory chapter that "Giotto changed the profession of painting from Greek back into Latin, and brought it up to date; and he had more finished craftsmanship than anyone has had since."⁴⁰ In other words, Giotto translated the art of painting from the contemporary Byzantine style into a Latin, or classicizing style, which he synthesized with his own particular manner, making it modern and thereby forming an Italian or national art.⁴¹ (Appendix 9)

Thus, Giotto's fame and popularity persisted throughout the fourteenth century. The praise recorded by the writers of this century remains constant, although the points of view vary. Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch represent the somewhat elite views of upper class "humanist" scholars, while Sacchetti is spokesman for the more commonplace middle class or bourgeois point of view. The two Villani voice their opinions as historians, and Cennino gives his as an artist. More specifically, however, Giotto is considered by these writers as the "initiator of a new era, the renovator of

painting, the creator of a new and modern art," and as such he is handed on to the Renaissance.⁴² Petrarch values the "modern" aspects of Giotto's art, while Boccaccio and Filippo Villani define this modernity as a restoration of the classical ideal. This is achieved, as Boccaccio says, by an imitation of nature, a practice whose significance and value is also recognized by Giovanni Villani. And finally, Cennino Cennini sees Giotto's style as the creation of a new Italian art.

There was, however, one dissenting opinion among the writers of the fourteenth century. It seems to be the only one of its kind found in either the fourteenth or fifteenth century and it has been suggested that it was caused by the change in artistic taste around the mid-fourteenth century. The writer in question is Benvenuto da Imola who wrote the above-mentioned commentary on the Divine Comedy. As Millard Meiss says, "he upheld the reputation and superiority of Giotto, but qualified it with what, in light of earlier and later opinion, amounts to heresy."⁴³ It has been shown in discussing Dante that Benvenuto did indeed uphold "the reputation and superiority of Giotto" with respect to his interpretation of Dante's opinion of the artist. However, he adds the following statement: "'Giotto still holds the field because no one subtler than he has yet appeared, even though at times he made great errors in his paintings, as I have heard from men of outstanding talent in such matters.'"⁴⁴

(Appendix 10)

This statement, although contained in the same passage, is not an actual part of Benvenuto's discussion of the verses in which Dante mentions Giotto. That is, it is not an interpretation of Dante's words, but rather it is Benvenuto's own opinion, which Meiss feels is a reflection of "current criticism of Giotto's pictorial style." This criticism testifies to the change in artistic style and taste taking place about the middle of the fourteenth century, a change which was, in Meiss' terms, "anti-Giottesque" to some degree.⁴⁵ Theodor Mommsen agrees with Meiss and explains that this criticism did not affect Petrarch's praise of Giotto voiced in the latter half of the fourteenth century because his viewpoint was not from Florence, but from Padua where the Giottesque tradition was still quite active and strong.⁴⁶ Also, Boccaccio's eulogy in the Decameron of 1350-52 is, as Meiss explains, too early to have been affected by the criticism, for the change in taste in Florence had only just begun.⁴⁷

Sacchetti, however, is not explained. His previously cited tales reflect the popularity which the figure of Giotto inspired in the second half of the fourteenth century, while Orcagna's statement, referred to above, reveals the esteem with which artists of the time regarded Giotto. Meiss on the other hand uses this same discussion at San Miniato al Monte, with an additional remark made by Taddeo Gaddi, to substantiate his premise of an anti-Giottesque change in taste. The conversation, as recorded by Sacchetti, continues as follows:

Orcagna...asked who was the greatest master of painting, not reckoning Giotto. One said it was Cimabue, and another said Stefano, another Bernardo, and another Buffalmacco, and one mentioned one man and one mentioned another. Taddeo Gaddi, who was of the company, said: "Of a certainty there have been many very great painters who painted in a manner which is impossible for human nature to surpass, but this art hath become rare, and is dying out more every day."⁴⁸ (Appendix 7)

This passage is usually interpreted "merely as a sign of pessimism and inferiority," as an "indication of decline,"⁴⁹ while Meiss sees it as a failure of Giotto's protégés to understand the new and different art of a younger generation. Meiss dates the discussion to the late 1350's, at which time Taddeo Gaddi is the only one of Giotto's immediate disciples still alive. Thus, as Meiss says, his artistic inclinations are opposed to those of Orcagna, for example, and he fails to recognize the greatness of Orcagna. "The profound difference of the art of this painter [Orcagna] and his contemporaries from that of Giotto and his successors in the earlier part of the century...implies not only that people with a taste formed in the earlier Trecento might fail to understand Orcagna, but also that some members of Orcagna's generation might feel less enthusiastic than their elders about Giotto."⁵⁰ And yet Meiss himself says, with reference to the discussion recorded by Sacchetti, that "we should expect the assembled masters to accept the preeminence of Giotto without question."⁵¹ If, as he believes, the conversation took place in the late 1350's, then, as he points out, all those present, with the exception of Taddeo Gaddi, would have been of Orcagna's generation.

There is, however, no criticism of Giotto. Also, Benjamin Rowland, Jr., in his review of Meiss's book, discerns a definite influence from Giotto in the art of Orcagna.⁵² Therefore, although a quite convincing case can be made for a change in artistic taste and style around the middle of the fourteenth century (as not only Taddeo Gaddi's statement but also the art of the time would seem to indicate), nevertheless, despite Benvenuto's remark, a definite and widespread anti-Giottesque attitude cannot be convincingly substantiated. Thus, the supremacy of Giotto's name emerges virtually intact out of the fourteenth century and as such is passed on to the fifteenth century.

The fifteenth century introduces a great many innovative artists--painters, sculptors and architects alike--who contribute to a new artistic vocabulary. Nonetheless, numerous writers of this century continue to mention Giotto in connection with this rebirth of the arts. As in the fourteenth century, these writers present a wide variety of points of view, and although this study concentrates specifically on artists who have commented upon Giotto, it must be noted that the artist-writers were not alone in perpetuating Giotto's fame. Despite the artistic "advancements" of their own age, other writers such as historians, poets and statesmen share the artists' high opinion of Giotto's contributory role in the Renaissance. For example, the Florentine humanist Matteo Palmieri says the following in Della vita civile, written in the 1430's:

Where was the painter's art until Giotto tardily restored it? A caricature of the arts of human delineation! Sculptures and architecture, for long years sunk to the merest travesty of art, are only today in process of rescue from obscurity; only now are they being brought to a new pitch of perfection by men of genius and erudition.⁵³
(Appendix 11)

These words of Palmieri's indicate an awareness not only of a "renaissance" of the arts, but also of the fundamental importance of Giotto's part in it. Due to Giotto, the art of painting was the first to be restored, and it was not for another century that sculpture and architecture achieved the same status.

Among the artists of the fifteenth century who discuss or mention Giotto in their writings are Lorenzo Ghiberti, Leon Battista Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci and Giorgio Vasari. Although none of these artist-writers actually incorporates a "Giottesque" conception into his style, nevertheless it is these masters who remain the spokesmen for their fellow artists with whom they have most likely exchanged influences. Since these men, as artists, are not directly involved with the art of Giotto, it might be said that, as literary men, they merely repeat tradition and praise Giotto only because they think they should. However, there is found in their writings a definite understanding of the art of Giotto, and this understanding, which either reflects or is passed on to the work of their fellow artists, helps in keeping alive the memory of Giotto, not as a myth, but as a painter whose innovations remain of significant value for the artists of

the fifteenth century. In the following discussion, a presentation of Giotto's place in the writings of the artist-writers is followed by a closer analysis of each judgment and its worth in light of the comprehension of Giotto's art which instigated it.

Ghiberti, in I commentari (about 1450,) devotes some special attention to Giotto. After presenting in the First Book an account of ancient art, he turns in the Second Book to a discussion of the lives and works of Trecento artists which is climaxed by his own autobiography. As Krautheimer says: "Ghiberti's autobiography is a highly personal document, an attempt to give an account of his work and to see himself as one of the artists who, beginning with Giotto, had contributed to the birth of a new art, as one who carried on the work of his artistic ancestors and as the crowning figure in the development."⁵⁴ Giotto, the first artist mentioned in Book Two, revived art and introduced the modern era of which Ghiberti himself is the summit. Ghiberti's passage on Giotto begins with the familiar legend of the young Giotto, who, while tending his flock on the hillside, would draw sheep from nature. Cimabue passes one day, sees him drawing a sheep, is impressed, and takes the boy home with him to be his pupil. Ghiberti continues with the following praise, which is reminiscent of that accorded Giotto in the fourteenth-century:

Giotto made himself great in the art of painting. He brought about the new art and abandoned the crudity of the Greeks; he stood out above all others in Tuscany and executed very excellent works, especially in Florence and in many other

places. Many of his pupils became as learned as the ancient Greeks. Giotto saw in art that which others failed to perceive and add to; he introduced natural art, and with it gentleness, never overstepping the measures. He was most accomplished in all the arts, and he invented and discovered many doctrines which had been buried for nearly 600 years.⁵⁵ Nature was not stingy in granting him talent...⁵⁵ (Appendix 12)

He then presents what is ostensibly a complete catalogue of Giotto's works.

Alberti's mention of Giotto is of a different kind, for he uses a specific work by Giotto to illustrate a point. Giotto is referred to by Alberti in Della pittura (of 1435-36), a work which is considered the first modern treatise on the theory of painting.⁵⁶ In this treatise, Alberti approaches painting on both stylistic and scientific grounds, using antique painters and antique works of art to re-enforce his theories. A work by Giotto is the only non-antique example used in the entire treatise. The composition of his mosaic in Rome, the Navicella, is singled out as fulfilling Alberti's ideals concerning a variety of expression through gesture.⁵⁷

For Leonardo, Giotto's worth resides in his direct study of nature. This practice is discussed and praised by Leonardo in a passage found in the Codex Atlanticus, a bound volume of notebook writings of about 1483-1518. The passage is a comment on the fact that "painting declines and deteriorates from age to age, when painters have no other standard than painting already done."

Hence the painter will produce pictures of small merit if he takes for his standard the pictures of others, but if he will study from

natural objects he will bear good fruit. As was seen in the painters after the Romans who always imitated each other and so their art constantly declined from age to age. After these came Giotto the Florentine who--not content with imitating the works of Cimabue his master--being born in the mountains and in a solitude inhabited only by goats and such beasts, and being guided by nature to his art, began by drawing on the rocks the movements of the goats of which he was keeper. And thus he began to draw all the animals which were to be found in the country, and in such wise that after much study he excelled not only all the masters of his time but all those of many bygone ages. Afterwards this art declined again, because every one imitated the pictures that were already done...⁵⁸ (Appendix 13)

According to the same passage, it is only with Masaccio that art reaches its next high point. Thus, using the study of nature as his criterion, Leonardo establishes "the graph of history's rise and fall: Antiquity--Medieval Mannerism--Giotto--Fourteenth-century Mannerism--Masaccio."⁵⁹

The statements made by Vasari in his Lives reflect previously recorded information and popular tradition, combined with the results of his own observation. His life of Giotto, therefore, seems to be a summary of what others have said before him, enhanced by his own enthusiasm and emphasis on particular qualities. Once again, Giotto is esteemed for his restoration of art through the study of nature:

Giotto, seeing that he alone--although born amidst incapable artists, and at a time when all good methods in art had long been entombed beneath the ruins of war--yet, by the favor of Heaven, he, I say, alone succeeded in resuscitating art and restoring her to a path that may be called the true one. And it was in truth a great marvel, that from so rude and inapt an age, Giotto should have had strength to elicit so much, that the art of design, of which the men of those days had

little, if any, knowledge, was, by his means, effectually recalled to life.⁶⁰ (Appendix 14A)

Giotto...became so good an imitator of Nature, that he totally banished the rude Greek manner,-- restoring art to the better path adhered to in modern times...⁶¹ (Appendix 14B)

Giotto has indeed well merited to be called the disciple of nature rather than of other masters; having not only studiously cultivated his natural faculties, but being perpetually occupied in drawing fresh stores from nature, which was to him the never-failing source of inspiration.⁶² (Appendix 14C)

Vasari also presents Giotto's work in the form of an annotated list, parts of which are referred to in Chapter III and elsewhere.

Thus, as the preceding has shown, despite new advancements in art which might have deposed Giotto from the undisputed position of first place, his fame remains throughout the Renaissance--his fame as the first renovator of painting which, as Gnudi says, is "surrounded by a mythical, legendary halo. His art becomes more remote in time, but retains all its power of suggestion..." In this period of the Renaissance which is "characterized by the worship of Nature and Antiquity, Giotto is celebrated as the man who first brought art back to Nature and to the grandeur of Antiquity."⁶³

Gnudi, however, believes that the historians and the artists of the Renaissance did not perfectly comprehend Giotto's art, that they did not have a full historical perspective, and therefore they were only able to observe that Giotto was from the past--already distant and masked by a mysterious and impenetrable aloofness. He was appreciated

for his move toward reality, he was proclaimed as the "supreme innovator" of a new art; but at the same time, he was surrounded with "the halo of a legend, made...remote and established...as a myth."⁶⁴ To illustrate his point, Gnudi goes back to Ghiberti, Leonardo and Vasari and shows how a legendary and mysterious web is woven by their introductory remarks on Giotto. It is true that all three, using impressive pronouncements, begin with the story of the young boy out in the fields drawing from Nature.⁶⁵ And Vasari further adds: "It may with truth be called a miracle, that Giotto attained to so great an excellence of manner, more particularly when we consider that he acquired his art in a certain sense without any master."⁶⁶ Thus, Gnudi claims, by the time of Vasari, Giotto not only embodies a myth, but also a miracle--the miracle of art learned from Nature without a teacher. The historical links which were still perceived by Cennino Cennini are now lost, and Vasari sees only a direct contrast between the art of Giotto and that of his master, Cimabue.⁶⁷

It seems that Gnudi has misjudged, and his conclusions can be at least partially disproved. It is true that the legendary quality is present, to a certain extent, in the writings of the three men cited. They are recording a great Italian, a great Florentine, for posterity, and eulogies tend to be grandiose glorifications, rather than critical analyses.⁶⁸ Therefore, Giotto appears as a legend when one quotes Ghiberti, Leonardo and Vasari out of context; but, Gnudi goes no further and remains short-sighted. For, it is by going further that

different aspects open up, and it is discovered that these men are not giving the unqualified praise characteristic of a myth. It remains true that artists and writers in the fifteenth century were removed from Giotto's own environment, from his cultural heritage and society. Thus, the full significance of Giotto's art can be found only with Giotto himself. But, those aspects of his art which go beyond considerations of time and place do seem to be comprehended by certain fifteenth-century artists and writers. Stylistic evidences which tend to deny the statement that Giotto was merely an uncomprehended myth during the Renaissance are dealt with further on. Literary evidences can be found with the artist-writers already mentioned, first of all with Ghiberti.

By reading the whole of Ghiberti's I commentari, particularly the second book in which he presents his own view of the history of "modern" art, a new understanding of his opinion is gained. It has already been pointed out that Ghiberti credits Giotto alone with having begun a new era. In this, as Krautheimer says, "he does not accept judgments handed down from earlier generations: Cimabue and Duccio are not the ancestors of Trecento painting, but are representative of Romanesque-Byzantine art, of the maniera greca, and thus are opposed to Trecento principles."⁶⁹ This, however, is not a blind adoration of Giotto to the exclusion of all else, nor does Ghiberti permit his judgment to be colored by local prejudices. "Giotto, Florentine though he is, is treated

with respect, but somewhat coolly."⁷⁰ Rather, he prefers the Sienese artists, especially Ambrogio Lorenzetti, whose skill, he feels, surpassed that of all others, and who is the only artist to receive his unrestrained and lavish praise.⁷¹ And, he prefers Ambrogio Lorenzetti despite the fact that the Sienese themselves ranked Simone Martini as the best. Thus, Ghiberti remains unswayed by legend and approaches the history of art with a lucid and unbiased judgment."⁷² He recognizes the value of Giotto's quality of renewal, of his return to "natural art", and at the same time he understands the significance of the stylistic differences between Giotto and his personal preference.⁷³

Leonardo states that after Giotto, "art declined again, because every one imitated the pictures that were already done."⁷⁴ Therefore, he understands that Giotto's art contains an essential quality which is based on his observation of nature and which is lost in a mere transcription of stylistic motifs.

And finally, Vasari, in his life of Cimabue and in the introduction to Part II of the Lives, gives proof that he is more aware of historical links, and of the relationship between the art of Cimabue and Giotto than Gnudi indicates. For example, at one point Vasari says that it was first through the efforts of Cimabue, and then by the help of Giotto that the Byzantine style was "abandoned." He then outlines those stylistic elements in Giotto's art which present a closer approach to nature than is seen in the works of

his predecessors.⁷⁵ Once again, there is an understanding of the development of a new art, a new style. And Vasari is able to evaluate and highly praise Giotto's art despite the fact that he, like Ghiberti, placed his personal preferences elsewhere. He organized his Lives by dividing the artists into three parts or periods which extend from the revival of the arts in the late twelfth century, a period in which the arts were "very far from their perfection," to Vasari's own century in which perfection has been achieved.⁷⁶ As Einar Rud says: "In reading Vasari, one suspects that he had his difficulties. He had to achieve a balance between his intuitive admiration of the primitives, notably Giotto, and his outwardly inspired opinion. The originality and concentration of Giotto in fact held a great appeal for him, but that master's greatness did not fit properly into his scheme."⁷⁷ From the point of view of Vasari and his fellow artists, Giotto's "imperfections" should bar him from receiving any sort of enthusiastic appreciation, and yet Vasari is able to shed his prejudices in this instance and grant him just that.

It must be admitted, however, that Vasari speaks of Giotto's art in terms of a complete break with the Byzantine tradition, while Cennino Cennini understands it more as an absorption and then a translation of the Byzantine style. In that respect, as Gnudi points out, Cennino is in the position of having a more perfect comprehension of Giotto's art.⁷⁸ But, Gnudi does not take into account the possibility that Renaissance artists might have been influenced by Cennino's

treatise, which not only praises Giotto with a fairly critical awareness of the facts, but also encourages artists to look at Giotto's art for purposes of instruction.

Nor does Gnudi take into account the possible influence of Alberti's Della pittura, with its mention of Giotto devoid of a legendary halo. Alberti dedicates his work to five artists--Brunelleschi, Donatello, Ghiberti, Luca della Robbia, and Masaccio--who had been or were at the time involved with the artistic revolution in Florence.⁷⁹ The practice of these artists is the basis of Alberti's theory in Della pittura. Their progressive principles are the root of his own, and his aim, as stated by John Spencer, was to make this "new humanist art of Florence understandable and desirable for a larger group of artists and patrons."⁸⁰ After 1436, the impact of Della pittura can be seen in certain works of art, giving evidence of its almost immediate acceptance. Works by Domenico Veneziano, Fra Angelico, Uccello, Fra Filippo Lippi, Piero della Francesca and Ghiberti seem to illustrate Albertian theories,⁸¹ while further and perhaps stronger proof of acceptance can be found in later fifteenth-century treatises on the art of painting such as those by Filarete, Piero della Francesca and Leonardo.⁸² It remains a question, however, as to how much influence, if any, the mention of Giotto's Navicella (Figure 2) had. As it was previously pointed out, this is the only non-antique reference made in the work, and it is used because it effectively illustrates the principle that external gestures should portray a desired

emotion and thus reflect the inner workings of the mind. It also illustrates Alberti's requirement for a range and variety of emotions expressed through gesture. After citing a classical example, Alberti says:

Also praised is the ship depicted in Rome in which our Tuscan painter Giotto has placed eleven disciples, all moved by fear at seeing one of their companions walking upon the water. It is praised because each one expresses with his face and gesture a definite indication of his troubled mind, such that in each there are different movements and positions.⁸³ (Appendix 15)

Although there is no documentary evidence available as to possible influences this passage might have had on artists, Kenneth Clark believes that an influence can be seen in such a work as Uccello's Deluge. Besides the Albertian principles found in the scientifically arranged arks, and the general copiousness, variety and drama of the scene, Clark feels that Uccello may have been even more specifically influenced by Alberti's description of the Navicella, an example which portrays dramatic effects (involving a ship) with the range of emotion expressed through gesture.⁸⁴

This presents a rather tenuous proof that fifteenth-century artists may have been influenced by the Navicella, only because it is referred to in Alberti's Della pittura. It might be argued that artists would already be aware of Giotto and would not need this stimulus from Alberti to study Giotto. But, it might also be argued that those artists who were not originally attuned to progressive principles, nor to the essence of the Giottesque style (for example, Uccello

and Fra Angelico) would--if they were at all amenable to a change in style, in order to keep up with the times--most likely be influenced by Della pittura, and therefore, perhaps, by the Navicella, and through it, by Giotto. It might even be said that actually seeing the Navicella in Rome would not be necessary, but that the description given by Alberti, plus a new awareness as to the possibilities of the art of Giotto would be enough.⁸⁵ Also, drawings of the work must have existed.

There are two other pieces of evidence which seem to prove that the Navicella was at least popular during the fifteenth century, if not actually a direct influence. The first of these is the comment made by Vasari about the mosaic. His words reflecting Alberti in part, Vasari says it is "a truly wonderful work, and deservedly eulogized by all enlightened judges; and this not only for the merit of the design, but also for the grouping of the apostles, who labor in various attitudes to guide the boat through a tempestuous sea, while winds blow in a sail, which is swelling with a vivid reality... The praises universally bestowed by artists on the mosaic... were, without doubt, fully merited."⁸⁶

The second piece of evidence is the relief medallion in the Cathedral of Florence--a commemorative portrait of Giotto done by Benedetto da Maiano in 1490 (Figure 3). This medallion depicts Giotto, not as a painter, but as a mosaicist.⁸⁷ The only work in the mosaic medium known to be by Giotto is the Navicella.

The inscription accompanying this commemorative medallion will serve as a conclusion to this section dealing with the literary evidence of Giotto's fame during the Renaissance. It affirms the fact that Giotto's renown remained strong throughout the fifteenth century. As has been indicated, this renown goes beyond unqualified praise toward some degree of true comprehension. And, although the extent to which these literary sources directly influenced artists of the fifteenth century cannot be assessed, it can, nevertheless, be assumed that they exercised a considerable indirect influence. Referring to this late-fifteenth-century testimonial to Giotto, Vasari says: "By public decree, and by command of the elder Lorenzo de'Medici--of glorious memory, who bore him a particular affection, and greatly admired the talent of this distinguished man--his bust was placed in Santa Maria del Fiore."⁸⁸ Vasari goes on to say that Lorenzo asked Benedetto to execute the medallion, and he also asked the poet Angelo Poliziano to write the Latin inscription, which reads in translation:

I am he through whose merit the lost art of painting was revived; whose hand was as faultless as it was compliant. What my art lacked nature herself lacked; to none other was it given to paint more or better... But what need is there for words? I am Giotto, and my name alone tells more than a lengthy ode."⁸⁹ (Appendix 16)

CHAPTER III

ARTISTIC EVIDENCES IN THE RENAISSANCE

Introduction

The literary sources testify to Giotto's undiminished fame throughout the fifteenth century, and whereas the degree of influence exercised by these literary references remains undetermined, it must be recognized that through them a definite awareness of Giotto and his art is kept alive. Stylistic evidences give proof to this awareness on the part of Renaissance artists and through a stylistic analysis a more concrete assessment of a direct Giottesque influence can be determined. There are various ways of approaching the relationship between the art of Giotto and that of the Renaissance, and each manner of approach reflects a different aspect of the possible influences. First of all, there are those artists who, as pupils, belong to a direct line of descendants stemming from Giotto himself. The process of handing down Giottesque elements from generation to generation continued throughout the fourteenth century and up through the beginning of the fifteenth century. The result of this process is a distortion of the original Giotto, for these artists tend to reduce the Giottesque style to a set of conventional formulas which neglect and even negate the essential spirit and feeling of Giotto's art. They retain "neither his

restraint, nor his force, nor his concentration."¹ This distortion is also partly due to the introduction of certain International Style elements. Artists such as Agnolo Gaddi,² Lorenzo Monaco,³ and Masolino⁴ can be seen as belonging to this tradition.

A second approach considers those artists of the Renaissance proper who looked to Giotto for certain stylistic and compositional motifs. Like the pupil-descendants, these artists are mainly concerned with transcribing superficial Giottesque elements without delving to any great extent into the real significance behind these motifs. But, unlike their fourteenth and early fifteenth-century predecessors, these artists are involved with the "progressive" trends of the fifteenth century. Fra Angelico⁵ and Ghirlandaio⁶ are among the artists of this category.

It is the third manner of approach which proves most productive in an investigation of Giotto's true contribution to the Renaissance. This concerns those artists who exhibit an overall classical or monumental feeling together with specific Giottesque motifs. There is a problem, however, in assessing exactly how much of a direct influence the art of Giotto had in determining this style. It has often been termed a "Florentine" style. Giotto's "restoration" of art (or painting) might be considered the immediate instigation of the Florentine style. The fact remains, however, that certain elements of Giotto's art which are known as "Florentine" or "classical" were present elsewhere in Italy

and prior to Giotto: for example, in the art of the Pisani, Arnolfo di Cambio and Cavallini. This art could have been, and was, drawn upon as well.⁷ Also, Masaccio, who was directly influenced by the art of Giotto (see below) and who helped formulate the Florentine style early in the fifteenth century, exerted a considerable amount of influence on the artists who followed. Thus, much of what is Giottesque in the art of the Italian Renaissance stems directly from Masaccio and only indirectly from Giotto. Nonetheless, the writers of the Renaissance testify to the fact that, at the time, it was felt that the "new art" was dependant on Giotto. For example, Ghiberti states that "Giotto...brought about the new art,"⁸ and Vasari feels that Giotto "alone succeeded in resuscitating art and restoring her to a path that may be called the true one." He restored art "to the better path adhered to in modern times."⁹

Perhaps the question can better be approached from the standpoint of a specific regional temperament, which Giotto reinterpreted with a new intensity, and, in turn, passed on to the Renaissance. This is a theoretical approach with inconclusive results. It becomes more concrete when backed up with visual and documentary evidence found in the painting, and specifically the fresco cycles, of such Renaissance artists as Masaccio, Piero della Francesca and Michelangelo.

Monumental fresco painting is a form of artistic expression favored by the Tuscans and it is with this art that a

basis of comparison between Giotto and the Renaissance artists can best be established. Eve Borsook says concerning this art:

The nature of mural painting requires a broad vision. After the ancient Romans, it was the peculiar gift of the painters, sculptors, and architects of Tuscany to feel and to see in the large. What mosaics were to Venice, panel painting to Flanders, stained glass to France, murals were for more than two centuries to Tuscany. The very names of Giotto, Masaccio and Michelangelo have become synonymous with that grandiose outlook which gave to old Biblical stories and new civic and personal ideals an expression at once monumental yet humane.¹⁰

Therefore, it can be said that, as Tuscans, Giotto, Masaccio, Piero and Michelangelo were born into a tradition of monumental and grandiose modes of expression. An integral part of this monumentality of expression is a classicizing tendency by which a certain restraint and economy of means are exercised in the communication of a profoundly human message. Although the immediate (or earliest) influences acting upon all four of these artists were not strongly conducive to such a style and expression, nevertheless, something in the artistic sensibilities of these artists prompted them to look elsewhere for confirmation of their own predilections. As Giotto was the first painter of the modern era to fully work out the vocabulary of this tendency, it might be natural for Masaccio, Piero della Francesca and Michelangelo to turn to Giotto and study his solutions. And it seems that this was the case. It is true that these artists added to Giotto's solution the new advances which had been made in art during the intervening one hundred to two hundred years.

These advances are specifically technical ones (which may or may not be used to increase the illusion of reality): for example, anatomical articulation and bodily movement; the use of scientific perspective to depict a more coherent space and to relate the figure more convincingly to its setting; a more precise rendering of light and its effects on objects, and thus, a more sophisticated modeling in light and shadow. But, despite these advances, neither Masaccio, nor Piero, nor Michelangelo sacrifices Giotto's ability to depict a heightened reality, to extract the universal and essential qualities of a human moment. Nor do they sacrifice the all importance of Giotto's figure with its power to stimulate one's tactile consciousness,¹¹ nor his subordination of all details to a concentration on man himself. The influence from Giotto upon these artists is not uniform, however. Although each retains the essence of a Giottesque statement and indicates an understanding of the significance of Giottesque motifs, each concentrates on a different aspect of Giotto's style which conforms not only to his own personal inclinations but also (in the case of Masaccio and Michelangelo) to the artistic taste of the times. Thus, Masaccio combines a Giottesque figure style, composition and overall monumentality of expression with an illusion of earthly reality, while Piero and Michelangelo return to a Giottesque elevated, spiritualizing presentation; Piero through a manipulation of the total composition and Michelangelo through a concentration on ideal figures.

Giotto's frescoes in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence offer the most concrete basis for comparison between his art and that of the Renaissance. The reason for this lies first of all in the situation of these frescoes in a prominent church in the artistic center of Italy. It is suggested, or actually stated, in the visual and documentary evidence available, that Masaccio, Piero and Michelangelo studied these frescoes. Also, as Berti says, it was an "accepted fact that the late Giotto of frescoes in Santa Croce with their rich and mature pictorial complexity, constitutes the most advanced point reached by the Trecento in relation to what art was to become in the following century."¹² Because of their distance from Florence, it is harder to determine the influence of Giotto's Arena Chapel frescoes in Padua. Considering Piero and Michelangelo, both of whom travelled extensively, it is possible that they were familiar with this earlier fresco cycle. In the case of Masaccio, however, the Santa Croce cycles are the only frescoed works by Giotto which he could have studied, as it is believed that he did not leave Florence until 1428, at which time he went to Rome and died almost immediately.¹³

Both Ghiberti and Vasari mention four chapels in Santa Croce which were frescoed by Giotto.¹⁴ Besides the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels, there was a chapel of the Guigni family, and one of the Tosinghi and Spinelli families. Vasari indicates that the Guigni Chapel was dedicated to the Apostles, with "various scenes from the martyrdom of many of them." And

the Tosinghi-Spinelli Chapel was dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin, with scenes from the life of the Virgin: her birth, her marriage, the annunciation, the adoration of the magi, the presentation of Christ in the temple and the death of the Virgin.¹⁵ These two chapels offer possibilities of further influences which, however, remain lost and unknown, leaving only the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels for consideration. In listing these chapels and the scenes they contain, Vasari singles out the following for special attention: The Funeral of Saint Francis, The Feast of Herod, The Raising of Drusiana, and The Ascension of Saint John to Heaven.¹⁶ Perhaps Vasari's preferred choices are also those of the Renaissance artists. Concerning the Peruzzi Chapel, however, those artists, including Masaccio and Michelangelo, of a more monumental frame of mind are specifically influenced by the St. John the Evangelist cycle.¹⁷

The Art of Masaccio

In examining first the art of Masaccio, it becomes apparent that a consideration of the relationship between the art of Giotto and that of any fifteenth-century artist must go beyond the surface style. Rather, the whole conception behind the style must be considered, as well as the relationship of each artist to his own time. For example, on the surface, Masolino retains some stylistic qualities of Giotto; but when compared to the art of his contemporary, Masaccio, Masolino's art appears delicate and decorative and lacking

substance. A direct surface translation of Giotto's style has become anachronistic in the early fifteenth century; and, at the same time, it has lost the original meaning behind the style. On the other hand, Masaccio helped formulate the "new" style of the fifteenth century, using all of the philosophical changes and technical advances developed since Giotto. At the same time, he returns to the fundamentals of Giotto's conception which are not arrived at by transcribing the surface style, but by understanding the idea behind it. Thus, as is demonstrated by using specific examples, Masaccio and Giotto become similar in their conception of the human figure, in their use of space to organize and offset the figures, in their general strictness of composition, in their concentration on the essentials, and in their overall dignity, seriousness, grandeur and monumentality of presentation.

The reasons why Masaccio reverted one hundred years to the art of Giotto seem obvious on the one hand, but difficult to assess on the other. As was pointed out in the literary evidence, the fame of Giotto was strong throughout the fourteenth century and into the fifteenth century--a fame which persisted despite one recorded dissenting opinion and despite a change in artistic taste during the second half of the fourteenth century. No other artist received such extensive praise. In fact, the state of the artistic situation in the one hundred years after Giotto has been deplored by both modern writers and commentators of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Sacchetti quotes Taddeo Gaddi as saying

that after Giotto, the art of painting "has grown and continues to grow worse day by day."¹ Cennino Cennini says at the end of the fourteenth century that Giotto "had more finished craftsmanship than anyone has had since."² And Leonardo states that after Giotto art declined, until Masaccio appeared to re-revive the study of Nature.³ Thus, due to Giotto's unique position and fame as renovator of the art of painting, it seems inevitable that one would look to his art for inspiration. This, however, does not explain why it was Masaccio, who, after one hundred years of decadence, returned to Giotto. Even during this period of decline, artists copied Giotto's stylistic motifs; but it was Masaccio who first went beyond the formula to a deeper understanding of Giotto's intentions and thereby revived the essential teachings of his art.⁴

Antal explains Masaccio's reversion to the style of Giotto in terms of an upper bourgeois rationalism. Both Giotto and Masaccio are "products of those moments when the upper bourgeoisie exercised the greatest oligarchic power."⁵ Therefore, it is no accident that Masaccio's "restrained, exact, scientific and classicist style" should be a return to Giotto, and "particularly to his latest and most advanced works--the Peruzzi Chapel frescoes." For, "these represented the art of the proudest period in the earlier development of the upper class, when it did not yet feel itself menaced by the petty bourgeoisie."⁶ Although this theory may be a partial explanation, it cannot be accepted as it stands now;

for it does not take into account those artists who are not products of a period of strong upper bourgeois power, but who nevertheless express themselves in a manner stylistically similar to Giotto and Masaccio--for example, Michelangelo.⁷ One is left, therefore, with a vaguer idea of a classicizing temperament which seeks out the essence and the universal quality of human existence, in order to explain the affinity between Masaccio and Giotto.

The San Giovenale Triptych (Figure 4) of 1422--the earliest known work by Masaccio--indicates that from the very beginning, Masaccio studied and drew inspiration from Giotto's frescoes in Santa Croce. The throne of the Madonna in the triptych relates to the throne of the Sultan in Giotto's Trial by Fire (Figure 5) from the Bardi Chapel in its use of decorative inlay-work which defines and emphasizes its various parts. Also, the symbolic depiction of Obedience, one of the painted roundals on the ceiling of the Bardi Chapel, is a precedent for Masaccio's horizontal throne back which ends about mid-head level.⁸ This is used again by Masaccio in the Pisa Polyptych (Figure 6) and is a device which offsets the figure and aids in establishing a more convincing three-dimensional mass or bulk. As Berti says, "the head of the Madonna rises...above the back of the throne so that even the upper area of the arch [of the panel] is exploited and thereby rendered spatially meaningful by virtue of the penetration of a volume into it."⁹ The garments of Saint Juvenal (in the right panel, standing closest to the Madonna) seem to be

inspired by the color scheme of those of the Sultan, while the heads of the Saints in the left panel are similar to that of the Sultan. This applies particularly to Saint Bartholomew, who stands closest to the Madonna. It has also been pointed out that the Saints in Masaccio's triptych might have been derived from certain figures on the right of Giotto's Resurrection of Drusiana (Figure 7) in the Peruzzi Chapel. Specifically, the figure at the extreme right of Drusiana can be compared with Saint Juvenal.¹⁰

Thus, while Masaccio is formulating his style, he draws upon Giotto; but even after he has reached his mature style in the Brancacci Chapel, he continues to be aware of the value of Giottesque motifs readapted into his own terms. Masaccio's figure, like Giotto's, is a monumental one, enhanced by composition, setting, and essential seriousness and dignity of action. As Berenson says of Masaccio's figures: "Types, in themselves of the manliest, he presents with a sense of the materially significant which makes us realize to the utmost their power and dignity; and the spiritual significance thus gained he uses to give the highest import to the event he is portraying; this import, in turn, gives a higher value to the types, and thus, whether we devote our attention to his types or to his action, Masaccio keeps us on a high plane of reality and significance."¹¹

Like Giotto, Masaccio places a high value on the stimulation of one's tactile consciousness. His figures retain a strong sense of weight and mass, they are articulated only

enough to increase the reality of their physical presence. Therefore, Masaccio loses nothing of Giotto's grasp of the significant and the essential. The appearance of St. Peter in various scenes in the Brancacci Chapel can be related to Giotto's figures, who are physically immediate, and at the same time, powerful and imposing. For example, Giotto's figure of St. John the Evangelist in the scene of The Resurrection of Drusiana (Figure 7) seems to be a prototype for Masaccio's figure of St. Peter in such scenes as The Tribute Money (St. Peter paying the tax-collector, Figure 8) St. Peter Baptizing the Neophytes, (Figure 9), and The Raising of the Son of Theophilus (Figure 10).¹² Also, the same scene by Giotto contains the motif of three figures kneeling about St. John, in a semi-circle, "like buttresses," adding to the monumentality of the figure's presence by increasing the breadth of the presentation and expanding the solid base. This same motif is used by Masaccio with the three Carmelites kneeling around St. Peter in the Cathedra, situated on the right in the scene of The Raising of the Son of Theophilus.¹³

Another typical Giottesque motif which Masaccio adapts to his own style is that of a simple but crucial gesture passing between two figures. This gesture contains the meaning of the scene and creates a dramatic focal point. The resulting tension and energy stimulates and sets into motion secondary actions, gestures and unifying rhythms. Numerous examples of this can be found in the works of both Giotto and

Masaccio. In the Santa Croce frescoes it appears in the scenes of St. Francis Renouncing his Inheritance (the gesture between St. Francis and his father, with a telling expanse of wall separating the two, Figure 11) The Trial by Fire (the Sultan commands, St. Francis reacts, while the fire stands between, Figure 5) The Raising of Drusiana (the life-giving gesture passing between St. John and Drusiana, Figure 7) and The Ascension of St. John (St. John's outstretched hands are received by those of Christ above, Figure 12). Scenes in the Brancacci Chapel which contain this motif include: The Tribute Money (Christ giving and St. Peter receiving the command, and the paying of the tax-collector, Figure 8) The Distribution of the Alms (St. Peter pressing the alms into the hand of the woman, Figure 16) and The Raising of the Son of Theophilus (once again, a miracle passing between outstretched arms, Figure 10). Specifically, the Drusiana and Theophilus scenes are related in their use of a very similar "resurrection" gesture, as well as in the attitude of a man in the front row of the spectators who raises both hands in amazement.¹⁴

In executing the composition of the whole, the setting, and the relationship of the figures to the setting, Masaccio once again uses solutions which are similar to, and sometimes borrowed from, those of Giotto. The Tribute Money (Figure 8) respects Giotto's idea of carefully presenting the principal action, the dramatic core, in the foreground.¹⁵ It also follows Giotto's use of a simple and rugged background which both conforms to the figure type and is subordinated to the

imposing presence of the figures. The figures here command the landscape and the setting is arranged in such a way as to enhance the figures and the main actions. (For example, the vanishing point of the perspective system leads the eye toward the head of Christ.) Although there are no landscapes, as such, in the Bardi or Peruzzi Chapel frescoes, the idea remains the same. In addition, The Tribute Money depicts the familiar Giottesque motif of framing an important figure with an architectural structure while at the same time cutting off lesser figures with the same structure. The importance of St. Peter is emphasized by the rounded arch behind him, and the right side of this arch serves as a separation between St. Peter and the tax-collector. A similar idea can be seen in Giotto's Apparition at Arles, in which St. Francis is enframed and separated by a rounded arch (Figure 13).

The setting also intensifies the essential meaning in the scene of the Almsgiving (Figure 16). First of all, the manner in which the verticals of the architectural setting stress the figural composition is reminiscent of Giotto.¹⁶ Also, the central building is set obliquely so that a corner projects out, creating a line of separation, or a "hinge,"¹⁷ between St. Peter and the poor and causing an enlivening tension within the gesture passing between St. Peter and the woman. Giotto uses this same idea of a dramatic corner cutting through a central significant gesture in such scenes as St. Francis Renouncing his Inheritance (Figure 11) and The Raising of Drusiana (Figure 7). And finally, in the

Almsgiving scene, the device of a rounded arch to indicate an important figure is utilized once again. In this case, an arch does not enframe St. Peter, but rather it is placed above him, in the form of a window, comparable to the window placed above Zacharias in Giotto's Birth and Naming of St. John the Baptist (Figure 45).

A similar use of the "symbolic possibilities of the background" is found in the Expulsion of Adam and Eve (Figure 14), in which two small hills not only parallel the legs of the figures, but also relate to their physical and psychological states--one drops, alluding to the fall of man, while the other rises, suggesting that life will continue in a painful way.¹⁸

The entire composition of The Raising of the Son of Theophilus (Figure 10) incorporates motifs from scenes in both the Bardi and the Peruzzi Chapels; and, as parts of it were either redone or finished by Filippino Lippi, it offers interesting speculations as to the original idea of Masaccio. (Those parts by Filippino Lippi include most of the extreme left hand group, and the central group--extending from the forearm of St. Peter, through the group surrounding the boy and the boy himself, as far as the profile of the first Carmelite facing to the right.) Compositional elements which Masaccio has taken from Giotto's Funeral of Saint Francis (Figure 1) include: the division of the back wall into marbled panels, the organization into a box-like space which is bounded by two wings of buildings, and the unifying device

of the horizontal wall. It is not known whether or not Filippino finished the central portion according to the original plans of Masaccio, but, as Berti points out, there is reason to believe that a finished product entirely by Masaccio would have been different. For example, Filippino's isocephalic row of heads might have been less severe and monotonous if rendered by Masaccio, and the resurrected boy might have been set at a different angle. However, Berti feels that in any case the incident of the resurrection would have been a reworking, in modern terms, and in perspective, of Giotto's Raising of Drusiana. It has already been noted that he did use certain elements from this fresco: the figure of St. Peter, the man with hands raised in amazement (which is by Masaccio and not by Filippino), and the figures kneeling around St. Peter on the right.¹⁹

Thus, Masaccio's settings, both architectural and landscape, owe much to Giotto and despite a new use of space extended by means of architecture and landscape, nevertheless Masaccio fully retains Giotto's feeling for the pre-eminence of the figure, or man. As John White says of the Tribute Money (Figure 8) in the Brancacci Chapel: "The forms of nature give expression to the monumental calm of the majestic figures. Space surrounds them like the heavy-folded cloak of the apostle on the right. It has its own reality, its own existence. Yet its meaning lies within the figures it contains."²⁰ Also, the architecture in The Raising of the Son of Theophilus

defines but limits the space, while the scale and design are controlled so as not to detract from but rather to serve as a foil for the action of the scene.²¹

There is, however, one basic difference between the artistic conceptions of Giotto and Masaccio, a difference which is found in the treatments of both space and figures. Giotto is concerned with a reality which transcends the mundane existence of ordinary mortals. It is ultimately the symbolic or ideal reality of the spiritual world toward which one must aspire. Masaccio, on the other hand, is more concerned with the illusion of an earthly reality which relates more directly to the spectator. In the words of Philip Hendy, he "mastered the problem of re-creating the country around Capernaum in order that Christ and his disciples might walk the earth again."²² As has been shown, Masaccio depicts a heightened reality which has much in common with Giotto's art, but Masaccio never goes beyond a naturalistic and earthly realm in order to attain the pure and elemental reality of Giotto which lies behind everyday appearances. One way in which Masaccio's frescoed scenes become more readily accessible is through the dissolution of the flat wall surface achieved by a manipulation of space and linear perspective. Giotto (as will be explained more fully in the following section on Piero della Francesca) retains the integrity of the wall surface rather than extending the real space of the room into the painted space of the fresco, while Masaccio engages in an illusionism whereby the wall becomes a window

through which is viewed the pictorial scene.²³ Nothing stands between the spectator, the architectural frame and the pictorial scene. For example, the oblique perspectives in the scenes of the Almsgiving and Saint Peter Healing with his Shadow (on either side of the window in the Brancacci Chapel) converge toward each other in the area of the window, outside of the scenes themselves (Figures 15 and 16). These two external vanishing points, "without actually coinciding... give sufficient emphasis to the spectator's central placing as he stands, enclosed by the framework of the architecture, and he looks out into the depths beyond. The wall has melted, and reality and picture are one world to the imaginative eye."²⁴ Also, the Trinity fresco in Santa Maria Novella is treated as an illusory, trompe l'oeil chapel extending off the left aisle (Figure 17).

Masaccio, therefore, designs a space which relates directly to the spectator. The effect is aided by the placement of the horizon line at the same height as the heads of the figures within the scene, so that in essence spectator and figure are on the same level.²⁵ By these means, the spectator has the impression of actually participating in the action, unlike Giotto's spectator who may empathize with but never participate in the action which takes place on a plane higher than terrestrial reality.

The greater individualization of Masaccio's figures is an additional contribution to the difference between the two artists. The generalized figures of Giotto help keep the

observer somewhat aloof, whereas it is much easier to identify with the figures of Masaccio. Not only do they assume more natural attitudes within a more convincingly depicted space, due to technical advances in the rendering of anatomy and perspective, but also their facial and bodily features are more particularized. In fact, many of his figures are thought or known to be actual portraits. For example, specific figures have been identified by Berti (or at least recognized by him as contemporary personages) in such scenes as The Tribute Money, St. Peter Healing with his Shadow, and The Raising of the Son of Theophilus.²⁶ The lost Consecration fresco is reported to have had numerous portraits of high quality and convincing likeness.²⁷ And, although in the Trinity fresco (Figure 17) the symbolic scene is placed both spiritually and physically above the spectator, the donor portraits are on the same level as the spectator and they actually kneel outside of the illusionistic chapel, within the spectator's spatial realm. In conjunction with the inclusion of portraits, Masaccio's scenes often have strong connections with specific contemporary events²⁸ which would be a further means of directly relating the pictorial world to the spectator of the time.

Despite this difference, Giotto and Masaccio remain quite close in other respects, as has been demonstrated. And, it should be noted that Masaccio is presenting the highest level of existence realized by man on earth, and it is possible that he saw within the terrestrial realm the transcendent,

ideal realm of Giotto.²⁹ Masaccio's affinity with Giotto is especially apparent when his work is contrasted with that of his contemporary and fellow artist in the Brancacci Chapel, Masolino. For example, Masaccio's use of linear perspective not only achieves a new sense of illusionistic space, but it also maintains a Giottesque concentration on the essentials. All parts are organized so as to augment the central meaning which in every case is enacted by human figures. Masolino, on the other hand, uses linear perspective only to depict a unified space which neither adds to nor strengthens the narrative. In his scene of The Healing of the Lambe Man and the Resurrection of Tabitha (Figure 18), in the Brancacci Chapel, space is depicted for the sheer joy of depicting space and it has "no close connection with the action in the foreground."³⁰ The vanishing point of the perspective system is situated in the center of the composition, the standard practice, however, Masolino has divided the space into two separate scenes placed to the right and the left with the result that there is no narrative interest in the center despite the fact that the attention of the spectator is drawn to that area by the perspective lines. The eye falls upon a bare wall in the background, while two figures in contemporary costume fill the central area between the two scenes in the foreground. As Mesnil says, these young men "could pass for people going to the temple, but they have only an external and artificial connection with the subject; in reality they belong neither spiritually nor materially to the scene. But

the painter has placed these incidental figures at the center of the composition, near the point of view, at the very place where one's gaze is first led."³¹

Also, the scene on the right, The Resurrection of Tabitha by Saint Peter, differs significantly from Masaccio's handling of a miraculous event and by way of contrast reiterates the powerful effectiveness of a Giottesque/Masacciesque resurrection scene. In Masolino's depiction, rather than establishing a direct and intimate communication between the Saint and his subject, the two protagonists are separated from each other. St. Peter is placed outside and Tabitha inside an architectural structure, while the space between the two is broken by a pillar which is situated to the fore of the figures--that is, it stands between the spectator and the protagonists. This material object tends to distract the attention of the spectator and destroy any intimate and mystical bonds between St. Peter and Tabitha.³² Although the gestures of St. Peter and Tabitha are quite similar to those of St. John and Drusiana, Masolino, unlike Masaccio, does not capture the spirit and intent of Giotto's Resurrection of Drusiana.

The Art of Piero della Francesca

The results of an investigation into the possibilities of a direct influence from the art of Giotto upon that of Piero della Francesca are more problematic and less definitive than those in the preceding study of Masaccio. It can be assumed that while in Florence Piero was exposed to

certain Giottesque elements which had become a standard part of Florentine artistic expression; and he undoubtedly saw Giotto's frescoes in the four chapels in Santa Croce. But whether or not he consciously studied and drew elements from Giotto has remained uncertain. There is no documentary evidence which links Piero with Giotto, nor do the major art historians dealing with Piero connect him in any specific and positive way to Giotto. And yet there is a strong affinity between the art of these two men, an affinity involving both expression and modes of expression.

Both Giotto and Piero della Francesca go beyond the shifting and transitory appearances of the natural world in their desire to express the unchanging, universal aspects of human existence. Through selection and reduction they create an ideal and eternal reality which penetrates life on this earth and reveals the spiritual values underneath. In each case, this ideal is presented in solid, physical terms which are so manipulated as to express "a stability directly symbolic of an eternal, unshakeable world. Thus, being is emphasized over doing, eternity over the moment, idea over fact."¹

However, these two artists proceed toward this similar goal from different points of reference. Giotto moves away from the Italo-Byzantine style and towards nature, or the illusion of visual reality, intuitively stopping well before naturalism is attained. Piero, on the other hand, moves away from, or abstracts, reality as it was mastered by the first generation of the Early Renaissance. In neither case

is nature copied as such, and yet never have the essences of nature been so convincingly revealed.

The major vehicle of expression for each is the human figure, a figure which has been reduced to its basic essentials, which is devoid for the most part of action or explicit emotion. Giotto's figures are generalized types rather than individuals. Broadly treated and thus removed from reality, they nevertheless embody the basic qualities of physical existence, weight and mass, achieved by drapery treatment and a rudimentary modeling. Action is stopped, facial features are uniform and expressions are restrained; thus the meaning of the whole is not restricted to any one moment in time. Rather, the stabilization lends a universal and timeless quality.²

Piero's figures have also been removed from nature and conform to generalized types.³ Although Piero's process is one of reduction, involving not only developments in the rendering of anatomy but also principles of geometry, nevertheless the intent and resulting expression are similar. After closely observing and studying the human figure, Piero then transforms these observations into geometrical equivalents, thus reducing in a uniform manner all figures to a basic statement of physical form. The placement of these forms within a light-filled space enhances the feeling of weight and mass and establishes them as solid, three-dimensional entities. Berenson speaks of the "ineloquence" of Piero's figures, their lack of evident emotions.⁴ "If

they express anything it is character, essence, rather than momentary feeling or purpose. They manifest potentiality rather than activity. It is enough that they exist in themselves."⁵ Their essential state is their ultimate natural and permanent state.⁶ Therefore, like those of Giotto, Piero's figures are expressive of a higher order in which dignity and monumental power are achieved through stasis.

Just as the figures of both artists are stated in terms of the essence of their physical existence, the setting is also reduced to the essentials necessary for a concentrated pictorial statement. Figures and setting are then fused together so that the whole becomes one unified expression. It is true that because of Piero's use of geometric laws of organization his figures and settings become more absolutely integrated than those of Giotto, but Giotto can be seen as a forerunner to Piero's idea. It is well known that Giotto often uses architectural and landscape devices to amplify the importance of a figure or figure grouping and at the same time to contribute to the meaning of the whole (the hill in the Lamentation (Figure 19), the break in the wall in The Raising of Drusiana (Figure 7). In the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels he sometimes goes beyond this by creating an actual decorative interplay between figures and architecture, irrevocably linking them together: the arms of St. Francis, in the Apparition at Arles (Figure 13), continue the circle of the arch under which he stands;⁷ the background architecture, in The Raising of Drusiana, relates to the stances of the

figures in the foreground by the use of vertical towers behind St. John and sloping roof lines behind the stooped position of Drusiana.⁸ Piero submits a similar idea to scientific principles. Everything is reduced to its geometric equivalent then set into a space defined and organized by linear perspective. As both figures and setting have therefore been formed by the same method, an architectonic relationship is established between them. The result is a mutual reinforcement of and participation in one underlying, unifying principle. For example, in The Annunciation (Figure 20) at Arezzo not only has the Virgin Mary taken on a solid and stable columnar aspect, but also the column has taken on an organic aspect both through entasis and through its close proximity in shape and placement to the Madonna. Also, the groups of figures in the Finding and Proving of the True Cross (Figure 21) at Arezzo conform to the states of their respective backgrounds, the group on the left forming a curve into depth which relates to the curve of the hills in the landscape background,⁹ and the group on the right repeating the architectural square of its background.¹⁰ In each case, whether organized intuitively or scientifically, the end result is complete in itself and reflects Alberti's formula for harmony. All elements and only those elements needed for a harmonious but powerful statement have been included, and nothing can be added or taken away without destroying this statement.

A concentration specifically on Piero's fresco cycle in the Church of San Francesco at Arezzo and Giotto's cycles in

the Arena, Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels shows how the two artists are similar in their use of compositional devices to construct a unified work of art on a large and complex scale. Piero's frescoes, which are located in the choir of a fourteenth-century Gothic church, divide the vertical walls in a manner which had been traditional to Tuscan wall decoration since Giotto: three long horizontal scenes are placed one above the other.¹¹ The placement of each episode conforms to a compositional and iconographical unity, rather than a chronological sequence. The result is a total harmony produced by the sum of all the parts. The overall richness and complexity of both the composition and the iconography, linking the scenes vertically and horizontally across the chapel, brings to mind the genius of Giotto as found especially in the Arena Chapel. Also, both Giotto and Piero have made use of a progression up the wall from dense to lighter scenes, while Piero's organization according to a strong central axis (helping to link the scenes vertically) is reminiscent of Giotto's Bardi Chapel.

A more specific and significant similarity between the fresco cycles of the two artists, however, concerns the manner in which each handles the design of a scene in such a way that the decorative unity of the wall is maintained, and thus a greater unity of the whole is achieved. Kenneth Clark points out that "one of the peculiar beauties of Piero's frescoes is that they are, in every particular, conceived as decoration. They differ radically from the majority of Florentine frescoes, from Giotto to Ghirlandajo, in that they

never obliterate the surface of the wall as the first factor in decorative unity."¹² This broad generalization on the part of Clark can be disproved, however, to the extent that it is Giotto who strongly predicts Piero in his retention of the integrity of the wall surface.¹³

This principle of composition stresses the idea of an actual picture surface as opposed to the practice of extending the real space of the observer by illusionistically punching a hole through the wall. In the case of both Giotto and Piero, although a definite space is created and occupied by figures and setting, this space is controlled so that the focal point is strongly contained in an area close to and parallel with the front plane. This is achieved through a precise organization of the setting, figure arrangement, color and light. Piero's use of linear and atmospheric perspective creates a clearly defined space within which all objects exist in a convincing way. However, this perspective composition serves "not just to create depth, but to guide the beholder's eye to the heart of the subject which coincides with a plane in the immediate foreground."¹⁴ As each component part of the three-dimensional space has been broken down in a uniform manner (in terms of geometry), then carefully arranged in the interest of balance and harmony, the resulting design tends to come forward and to emphasize the flat front plane. (A good example of this can be found in the scene of The Finding and Proving of the True Cross (Figure 21). Other striking examples are provided by such panel paintings as the

Flagellation (Figure 22), and the Brera Altarpiece (Figure 23). The majority of the figures, those presenting the main action, are placed in the foreground; thus it is perhaps natural that the eye be led to them. But, as figures and background are architectonically fused together they become inseparable contributors to one, concordant artistic whole. The solemnity and restraint of the figures fortifies this harmony by eliminating any specific attraction or distraction for the eye of the observer. Moreover, although the figures are arranged in several planes into depth, the impression is one of a frieze arrangement which plays against the depth and thus contributes, once again, to the integrity of the wall surface. Thus, in the scene of the Queen of Sheba kneeling at the bridge (Figure 24), the ladies-in-waiting form a circle of space behind the kneeling Queen. The waist bands set at the same level on each figure not only help to describe this circle, but also serve to moderate the effect of spatial recession by forming a continuous line across the surface.¹⁵ Other examples of an interplay between depth and surface include the Proving of the True Cross (Figure 21), in which the foreshortened cross not only creates a sense of depth, but also functions as a link between the two foreground groups¹⁶ and thus adds to the continuity of the surface rhythm. The visual continuity extends across the two sections of the Finding and Proving of the True Cross by the line of a garment which flows out of the right-hand scene and over the foot of a figure in the left-hand scene.¹⁷ This

unifying surface line tempers the break in the background between landscape and architecture. An additional example is found in the scene of The Victory of Constantine over Maxentius (Figure 25) in which recession is established in part by the river flowing down the center, while the battle itself is arranged in a frieze-like fashion across the front plane.¹⁸ Furthermore, this river serves as a central break in which a vertical accent in the form of a tree is emphasized. The line of the tree is linked vertically to similar centralized accents in the scenes above and thus contributes to the unity of the total wall surface.

The unification of depth and surface pattern is further aided by Piero's use of color and light. His palette is "restricted to those colors which are on easy terms with one another;" just as there is nothing blatant or harsh about his forms, his colors are muted and set up quiet relationships and contrasts.¹⁹ Placed in the overall geometric scheme, these colors not only create a rhythmic design across the surface, but also contribute to the creation of spatial death. The cooler tones recede while the warmer ones come forward. The effect of the color, however, is dependent upon that of the light. It is most often an all-pervasive sunlight which bathes all forms equally and consistently and thus remains unobtrusive. It creates no harsh spotlights or deep shadows to arrest the harmonious flow of the surface design. Furthermore, shapes and colors are prevented from asserting themselves for the sake of mere decoration, because the light,

more than any other element, maintains the sense of depth and establishes each object as an actual physical and solid entity. The three-dimensionality of the geometric shapes is defined by the light which surrounds them, while the colors are infused with light and become less intense as the light fades with increasing distance.

Piero begins with a close and precise study of figures, perspective, color and light. These elements are then selectively abstracted and mathematically organized into a proportionate whole. Underlying the science, however, there is unquestionably an instinct for harmony. Giotto relies solely upon observation and intuition, but even without science his results are a definite prediction of Piero. In the interest of achieving a unified effect, Giotto combines the space-creating figures and setting in such a way that the decorative integrity of the wall surface is maintained.²⁰ And like Piero, Giotto brings about this harmony between three-dimensional space and plane surface through the use of geometry, a fusion of figures and setting, color and light.

John White points out that "the frequent use of geometric terms in analysing Giotto's compositions is symptomatic of the importance of the positioning of figures and architecture upon the pictorial surface, in relation both to each other and to the various compositional diagonals and other obvious dividing lines and subdivisions that reflect the inherent geometrical properties of the pictorial rectangle," mentioning as an example the vertical and horizontal grid which is formed by

figures and architecture in the scene of The Birth of the Virgin (Figure 26) in the Arena Chapel.²¹ Numerous other examples could be cited to illustrate how Giotto, before Piero, breaks down the various elements of his pictorial space into simplified essentials of form which are juxtaposed both to create space and to keep the eye of the observer on the front plane. A landscape is most often described in terms of rounded, or diagonal hills and vertical trees, while architecture is formed with geometric objects such as square and rectangular cubes, pyramids and hemispheres. The simplified figures relate to the shapes of their setting and although figures and setting do not conform to one precise mathematical principle of unification, as they do with Piero, the two are definitely conceived of as a unity, inseparably contributing to the overall expression. Also, as was pointed out, there are instances in the Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels when an actual geometric fusion of figures and architecture is produced. (The Apparition at Arles, Bardi Chapel,²² Figure 13.) The result of this manner of composition is similar to Piero's: the various shapes form a pattern which comes to the surface and thereby tends to subdue any forceful extension into depth. But, as with Piero, a definite spatial depth is established. In Giotto's case this is done by a rudimentary use of perspective and by solid three-dimensional figures and objects of setting, but once again, all lines of force lead the eye to the quiet, restrained figures on the front plane. And, very reminiscent of Piero, figures and setting work together

to achieve a balance of effect between three-dimensional depth and surface design. For example, in The Teaching in the Temple (Arena Chapel), arches, festoons and figure arrangement participate in an interplay between space-creating curves in depth and pattern-making curves on the surface (Figure 27). In addition, the festoons on the surface cover the three-dimensional join of ceiling and walls, while the seated figures form not only a spatial arc²³ but also a straight line of heads across the surface. Throughout the works of Giotto, a frieze-like arrangement of figures is often used to temper the effect of the space-creating architecture. For example, in the scene of St. Francis Renouncing His Father (Bardi Chapel), the line of figures softens the oblique projection of the building and the figure of St. Francis, by covering the corner of the building, cuts off a potential rupture through the planar wall²⁴ (Figure 11). A final example shows Giotto using a device which Piero used after him, that of connecting two sections of one scene with the flow of a garment across the surface. The line of Salome's gown in The Feast of Herod (Peruzzi Chapel) helps bridge the change in the architectural setting behind by maintaining a rhythmic connective on the front plane²⁵ (Figure 28). (This is similar to Piero's connection between the Finding of the Cross and the Proving of the Cross, Figure 21.)

As with Piero, color and light also make an essential contribution to Giotto's final effect. Unlike his Romanesque predecessors, in his frescoes at Florence Giotto used a

color which is soft in hue and texture. Thus, it is more naturalistic to a certain extent. It is also restful to the eye and adds to the overall simplicity and restraint of a scene. However, his color still retains the decorative functions of Romanesque art in that identical colors are repeated throughout for figures, for buildings and for the architectural framework between scenes. The result is a decorative unification "in a harmony of clear-struck notes."²⁶ Also, a recent restoration of the Peruzzi Chapel has revealed an exquisite sense of light-filled color. The light itself serves to unify the entire cycle (in all three chapels) by falling upon the frescoed architecture from a single outside source.²⁷ It strengthens the decorative unity of the surface pattern by its uniformity of emphasis, for no deep shadows are created which cut into the planar surface. And finally, like Piero, Giotto prevents the effect of a mere surface decoration by substantiating each element as a three-dimensional entity in space, through his use of an elementary modeling in light and shade.

Thus, as has been shown, neither Giotto nor Piero is interested in creating the illusion of a reality which is the extension of the observer's own reality. Rather, by moving toward or abstracting from nature in order to retain the decorative integrity of a flat wall, they evoke a higher reality which lies beyond the world of the spectator. Their reality is an ideal one, presented in physical and natural terms only to the extent that the observer can grasp its

meaning to the fullest, but not to the extent that he can enter in and participate. For in the final analysis, the creations of these artists remain an artistic communication upon a flat wall of the universal harmony in which they have faith.

A contrast between Giotto and Piero might be argued if it were true that Piero's deliberate use of science has destroyed all Giottesque feeling for humanity. This, however, is not the case. Piero's search, like Giotto's, is a classical one, intent upon discovering and portraying the permanent and universal in man's existence. His problem is "to discover the proof of God in laws of nature, to find rules of her invisible harmony, and in his paintings to make this visible. But the principal medium through which nature could attain perfection was man; and while looking at Piero's men and women, the lords and creator of their own noble spaces, we are almost convinced that this is true."²⁸ Piero's art stresses the highest of human values, the intellect, which is able and willing to create and control a perfect harmony. It is a harmony which exists by and for man and it is not without a certain warmth and sense of vital life. (For example, the use of color and light and the depiction of a powerful, noble humanity contribute to this.) However, it is a harmony which in its perfection exists on a higher plane than man himself, to be contemplated rather than participated in, and as such it is eternal. Therefore, Giotto by intuition and Piero by intuition plus science both illustrate that their

principal concern is "with translating human spiritual values into visual terms" and each is aware that to achieve this, realism must be used only as a means and not as an end.²⁹

It may be that these similarities between Giotto and Piero della Francesca are purely coincidental. A similarity in intent may have led each, separately, to a similar mode of expression. However, Giotto's fame as an innovating artist was strong during the fifteenth century, and it is known that his art directly influenced certain Renaissance artists such as Masaccio and Michelangelo.³⁰ Much of Florentine art of the Renaissance owes a great deal to Giotto, through a continuation of his ideas throughout the fourteenth century and into the fifteenth century, through Masaccio, and through other artists who might have directly studied Giotto's paintings. By the time of Piero, many artists of the progressive style were using certain Giottesque motifs, such as powerful figures, emphasized by a broad treatment of drapery and enhanced by the setting; and perhaps Piero, being influenced by these contemporary artists, was only very indirectly influenced by Giotto. If on the other hand another viewpoint is considered, that of an underlying "Florentine" temperament, the fact remains that Piero himself was not a Florentine and thus it cannot be assumed that his adoption of certain Florentine elements is the cause of a natural inheritance. Although it is evident that much of his training was received in Florence, nevertheless strong non-Florentine influences

were exercised upon him as well. And yet the final statement is classical and very reminiscent of Giotto.

Piero della Francesca was born between 1410 and 1420 in Borgo San Sepolcro, a small town located at the center of Italy. During his youth, the strongest artistic style in his area was Sienese.³¹ A document of 1439 states that Piero was then in Florence with Domenico Veneziano and it is believed that he had probably been there from about 1435.³² The influences which Piero might have received while in Florence are numerous, and include elements not only from progressive contemporary artists, but also from artists of the fourteenth century and of the International Style. Among those artists named are Maso di Banco, Gentile da Fabriano, Masolino, Brunelleschi, Donatello, Masaccio, Fra Angelico, Alberti, Domenico Veneziano, Uccello and Andrea del Castagno.³³ As will be shown, it is possible that at least three of these artists, Maso di Banco, Masaccio and Alberti, brought Piero into contact with Giottesque motifs and perhaps even stimulated Piero to a direct confrontation with the art of Giotto. By 1442, Piero was back in Borgo San Sepolcro, and it seems he was influenced by Sassetta's altarpiece for the Church of San Francesco which was completed in 1445.³⁴ It is known that Piero's subsequent travels took him to Ferrara, probably before 1450, to Rimini in 1451, to Arezzo in 1452, 1466, 1468, to Rome in 1459, to Monterchi soon after Rome. He also made several trips to Urbino during the 1450's and 1460's.³⁵ Philip Hendy suggests a second trip to Florence somewhere

between 1452 and 1466, when Piero might have seen later works by Uccello and Castagno.³⁶

There is no mention, either in documents or in art historical literature, that Piero was specifically influenced by Giotto. Unquestionably, he saw Giotto's frescoes in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence, and it is possible that while in Ferrara he traveled further north to Padua. The known facts about Piero's stay in Florence relate only that he was there in 1439 with Domenico Veneziano who was working on frescoes in the choir of Sant' Egidio. Art historians suggest that while in Florence, Piero was influenced by Maso di Banco and Masaccio, two artists who have close stylistic ties with Giotto. Although there is no documentary evidence to prove this influence,³⁷ the visual evidence is strong. It can be seen, however, that many of those elements which Piero derived from Maso or Masaccio stem originally from Giotto.

It is Roberto Longhi who suggests an artistic relationship between Piero and Maso di Banco, especially as concerns color and space. He believes that "the significance of Maso's attempt to arrive at a synthesis of form and color did not escape Piero's vigilant eye."³⁸ He goes on to mention specific characteristics found in the frescoes of the Life of St. Sylvester (Bardi di Vernio Chapel, Santa Croce) which seem to predict Piero: broad masses of "clear-tinted" color combined with a precisely defined, simple and calm design, and the overall solemnity conveyed.³⁹ Longhi uses Maso's Raising of the Two Magicians (Figure 29), and Piero's Finding and

Proving of the True Cross (Figure 21) as comparisons "in calmness, sense of control and disciplined orderliness pervading the sacramental gestures of worship and blessing."⁴⁰ All of these elements find their beginnings in the art of Giotto. If, indeed, Piero did see Maso's frescoes in Santa Croce, he also saw Giotto's frescoes in the same church.⁴¹ Also, whereas Maso has combined these elements to convey a general mood of spiritual fantasy, Piero, like Giotto, has combined his to convey a spiritualism grounded upon the physical reality of human existence.

Kenneth Clark believes that a decisive factor in the moulding of Piero's style "was the prolonged contemplation of Masaccio's Carmine frescoes... From them he learnt the majestic tempo, the grave gestures, the vision of an ennobled humanity, which characterize all his work."⁴² Once again, Giotto is immediately brought to mind as the progenitor of such an expression. Specifically, Clark mentions the influence of Masaccio's "architecture of drapery" used to stress a sense of form and based ultimately on Giotto. This architectural drapery "is designed to emphasize the solid reality of Masaccio's figures, and to this end he elaborates the scheme of an enveloping sheath, which encloses and reveals a central core."⁴³ It's adaptation by Piero is especially noticeable in several of his single figures, the Mary Magdalen (Figure 30) in the Cathedral of Arezzo,⁴⁴ for example, and the right-hand prophet (Figure 31) of the Arezzo frescoes.⁴⁵ Clark points out that in his frescoed scenes

Piero uses a less three-dimensional and more geometric pattern of drapery in the interest of his principles of decoration.⁴⁶ However, throughout his work, Piero never denies his figures a plastic, weighty and powerful form. In this, he relates to Masaccio and before Masaccio, of all the Gothic painters, only Giotto creates comparable figures. To Hendy this "is not so much the result of a technical effect as of an attitude of mind."⁴⁷ In addition to his conception of the figure, Masaccio influenced Piero in his use of perspective to group such figures in space.⁴⁸

The differences between Masaccio and Piero are due partly to influences from intervening artists contributing to Piero's use of color, light and space. And there is at least one difference between the two which links Piero closer to Giotto than to Masaccio. This involves the spiritualizing intent of Piero contrasted to Masaccio's desire to maintain a strict earthly basis and relate more directly to the spectator. Each artist produces a powerful effect by concentrating uniquely on the essentials needed. However, while Masaccio reduces visual reality to emphasize the essence of physical existence on earth, Piero's reduction is carried to such an extent that an ideal reality is created and in this he is similar to Giotto. Therefore, although Masaccio was influenced by Giotto, and Piero was in turn influenced by Masaccio, the spiritualizing tendency of Giotto was not passed on to Piero through this channel. The question remains, did Piero himself return to

the art of Giotto for inspiration, or did he independently develop his ideal?

A third artist who most likely influenced Piero and who may have led him to Giotto is Leon Battista Alberti. In 1435, Alberti's Della pittura appeared in Florence and it is believed that Piero first came to Florence at about this time. Also, in 1450-1451, Piero was in Rimini executing a fresco in the Tempio Malatestiana, which Alberti was in the process of redesigning. These facts, along with evidence found in the art and writings of Piero, are enough to assume a definite awareness of Albertian ideas on the part of Piero. Kenneth Clark hypothesizes an actual friendship between the two men and he feels that Piero's quick mastery of perspective and of the basic laws of proportion, elements which appear in his art soon after his return to San Sepolcro, indicates that he must have learned them "from one of those to whom they were a gospel."⁴⁹ Clark also points out that Piero maintains "the majestic tempo and mathematical harmonies" of early fifteenth-century art despite the fact that this art, upon which Alberti based his treatise, had been replaced by another fashion by 1460.⁵⁰ In addition, Piero's use of color seems to be an illustration of Alberti's color system described in Della pittura,⁵¹ many of Piero's architectural backgrounds appear to be a direct reflection of Alberti's ideals, and, finally, Piero's theory of painting as outlined in De prospectiva pingendi is similar in many ways to Alberti's.⁵² Whether or not from this influence Piero was further influenced by

Alberti's admiration for the art of Giotto, and specifically by his mention of Giotto in Della pittura, remains only a possibility to be considered.

Thus, as his art tends to prove, Piero owes something to at least three artists whose works or writing reflect something of the Giottesque. Maso di Banco, a pupil of Giotto, continues in his art the solemn grandeur of the master and develops his ideas of space, light and color. Later, Masaccio, by directly studying the art of Giotto, revives with all of its original intensity the essential value of his monumental figures and significant compositions. It is partly through Masaccio, therefore, and the influence of his Brancacci Chapel frescoes, that these Giottesque elements become a major part of early fifteenth-century Florentine art, and it is this art which stimulates Alberti to write his treatise on the theory of painting. Thus, not only are many of Alberti's artistic ideals based ultimately on Giotto, but also he uses Giotto to illustrate one of these ideals.

Through these artists, Piero is circuitously influenced by Giotto, just as it can be said that a great deal of fifteenth-century art has descended indirectly from Giotto. However, a consideration of these second-hand influences does not account for the spiritual quality of Piero's art, that quality which relates so strongly to the art of Giotto. It is not unlikely that Piero, in his desire to uncover the eternal, probed beyond those aspects of visual reality conquered by his predecessors and found in Giotto that inspiration for

which he was looking. If the preceding discussion is valid, it cannot be denied that Giotto and Piero are similar in intent and manner of expression. It is possible that each arrived separately at his spiritual ideal. But as the fame of Giotto was inescapable during the fifteenth century, the possibility is even stronger that Piero looked to the art of Giotto for confirmation of his own tendencies.

The Art of Michelangelo

An examination of the relationship between the art of Michelangelo and that of Giotto is based on visual evidence as well as undeniable documentary evidence. Thus, as was the case with Masaccio, it is certain that a direct influence was received. However, the influence of specific Giottesque motifs becomes more difficult to assess. This is partly due to the time span of two centuries which separates Giotto and Michelangelo. Whereas Masaccio was limited in his choice of a predecessor who strengthened and confirmed his own predilections, Michelangelo had the choice of drawing upon a full century of artists of the Florentine style, or of a classicizing temperament. Also, Michelangelo was primarily a sculptor and, therefore, he approached painting in sculptural, rather than pictorial, terms. He executed very few large "group" compositions and seldom used an architectural framework as an organizing device. Instead, he communicated through single figures or small groups of two and three figures placed into very simple and elemental settings. And

it is with these figures that he achieves a Giottesque conception of mankind and the universe. This conception remains an all-pervasive "idea" rather than a specific element which can be taken apart, defined and analyzed. And, although the exact nature of Giotto's influence on the art of Michelangelo remains vague in comparison with the specific influences apparent in the art of Masaccio, in the final analysis, Michelangelo joins Piero della Francesca in exhibiting a stronger affinity to Giotto than does Masaccio.

Proof of Michelangelo's admiration for Giotto's art can be found, first of all, in documentary evidence. There exist several drawings done by Michelangelo when he was still a boy of twelve or thirteen years old which show that from the start he was interested in forceful figures. Rather than concentrate on the art of his older contemporaries such as Botticelli, Filippino Lippi and Ghirlandaio, Michelangelo turned back to the old masters--artists such as Giotto and Masaccio--who had frescoed churches in Florence.¹ His study of these old masters revealed to him the roots of the Tuscan monumental tradition and taught him the secrets of rendering simple yet powerful human figures.² The earliest known drawing by Michelangelo is a copy after Giotto--two figures on the left, witnessing and reacting to the miracle of the Ascension of St. John the Evangelist (Figure 32). A second drawing (Figure 33), probably a little later, is a copy after Masaccio--St. Peter paying the tax-collector, on the right of the Tribute Money. (It was mentioned in the

discussion of Masaccio that this figure was very likely ultimately derived from Giotto.) These two drawings date somewhere between 1489 and 1492, when Michelangelo was studying first with Ghirlandaio and subsequently in the Medici Garden.³ A third drawing, that of a Philosopher or Astrologer (Figure 34) is possibly an independent invention on the part of Michelangelo or a copy from a lost fresco by Giotto, such as the scene of The Adoration of the Magi in the Tosinelli-Spinelli Chapel (Santa Croce).⁴ Michelangelo's interpretive imitation of Giotto and Masaccio results in the achievement of a great sense of mass and plasticity. "With clarity and method he establishes here a fundamental distinction between the folds which express the weight of matter and those which indicate the form of the body... With this new system of folds Michelangelo is able to give the effect of closed weight and bulk and yet show the organic forms of the body beneath. This the Italian artists of the fifteenth century had never achieved... Only in Giotto and Masaccio was there a slight attempt to combine both weight of matter and organic form. Michelangelo was the first to evolve a real system in this direction..."⁵

The question as to why Michelangelo returned to Giotto for inspiration is answered in part by the fact that he also returned to Masaccio. The classicizing and monumental spirit was already present, and in the art of two of his predecessors he found a confirmation of, and a new impetus for, that spirit.

He was searching for an ideal, and the basis of that ideal he found in the art of Giotto and Masaccio. As de Tolnay says:

Through the imitation of Giotto and Masaccio, then, Michelangelo arrived at a new representation of the grandeur and dignity of man. He gave a new life and reality to their figures; he took from his models the majesty of the ensemble but set aside all conventional and typical elements, and added a new accuracy of observation in the details. However, this new quality of realistic detail does not bring the figures of his models to a trivial level (as sometimes in Ghirlandaio), but accentuates the reality of their ideal character.⁶

It is, as explained below, an ideal character which goes beyond Masaccio's earthly ideal to Giotto's spiritual ideal, or the ultimate real.

A further strengthening of Michelangelo's original predilection might have come from his association with Domenico Ghirlandaio, Benedetto da Maiano and Lorenzo de' Medici. As Michelangelo was apprenticed to Ghirlandaio for a short time (1488-89), it is not unlikely that he would be influenced to a certain extent by the master's own tastes. And, it seems evident that Ghirlandaio did look to Giotto's Santa Croce frescoes in several instances.⁷ This is most apparent in the Sassetti Chapel frescoes (Santa Trinita), in which scenes from the life of Saint Francis are depicted, and for which Ghirlandaio looked to Giotto's previous solutions in the Bardi Chapel.⁸ As Gerald Davies says, "it is clear that Domenico's choice was limited to the manner of treatment, the subjects themselves having now come to be regarded as already prescribed, and as in some sort compulsory, being

founded on the series which Giotto had made immortal."⁹ Ghirlandaio follows Giotto's choice of subject matter for five out of his six scenes and Steinmann feels that four of these scenes have a compositional prototype in the Bardi Chapel: St. Francis Renouncing His Worldly Goods, The Confirmation of the Order by Honorius III (Figure 35), The Trial by Fire in the Presence of the Sultan (Figure 37), and The Funeral of St. Francis (Figure 38).¹⁰ In particular, Ghirlandaio's scene of The Granting of the Rule seems to be a combination of Giotto's scenes of The Granting of the Rule (Figure 36) and The Appearance of St. Francis at Arles (Figure 13).

However, Ghirlandaio's interest in Giotto is only a superficial one and although it is very likely a factor leading to Michelangelo's own interest in Giotto, the pupil's understanding of the old master was to penetrate far beyond that of his teacher. There is a basic difference in aim and feeling between Giotto and Ghirlandaio. Ghirlandaio strives for a very immediate and contemporary reality which would have appealed strongly to the Florentines of his day, unlike Giotto's "higher" reality which contains something of the spiritual and the mystic. Davies notes that Ghirlandaio's Burial of St. Francis (Figure 38) in the Sassetti Chapel lacks "that intense reality of grief, that spiritual sympathy, which makes Giotto's rendering of the Death of St. Francis (Figure 1) inferior doubtless in the qualities of advanced figure drawing, scientific architecture, composition, and painter's technique, still a far more real thing to our

imagination. Giotto was busied with the fact and its meaning; Ghirlandaio with the fact as it would have met the eye under his set conditions and with his set and sumptuous surroundings."¹¹

Another possible influence upon Michelangelo's way of thinking might have come from Lorenzo de'Medici. Vasari states that in 1490 Lorenzo commissioned the commemorative portrait and accompanying inscription in honor of Giotto. Although it is not known exactly why this was commissioned at this particular time,¹² it is known that Benedetto da Maiano executed the portrait in 1490 and it is believed that Michelangelo received some training from this particular sculptor at about the same time, while living in the Medici Palace.¹³ Also, the inscription was written by Angelo Poliziano, a humanist and poet who had definite connections with the Medici Academy. And, finally, de Tolnay mentions that about this same time the revival of the old and celebrated Tuscan art tradition had developed into a "general spiritual current" which was affecting literature as well.¹⁴ Lorenzo de'Medici was at the head of this movement and proof of his admiration for Giotto and Masaccio may be found in the fact that his collection included two paintings each by Giotto and Masaccio.¹⁵ It seems Michelangelo could not fail to be aware of Lorenzo's possession of these paintings, nor of the movement in general.

There remains one additional piece of evidence which indicates that Michelangelo continued to be impressed by the

art of Giotto. While listing Giotto's works, Vasari comments on the panel of the Death of the Virgin (Figure 39) which was then found in the Church of the Ognissanti in Florence. "This work," he says, "has been greatly prized by artists and was above all valued by Michelangelo Buonarotti, who declared... that nothing in painting could be nearer to life than this was..."¹⁶

Berenson explains Michelangelo's affinity for Giotto and Masaccio once again in terms of his concern for tactile values and material significance in the human form. From Michelangelo's point of view--coming as he does at the end of a century concerned with artistic advances in the rendering of the human body--the most perfect form to be used in conveying material significance is the human nude. Michelangelo was aware of the fact, as were both Giotto and Masaccio, that those things to which human beings can relate most readily and directly are human figures. He also realized that the real significance lies in the form underneath the drapery. Therefore, by eliminating the mask and getting down to a direct contact with the form itself, a heightened reality can be presented. It is for this reason that Berenson sees Michelangelo as the final culmination of a long line of Florentine artists--all stemming ultimately from Giotto--who were "persistently devoted" to the rendering of a heightened reality, through tactile values, through movement, or through both.¹⁷

Michelangelo, however, also remains aware of the value of the draped figure and its potential to portray an awesome and monumental grandeur, as in the prophets and sibyls on the Sistine Chapel ceiling. This can also be seen in the figure of God in the scene of the Creation of Eve (Figure 40), a figure very similar to Giotto's St. John in The Raising of Drusiana (Figure 7), which Masaccio had previously found so effective. Specific Giottesque motifs such as this appear much less frequently on the Sistine Ceiling than was the case with Masaccio's Brancacci Chapel. Nevertheless, certain scenes do suggest Giottesque prototypes.

In the scene just mentioned, The Creation of Eve, the imposing figure of God, like Giotto's St. John, is in the act of "bringing to life"; and, similar to the Drusiana scene, a dramatic tension and focal point is created by the outstretched hands. This motif of the "spark of life" passing between hands--passing from the spiritual to the earthly, between the creator and the created--culminates in the scene of The Creation of Adam (Figure 41).

Also, the position of Adam in the Creation of Eve, outstretched, with his head turned away from God, follows an old tradition, coming at least from the thirteenth century. The relief attributed to Giotto and Andrea Pisano on the Campanile in Florence depicts this same subject and forms a part of this tradition.¹⁸

As with Giotto, and later Masaccio and Piero, Michelangelo's figures are enhanced by the use of simple and

essential backgrounds. And once again, these backgrounds contribute physically and symbolically to the human scene presented. For example, in The Creation of Eve, the dead tree to the left not only parallels and emphasizes the figure of Eve, but also contributes to the meaning of the scene by setting up a significant contrast--a dead, inanimate object versus an animate being awakening to life.¹⁹ The symbolic possibilities of a simple landscape are also depicted in The Temptation and Expulsion of Adam and Eve (Figure 42). Here the rugged and barren Garden of Eden serves as a link between the two scenes: symbolically predicting the fall and compositionally sloping down into the Expulsion scene. A Giottesque motif might even be seen in The Sacrifice of Noah (Figure 43) in which the altar is set at an oblique angle, causing the projecting corner to create a line which cuts through the foreground gesture passing between two figures. Moreover, as Noah is placed immediately behind this projecting corner, it serves to emphasize him. Thus, Michelangelo, like Giotto, Masaccio and Piero, uses his settings in a positive way to offset and contribute to the significance of his figures.

There are at least two scenes on the ceiling which reflect a Giottesque compositional set-up. The scene of The Punishment of Haman (Figure 44) found in one of the corner spandrels is related to the general set up of Giotto's Birth and Naming of St. John the Baptist (Figure 45) in the Peruzzi Chapel.²⁰ The similarities--which include the division of a space into two rooms, connected by a doorway, with a figure

reclining on a bed in the right hand section--can also be found in Michelangelo's scene of Judith and Holofernes (Figure 46).

de Tolnay mentions one further way in which Michelangelo returns to Giotto's "simple and monumental conception," and that is in his use of a restricted range of tones. Also, unlike many artists of the fifteenth century who worked against the fading of colors on a frescoed surface and tried to imitate the vivid colors of panel painting, Michelangelo used to his own advantage this natural paling of colors as the plaster dries. In doing so, he reverts to Giotto's "unity of coloristic effect," based on a "pale gamut."²¹ Such a use of color helps maintain, in a Giottesque and Pieresque manner, the unity and integrity of the surface, for the "pale gamut" is one way in which the illusionistic effect of figures "falling" out of the heavens into the spectator's realm can be avoided.

Michelangelo's ceiling is not a continuation of the spectator's own space. Rather, it is a second realm, an ideal realm which lies outside the grasp of ordinary mortals and which goes beyond the illusion of an earthly reality to a higher reality. The transcendental quality is achieved mainly by the figures, who are "immediate" yet idealized and generalized in much the same way as Giotto's. There is little use of foreshortening, thus there is little illusion of a space which penetrates the surface. To this same effect, Michelangelo's backgrounds are minimal, architectural settings in perspective are very scarce and colors are muted. Therefore, like Piero

and unlike Masaccio, Michelangelo returns to the spiritual and larger-than-life quality of Giotto's art, rather than concerning himself with illusionary effects. However, the way in which he does this, as well as the immediate historical reasons for it are different from Piero's. Michelangelo concentrates on the figures to achieve his effect, while Piero manipulates a more elaborate composition consisting of figures, architectural and landscape settings, color and light. Also, Michelangelo relates to his own generation in turning away from the external realism of the fifteenth century. Like his High Renaissance contemporaries, he depicts a perfected reality which lies beyond the world of mere visual appearances. And for Michelangelo, this heightened or perfected reality of a transcendental realm was specifically inspired by Giotto.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The reasons why Masaccio, Piero della Francesca and Michelangelo looked to the art of Giotto for inspiration are bound up with how they were affected by his art. In no case is there a mere transcription of stylistic motifs. Rather, in each, there is a deep understanding for the significance which lies beyond these stylistic motifs. The fact that each inherited the Tuscan monumental tradition and adopted a Florentine mode of expression does not fully explain the undeniable Giottesque elements in their art; for the ultimate answer as to the exact nature of Giotto's influence upon these artists is found with the individual himself. Masaccio, Piero and Michelangelo each extracted, in a different way and to a different degree, the intrinsic quality of Giotto's art, and the amount and quality of that extraction was directly dependent on the personality of the artist and his own artistic milieu.

It need not be assumed that Masaccio, Piero and Michelangelo were directly influenced by the literary evidence of Giotto's importance. But indirectly, they undoubtedly were influenced by such evidence, for it is in literature that Giotto's fame is maintained on a high level, even during times of artistic "decline." The fourteenth-century writers proclaimed Giotto as a "renovator" of the arts and praised

him for his restoration to art certain "classical" qualities. This literary tradition extended into the fifteenth century, which kept alive and perhaps even increased the fame of Giotto. Thus, men were aware of Giotto during the fifteenth century and they were aware of his contribution to the "renaissance" of the arts. Perhaps all did not understand him, or fully appreciate his achievements, but certain artists such as Masaccio, Piero della Francesca and Michelangelo were able to penetrate the myth and reach the essence of Giotto.

NOTES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1 Throughout this work, the term "Renaissance" is synonymous with the term "fifteenth century," and both should be understood as including the time span between 1400 and about 1520.

2 Richard Offner, "Giotto, Non-Giotto," Burlington Magazine, LXXIV, 1939, pp. 260, 267.

3 Ibid., p. 260; John White, The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space, London, 1957, pp. 57, 64-65.

4 Offner, "Giotto, Non-Giotto," p. 261.

5 Ibid., pp. 260-261.

CHAPTER II: LITERARY EVIDENCES IN THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

1 Karl Vossler, Mediaeval Culture, An Introduction to Dante and His Times, trans. William Cranston Lawton, II, New York, 1966, pp. 301-302, 320-322.

2 Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy, trans. Carlyle-Wicksteed, New York, 1950, pp. 254-255.

3 Vossler, Mediaeval Culture, II, p. 322.

4 Millard Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death, New York, 1964, p. 5.

5 Cesare Gnudi, Giotto, London, 1959, p. 17.

6 For example, C. E. Norton as quoted by Paget Toynbee, Dante Alighieri, His Life and Works, ed. C. S. Singleton, New York, 1965, p. 129.

7 As quoted by Thomas Caldecot Chubb, Dante and His World, Boston, 1966, pp. 505-506.

8 And it was during this time, when the two were together in Padua, that Dante is said to have asked Giotto the famous question: "'Since you are the father of both, why is it you paint such beautiful pictures and beget such ugly children?'" Giotto replied to this: "'Because I paint by day and I beget at night.'" (Chubb, Dante, pp. 505-506.)

9 Benvenuto includes here a reference to the praises of Petrarch and Boccaccio for the art of Giotto.

10 Giorgio Vasari, Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects, trans. Mrs. Jonathan Foster, I, London, 1890, pp. 95, 107, 116.

11 Ibid., pp. 105-107.

The frescoed portrait of Dante in the chapel of the Palace of the Podesta (now the Bargello), once thought to have been by Giotto and thus used as further evidence of the friendship between the two men, is now believed to have been painted by a follower of Giotto and not by Giotto himself. (Meiss, in Toynbee, Dante, p. 127.)

12 Dante, The Divine Comedy, trans. Carlyle-Wicksteed, p. 255.

13 Benvenuto Rambaldi da Imola, Comentum super Dantis Aldigherij Comoediam, ed. J. P. Lacaita, III, Florence, 1887, p. 313.

14 Vossler, Mediaeval Culture, pp. 153, 322.

15 Guido was Dante's "earliest" and "dearest" friend, and the friendship, which lasted until Guido's death, is specifically mentioned by Dante in Vita nuova. (Toynbee, Dante, pp. 47, 50, 81 and throughout.)

16 It is true that Dante is using the names of well known artists and poets to make a point about pride, and it seems he is implying that all famous individuals are guilty of the sin of pride. The implication is strengthened by the inclusion of Cimabue among the names mentioned in the passage. Cimabue is a nickname which signifies "a boldly scornful and ironical man." (Eugenio Battisti, Cimabue, trans. Robert and Catherine Enggass, University Park, 1967, p. 5.) An anonymous commentator of Dante, writing in 1333-34, indicates that this view by Cimabue's contemporaries of his personality continued to be well known. This commentator says: "Cimabue, of Florence, a painter of the time of our author Dante, knew more of the noble art than any other man; but he was so arrogant and proud withal, that if any discovered a fault in his work, or if he perceived one himself, ... he would instantly abandon that work, however costly it might be." (Battisti, Cimabue, p. 5.) Dante is perhaps suggesting that Giotto, the two Guido's, or any famous man, has some of those attributes implied in the name "Cimabue." Such an opinion, however, would not necessarily detract from the poet's judgment of these men and their art if, as seems likely in light of the evidence presented, Dante is using these names to comment on human nature itself, rather than to single out individuals for criticism.

17 Giovanni Boccaccio, The Decameron, trans. Richard Aldington, II, Westminster, 1955, p. 27.

18 Lionello Venturi, Italian Painting, The Creators of the Renaissance, Geneva, 1950, p. 47.

19 H. W. Janson, The Sculpture of Donatello, Princeton, 1963, p. 86.

20 Thomas C. Chubb, The Life of Giovanni Boccaccio, New York, 1930, p. 112; and Catherine Carswell, The Tranquil Heart, Portrait of Giovanni Boccaccio, New York, 1937, p. 86.

21 Giotto, p. 17.

22 Petrarch's Testament, ed., trans., and intro. Theodor E. Mommsen, Ithaca, New York, 1957, p. 22, intro.

23 As quoted by Sarel Eimerl, The World of Giotto, c. 1267-1337, New York, 1967, p. 163.

24 Petrarch's Testament, Mommsen, p. 22, intro.

25 Ibid., p. 21, intro.

26 Ibid., pp. 79, 81.

27 As quoted by Gnudi, Giotto, p. 19. Also, Giovanni Villani, Cronica, ed. F. G. Dragomanni, III, Florence, 1845, p. 232.

28 As quoted in the introduction of Franco Sacchetti, Tales, trans. Mary G. Steegmann, intro. Dr. Guido Biagi, London, 1908, p. viii.

29 Ibid., p. x, intro.

30 As quoted in the introduction of Ibid., p. x.

31 Giotto, p. 19.

32 Tale number LXIII is entitled: "A man of low degree brings to Giotto, the great painter, a shield which he desires him to paint. Regarding him with contempt, Giotto paints it in such a manner that he remains all confused." (Franco Sacchetti, Opera, ed. Aldo Borlenghi, Milan, 1957, p. 207.) A second tale, number LXXV, deals with an incident in which Giotto is "overthrown by a pig" and "says an amusing thing." (Sacchetto, Borlenghi ed., pp. 243-244; Sacchetti, Tales, p. 52.)

33 Sacchetti, Tales, p. 114. Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena, p. 3, says that "it is generally agreed, though we cannot be certain, that the story reflects a conversation at a gathering at S. Miniato in the late 'fifties."

34 Einar Rud, Vasari's Life and Lives, The First Art Historian, Princeton, New Jersey, 1963, p. 130.

35 Filippo Villani, Le vite d'uomini illustri fiorentini, annotated by Giammaria Mazzuchelli, Florence, 1847, p. 47. This is a condensed Italian translation of the original Latin, which is given in full in Appendix 8.

36 Cennino d'Andrea Cennini, Il libro dell'arte, II, ed. and trans. Daniel V. Thompson, Jr., New Haven, 1932, p. ix.

37 Elizabeth G. Holt, A Documentary History of Art, I, New York, 1957, p. 137.

38 Ibid.

39 It has recently been discovered, however, that of the three extant chapels frescoed by Giotto, the Arena Chapel is the only one in which the buon fresco technique was consistently used. (Leonetto Tintori and Millard Meiss, The Painting of The Life of St. Francis in Assisi, New York, 1967, p. 15.)

40 Cennini, Il libro dell'arte, II, p. 2.

41 Cennino Cennini, A Treatise on Painting, trans. Merrifield, London, 1844, p. 2; Gnudi, Giotto, p. 20; Eugenio Battisti, Giotto, trans. James Emmons, Cleveland, 1960, pp. 10-11.

42 Gnudi, Giotto, pp. 20-21.

43 Painting in Florence and Siena, p. 4.

44 As quoted by Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena, pp. 4-5.

45 Ibid., pp. 6, 7. Painting changed from an incipient humanism back to a Medieval spiritualism which emphasized dogma and tended toward a more iconic image.

46 Petrarch's Testament, pp. 24-25, intro.

47 Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena, p. 6.

48 Sacchetti, Tales, p. 114.

49 Benjamin Rowland, Jr. "Millard Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena After the Black Death," Review, The Art Bulletin, XXXIV, 1952, p. 319.

50 Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena, p. 4.

51 Ibid., p. 3.

52 Rowland, Review of Meiss, p. 319.

53 Werner L. Gundersheimer, The Italian Renaissance, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1965, p. 3.

54 Richard Krautheimer, Lorenzo Ghiberti, Princeton, 1956, p. 10.

55 Lorenzo Ghiberti, I commentari, Naples, 1947, pp. 32-33; Roberto Salvini, All the Paintings of Giotto, II, New York, 1963, pp. 97-98; Gnudi, Giotto, p. 21.

56 Leon Battista Alberti, On Painting, trans. John Spencer, London, 1956, p. 11.

57 Kenneth Clark, Leon Battista Alberti On Painting, London, 1946, p. 3; Alberti, On Painting, pp. 25, 78. The specific mention of this work by both Alberti and Filippo Villani (see page 15) would seem to testify to its popularity. A more complete discussion of Alberti and his mention of the Navicella is included further on in this same chapter.

58 The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci, ed. Jean Paul Richter and Irma A. Richter, I, London, 1939, pp. 371-372.

59 Luciano Berti, Masaccio, University Park, Pennsylvania, 1967, p. 2.

60 Vasari, Lives, I, pp. 93-94.

61 Ibid., pp. 94-95.

62 Ibid., p. 98.

63 Gnudi, Giotto, p. 21.

64 Ibid., pp. 21-22.

65 It should be noted that it was common practice at the time (and on into the seventeenth century) to accept as fact the statement of a predecessor without looking further into the matter. For example, Vasari is accused of having been "too credulous, too ready to accept information from any

source" and of often recording traditions as facts. (Vasari, Lives, trans. E. H. and E. W. Blashfield and A. A. Hopkins, I, New York, 1917, p. XXXVIII.)

66 Vasari, Lives, Foster trans., I, pp. 113-114.

67 Gnudi, Giotto, p. 22.

68 See note 63 above.

69 Ghiberti, p. 309. Also, as far as can be ascertained, the "sheep story" seems to originate with Ghiberti, rather than being a plagiarism from a previous commentator. The earlier anonymous commentator of Dante says that Giotto was apprenticed to a wool-stapler, but spent all of his time in the shop of Cimabue and eventually became the latter's pupil. (J. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle, A History of Painting in Italy, II, London, 1911, p. 29.) And, Vasari, Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori ed architettori, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, I, Florence, 1906, p. 371, refers the story back to Ghiberti. However, as a similar version of Ghiberti's "sheep story" is also applied to other artists, such as Castagno, in the fifteenth century, it is possible that it originated in the Trecento in connection with some artist other than Giotto.

70 Krautheimer, Ghiberti, p. 309.

71 Ibid., pp. 65-66; Giulia Sinibaldi, "Come Lorenzo Ghiberti sentisse Giotto e Ambrogio Lorenzetti," L'arte, XXXI, 1928, p. 82.

72 Krautheimer, Ghiberti, p. 309.

73 Sinibaldi, "Come Lorenzo Ghiberti sentisse Giotto e Ambrogio Lorenzetti," pp. 80-82.

74 The Literary Works of Leonardo, Richter, I, p. 372.

75 Vasari, Lives, Foster trans., pp. 306-307.

76 Ibid., p. 302.

77 Vasari's Life and Lives, p. 162.

78 Gnudi, Giotto, p. 22.

79 The treatise first appeared in Florence in 1435. Luigi Mallé (editor of Leon Battista Alberti, Della pittura, Florence, 1950, p. 8) and Elizabeth Holt (A Documentary History of Art, I, p. 205), however, interpret the dedication as referring to 1428 when Alberti first returned to Florence after the exile of his family. Alberti says: "But after I was brought back here to this city of ours, adorned above

all others, from the long exile in which we Alberti have grown old, I realized that in many, but especially in you, Filippo, and in those others, Nencio, Luca, and Masaccio, there was talent for every noble thing not to be ranked below any who was ancient and famous in these arts." (Holt, pp. 205-206.) This date, 1428, would explain the lack of mention of such artists as Andrea del Castagno, Domenico Veneziano, Fra Filippo Lippi, Paolo Uccello, and Fra Angelico who were not yet fully involved with the progressive trends. Of the five artists who are mentioned, the only question arising concerns Luca della Robbia for whom there is no documentation of his artistic career before 1431, when the Cantoria was begun. But as Charles Seymour, Jr. says: "he can hardly have been entrusted with so important a commission as that of the first Cantoria in the Duomo without being well known to the Operai and without enjoying their full confidence as a sculptor." (Sculpture in Italy, 1400 to 1500, Baltimore, 1968, pp. 92-93.) It is evident that Alberti felt that Luca della Robbia's art contributed to the new style developing in Florence at the time and if, as seems likely, the dedication dates to 1428, then perhaps Luca's inclusion is proof of the fact that his art manifested progressive tendencies before 1431.

80 Alberti, On Painting, p. 15.

81 Ibid., pp. 29-30; Krautheimer, Ghiberti, p. 251; Clark, Alberti On Painting, pp. 6-7.

82 Alberti, On Painting, p. 12; Clark, Alberti on Painting, pp. 16-18.

83 Alberti, Della pittura, p. 95.

84 Clark, Alberti On Painting, p. 18. Although John Pope-Hennessy in his book on Paolo Uccello (London, 1969) makes no direct reference to Alberti's passage concerning the Navicella, he too sees an influence from Alberti in Uccello's Deluge. Among other things, he mentions Uccello's use of a wide range of gestures to convey "motions of the spirit" as being inspired by Alberti's treatise. (pp. 16, 20.)

85 Paul-Henri Michel, in La pensée de L. B. Alberti, (Paris, 1930) points out that in Della pittura, Alberti is speaking primarily as a theoretician, and that of the works cited as examples, the only one he could actually have seen is Giotto's Navicella. All of the others were known to him only through written descriptions. (p. 468) Therefore, since theory alone, with no accompanying visual experience, was sufficient to communicate Alberti's ideas in all cases concerning examples from antiquity, it can be assumed that the same would hold true for Giotto's Navicella.

86 Vasari, Lives, Foster trans., p. 105.

87 Eimerl, The World of Giotto, p. 7.

88 Vasari, Lives, Foster trans., p. 122.

All three editions of Vasari's Lives which were used (Foster trans., II, p. 243; Blashfield and Hopkins trans., II, p. 227; Milanese ed., III, p. 337) indicate in footnotes that the people of Florence--the comune--and not Lorenzo de' Medici commissioned this work. However, both Martin Wackernagel (Der Lebensraum des Künstlers in der florentinischen Renaissance, Leipzig, 1938, p. 269) and Edoardo Bizzarri (Il Magnifico Lorenzo, 1950, p. 280) say that it was Lorenzo who had this and other memorials put up at this time. (See note 12 of Michelangelo section.)

89 Eimerl, The World of Giotto, p. 7.

CHAPTER III: ARTISTIC EVIDENCES IN THE RENAISSANCE

Introduction

1 Jacques Mesnil, Masaccio et les débuts de la renaissance, La Haye, 1927, p. 4.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., p. 16.

4 Berti, Masaccio, pp. 4, 69.

5 John Pope-Hennessy, Fra Angelico, London, 1952, pp. 10, 15, 31; Giuseppe Marchini, "Gli affreschi perduti di Giotto in una capella di S. Croce," Rivista d'arte, XX, 1938, p. 224.

6 See Michelangelo section.

7 For example, Donatello, whose sculpture contributed to the formation of the Italian Renaissance style and often exhibits characteristics of the "Florentine" style, drew upon many classicizing sources other than Giotto.

8 Ghiberti, I commentari, p. 32.

9 Vasari, Lives, Foster trans., pp. 93-95.

10 Eve Borsook, The Mural Painters of Tuscany, Garden City, 1960, p. 9.

11 Bernard Berenson, The Italian Painters of the Renaissance, Garden City, 1953.

12 Berti, Masaccio, p. 46.

13 Ibid., p. 38.

14 Ghiberti, I commentari, p. 33; Vasari, Lives, Foster trans., pp. 95-96.

15 Vasari, Lives, Foster trans., p. 96. The article by Giuseppe Marchini ("Gli affreschi perduti di Giotto in una capella di S. Croce," Rivista d'arte, XX, 1938, pp. 215-241) is an attempt to reconstruct each scene in the Tosinghi-Spinelli Chapel by analysing the form of its depiction by fourteenth-century artists succeeding Giotto. In each case, he arrives at several depictions which he feels must have followed Giotto's prototype in the Tosinghi-Spinelli Chapel.

16 Vasari, Lives, Foster trans., pp. 95-96.

17 Leonetto Tintori and Eve Borsook, Giotto, The Peruzzi Chapel, New York, 1965, p. 22.

The Art of Masaccio

1 Meiss, Painting in Florence and Siena, p. 3.

2 Il libro dell'arte, II, p. 2.

3 The Literary Works of Leonardo, Richter, I, p. 372.

4 Maso di Banco is an exception to the rule of Giotto's fourteenth-century followers. Of Giotto's pupils, he was "perhaps closest to the master" in artistic expression. (Frederick Hartt, History of Italian Renaissance Art, Englewood Cliffs, n.d. /1969/, p. 69.) It is possible that he assisted Giotto with the Santa Croce frescoes (Hartt, Italian Renaissance Art, p. 69) and he later became an independent painter, executing his own frescoes in the Bardi di Vernio Chapel found in the same church. Retaining the basic substance of Giotto's art, Maso elaborated the spatial play of the setting, and although the precise nature of his influence is uncertain, his art is undoubtedly an important link between Giotto and the Renaissance.

5 Berti, Masaccio, p. 20.

6 Frederick Antal, Florentine Painting and its Social Background, London, 1948, p. 310.

7 Frederick Hartt, Italian Renaissance Art, p. 52, agrees with Antal to the extent that he sees in Giotto's art manifestations of middle class values. He does not, however, suggest a one-to-one relationship between class and style, and thus, he does not formulate a rule against which other artists can be measured. He explains Giotto's style in terms of a specific class conflict between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines taking place in Florence during most of the Dugento. By the turn of the century, the Guelphs--the artisans and merchants--had gained power over the Ghibellines, or the feudal nobility. "It is against this triumph of the energetic, prosperous commercial and artisan class, who equated their values with the highest ideals of the state, that one must understand the firm, quiet, eminently practical art of Giotto, with its emphasis on clarity, measure, balance, order, and on the carefully observed drama developing between human beings at close quarters."

8 Berti, Masaccio, p. 46.

9 Ibid., p. 43.

10 Ibid., p. 46.

11 Berenson, Italian Painters, p. 50.

12 Tintori and Borsook, Peruzzi Chapel, p. 22.

13 Ibid.

14 Berti, Masaccio, p. 111.

15 Ibid., p. 104.

16 John White, The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space, London, 1957, p. 137.

17 Berti (Masaccio, p. 107) and Mesnil (Masaccio, p. 72) also mention this. Mesnil refers to this building set at an angle as "a caesura between the two principal figures," while Berti more accurately describes it's function as "a kind of hinge for the two groups of figures."

18 Berti, Masaccio, p. 96.

19 Ibid., pp. 109-112.

20 White, Pictorial Space, p. 138.

21 Ibid.

22 Philip Hendy, intro., Masaccio, Frescoes in Florence, New York Graphic Society, 1956, p. 10.

23 White, Pictorial Space, p. 135.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., p. 137; Mesnil, Masaccio, p. 105.

26 Berti, Masaccio, pp. 28-29, 70, 80, 109-110.

27 Ibid., p. 82.

28 Ibid., pp. 22-24, 79.

29 Philip Hendy, intro., Masaccio, p. 8, has pointed out how the naturalistic accessories of Masaccio's art serve as a foil for his ideal on earth. Referring to the confrontation between the tax-collector and Christ and his disciples in the Tribute Money, he says: "The spiritual grandeur of this dedicated body of men is set in relief by the mundane triviality which has sought to impinge upon it."

30 White, Pictorial Space, p. 137.

31 Mesnil, Masaccio, p. 63. The two miracles take place in the neighboring cities of Lydda and Joppa, and Frederick Hartt (Italian Renaissance Art, p. 161) has found an explanation for these seemingly "incidental" figures passing from one city to the other. "It has recently been shown," he says, "that the two foppish young gentlemen in the center of the fresco are by no means supernumeraries: they are the messengers sent from Joppa to fetch St. Peter and St. John with the greatest speed, although their characteristic Masolino doll-faces betray little sense of urgency." Thus, there is a reason for their presense, as they are a part of the story. And yet, due to the treatment and placement of these young men, the judgment of Mesnil that the figures are "incidental" and only artificially connected to the whole remains valid.

32 Ibid., p. 62.

The Art of Piero della Francesca

1 Richard Offner, "Giotto, Non-Giotto," The Burlington Magazine, LXXIV, 1939, p. 261.

2 Offner, "Giotto-Non-Giotto," LXXIV, pp. 259-268; LXXV, pp. 96-113. Also unpublished seminar paper of Charles Herrington, "Arena Chapel--Style and Expression," University of Wisconsin, 1969.

3 The facial features of Piero's men are individualized within a restricted range of types, while the facial and bodily expressions remain generalized.

4 Bernard Berenson, Piero della Francesca, or The Ineloquent in Art, New York, 1954, pp. 3-5.

5 Ibid., p. 7.

6 Ibid., p. 29.

7 John White, Art and Architecture in Italy, 1250 to 1400, Baltimore, 1966, p. 220; and the unpublished seminar paper of Christie Fengler, "The Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels," University of Wisconsin, 1969.

8 Fengler, "Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels," seminar paper.

9 Piero Bianconi, All the Paintings of Piero della Francesca, trans. Paul Colacicchi, New York, 1962, p. 21.

10 Roberto Longhi, Piero della Francesca, trans. Leonard Penlock, New York, 1930, p. 69.

11 Kenneth Clark, Piero della Francesca, New York, 1951, p. 21; Bianconi, All the Paintings of Piero, p. 19; Roberto Longhi, Piero della Francesca, Florence, 1963, p. 81.

12 Clark, Piero, p. 29.

13 Discussed throughout White, Art and Architecture, and Offner, "Giotto Non-Giotto."

14 Clark, Piero, p. 29.

15 Longhi, Piero, 1930, p. 55.

16 Philip Hendy, Piero della Francesca and the Early Renaissance, London, 1968, p. 87.

17 Longhi, Piero, 1930, p. 71.

18 Hendy, Piero and the Early Renaissance, p. 84.

19 Clark, Piero, p. 12.

20 White, Art and Architecture, pp. 209-211; Herrington, "Arena Chapel," seminar paper.

21 Art and Architecture, p. 209.

22 Ibid., p. 220.

23 John White, "Developments in Renaissance Perspective-II," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XIV, 1951, p. 68.

24 White, Art and Architecture, p. 220; Fengler, "Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels," seminar paper.

25 White, Art and Architecture, p. 222; Fengler, "Bardi and Peruzzi Chapels," seminar paper.

26 White, Art and Architecture, p. 209.

27 Ibid., pp. 205, 221.

28 Hendy, Piero and the Early Renaissance, p. 91.

29 White, Art and Architecture, p. 216.

30 Other artists of the Renaissance who were influenced (or supposed to have been influenced) by Giotto include Fra Angelico (see note 5, Chapter III, Introduction), Ghirlandaio (see section on Michelangelo), Donatello (Janson, Donatello, pp. 45, 70-72, 98-99; Maud Cruttwell, Donatello, London, 1911, p. 125), and Andrea del Castagno (Mario Salmi, Andrea del Castagno, Novara, 1961, pp. 13, 15-16, 28-29, 56).

31 Clark, Piero, pp. 2-3.

32 Ibid., p. 3; Longhi, Piero, 1930, p. 12.

33 Longhi, Piero, 1930 and Clark, Piero.

34 Clark, Piero, p. 8; Longhi, Piero, 1930, p. 11.

35 The dates used are those given by Clark, Piero.

36 Hendy, Piero and the Early Renaissance, pp. 73-78.

37 For example, concerning Masaccio, Piero's name does not appear in Vasari's list of artists who studied in the Brancacci Chapel (Clark, Piero, p. 6).

38 Longhi, Piero, 1930, p. 13.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid., p. 14.

41 It was mentioned in Chapter III, The Art of Masaccio, note 4 that Maso di Banco possibly assisted Giotto with these frescoes. His hand seems especially apparent in the Peruzzi Chapel.

- 42 Clark, Piero, pp. 5-6.
- 43 Ibid., p. 6.
- 44 Ibid., p. 41.
- 45 Longhi, Piero, 1930, p. 80.
- 46 Clark, Piero, p. 6.
- 47 Hendy, Piero and the Early Renaissance, p. 50.
- 48 Clark, Piero, p. 6.
- 49 Ibid., p. 7.
- 50 Clark, Alberti On Painting, p. 19.
- 51 Alberti, On Painting, p. 31.
- 52 Clark, Alberti on Painting, p. 19.

The Art of Michelangelo

1 The Complete Works of Michelangelo, Chapter I, Charles de Tolnay, New York, 1967, p. 8; Robert Coughlan, The World of Michelangelo, 1475-1564, New York, 1966, p. 28; Charles de Tolnay, The Youth of Michelangelo, Princeton, 1943, p. 65.

2 The Complete Works of Michelangelo, de Tolnay, p. 8.

3 Tintori and Borsook, Peruzzi Chapel, p. 22; Coughlan, The World of Michelangelo, p. 28; de Tolnay, Youth of Michelangelo, p. 178, says that "in the final analysis," he believes them to be from the Ghirlandaio period, 1488, "since after Michelangelo's entrance into the school of the Giardino Mediceo the antique influence was to dominate."

4 R. Ward Bissell, course entitled Renaissance Painting, The University of Wisconsin, 1969. This is very plausible, for the figure looks very much like an elder magus. However, the figure does not coincide closely with any of the magi in The Adoration of the Magi of the School of Orcagna (Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia) which Marchini ("Affreschi perduti di Giotto") uses as an example of a scene very likely influenced by Giotto's in the Tosinchi-Spinelli Chapel.

5 de Tolnay, Youth of Michelangelo, p. 67.

6 Ibid., p. 68.

7 Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Painting in Italy, IV, p. 307; Piero Bargellini, Il Ghirlandaio del bel mondo fiorentino, Florence, 1946, pp. 80, 122; Tintori and Borsook, Peruzzi Chapel, p. 22; Ernst Steinmann, Ghirlandajo, Leipzig, 1897; Gerald S. Davies, Ghirlandaio, London, 1909.

8 Bargellini, Ghirlandaio, p. 122; Steinmann, Ghirlandajo, p. 25; Davies, Ghirlandaio, pp. 71-73, 80.

9 Davies, Ghirlandaio, p. 71. It seems that Benedetto da Maiano, in depicting scenes from the life of Saint Francis on his pulpit in Santa Croce, also followed Giotto in choice of subject matter (Steinmann, Ghirlandajo, p. 25), and in the composition of such a scene as the Funeral of St. Francis.

10 Steinmann, Ghirlandajo, p. 26.

11 Davies, Ghirlandaio, p. 80.

12 Bizzarri, (Il Magnifico Lorenzo, p. 280) and Wackernagel (Der Lebensraum, pp. 268-269) mention that about this same time Lorenzo also had memorials put up for Fra Filippo Lippi (in Spoleto, with an inscription written by Poliziano) and for the musician Antonio Squarcialupi (in Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence). Bizzarri adds that perhaps Lorenzo contemplated making a kind of Pantheon of Florentine glory in Santa Maria del Fiore.

13 Seymour, Sculpture in Italy, p. 213, says the following about Michelangelo's early training: "The subject of Michelangelo's training as a sculptor was never treated by a completely trustworthy source. Who was his master, or were his masters, may never be established... Reasonable doubts may be raised by Vasari's account of his self-taught experiments under Bertoldo's benign supervision in the Medici Garden. It must be remembered that Bertoldo was a bronze-worker, not a carver, which the young Michelangelo was not only by predilection but in fact. Michelangelo's early preserved work has a fine sensitivity for marble as a material for art that presupposes training with a professional, perhaps in the shop of Benedetto da Majano, who... must have had as assistants a number of the more talented younger sculptors in Florence." It was mentioned above in note 9 that Benedetto was most likely influenced by Giotto in his St. Francis pulpit in Santa Croce.

14 The "lingua volgare" and its greatest poets, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, were placed on a par with Latin and the classics. (de Tolnay, Youth of Michelangelo, p. 177; and Selwyn Brinton, The Golden Age of the Medici, Boston, n.d., p. 173.) de Tolnay also says that the same tendency can be found in Pietro Bembo, Della volgar lingua; Castiglione, Il Cortegiano; Varchi, "L'Ercolano" (p. 177)

15 de Tolnay, Youth of Michelangelo, p. 177.

16 Vasari, Lives, Foster trans., pp. 133-144.

17 Berenson, Italian Painters, pp. 72-77.

18 Charles de Tolnay, The Sistine Ceiling, Princeton, 1945, p. 34. It is probable, however, that Michelangelo's principal source for this was the relief by Jacopo della Quercia on San Petronio at Bologna. (Bissell, course entitled Renaissance Painting.)

19 Bissell, course entitled Renaissance Painting.

20 de Tolnay, Sistine Ceiling, p. 97.

21 Ibid., p. 99.

APPENDIX

1) Dante Alighieri, La divina commedia

Purgatorio, Canto Undicesimo, (section)

Oh vana gloria de l'umane posse!
Com poco verde in su la cima dura,
se non è giunta da l'etati grosse!
Credette Cimabue ne la pintura
tener lo campo, e ora ha Giotto il grido,
sì che la fama di colui è scura.
Così ha tolto l'uno a l'altro Guido
la gloria de la lingua; e forse è nato
chi l'uno e l'altro caccerà del nido.
Non è 'l mondan romore altro ch'un fiato
di vento, ch'or vien quinci e or vien quindi,
e muta nome perchè muta lato. (Dante Alighieri,
La divina commedia, Florence, 1936, pp. 328-329.)

2) Giovanni Boccaccio, Decameron

Giornata Sesta, Novella V, (section)

E l'altro, il cui nome fu Giotto, ebbe uno ingegno di tanta eccellenzia, che niuna cosa dà la natura, madre di tutte le cose e operatrice col continuo girar de' cieli, che egli con lo stile e con la penna o col pennello non dipignesse sì simile a quella, che non simile anzi più tosto dessa paresse, in tanto che molte volte nelle cose da lui fatte si truova che il visivo senso degli uomini vi presse errore, quello credendo esser vero che era dipinto. E perciò, avendo egli quella arte ritornata in luce, che molti secoli sotto gli errori d'alcuni, che più a dilettrar gli occhi degl'ignoranti, che a compiacere allo intelletto de'savi dipignendo, era stata sepolta, meritamente una delle luci della fiorentina gloria dir si puote... (Opera volgari di Giovanni Boccaccio, III, Florence, 1827, pp. 141-142.)

3) Giovanni Boccaccio, Amorosa visione

Capitolo IV, (section)

Chiara era e bella e risplendente d'oro,
D'azzurro di color tutta dipinta
Maestrevolemente in suo lavoro.

Humana man non credo che sospinta
 Mai fosse a tanto ingegno, quanto in quella
 Mostrava ogni figura lì distinta:
 Eccetto se da Giotto, al qual la bella
 Natura, parte di sè somigliante
 Non occultò, nell'atto in che suggella. (Opera volgari
di Giovanni Boccaccio, XIV, Florence, 1833, p. 17.)

4) Francesco Petrarca, Familiarium rerum

Liber Quintus, 17, (section)

Atque ut a veteribus ad nova, ab externis ad nostra
 transgrediar, duos ego novi pictores egregios, nec
 formosos: Iottum, florentinum civem, cuius inter modernos
 fama ingens est, et Simonem senensem... (Francesco
 Petrarca, Le Familiari, ed. Vittorio Rossi, II, Florence,
 1934, p. 39.)

5) Francesco Petrarca, Testamentum, 12.

Et predicto igitur domino meo Paduano, quia et ipse per
 Dei gratiam non eget et ego nihil aliud habeo dignum se,
 dimitto tabulam meam sive iconam beate Virginis Marie,
 operis Iotti pictoris egregii, que mihi ab amico meo
 Michaelae Vannis de Florentia missa est, cuius pulchritud-
 inem ignorantes non intelligunt, magistri autem artis
 stupent; hanc iconam ipsi domino meo lego, ut ipsa virgo
 benedicta sibi sit propitia apud filium suum Iesum
 Christum. (Petrarch's Testament, ed., trans. and intro.
 Theodor E. Mommsen, Ithaca, 1957, pp. 78-80.)

6) Giovanni Villani, Cronica, III

Libro Undecimo, Capitolo XII, (section)

...e provveditore della detta opera di santa Reparata fu
 fatto per lo comune maestro Giotto nostro cittadino, il
 più sovrano maestro stato in dipintura che si trovasse
 al suo tempo, e quegli che più trasse ogni figura e atti
 al naturale; e fugli dato salario dal comune per
 remunerazione della sua virtù e bontà. (Cronica di
Giovanni Villani, ed. Franc. Gherardi Dragomanni, III,
 Florence, 1845, p. 232.)

7) Franco Sacchetti, Il trecentonovelle

Novella CXXXVI, (section)

Nella città di Firenze, che sempre di nuovi uomini è stata doviziosa, furono già certi dipintori e altri maestri, li quali essendo a un luogo fuori della città, che si chiama San Miniato a Monte, per alcuna dipintura e lavoro, che alla chiesa si dovea fare; quando ebbono desinato con l'Abate, e ben pasciuti e bene avvinazzati, cominciarono a questionare; e fra l'altre questione mosse uno, che avea nome l'Orcagna, il quale fu capo maestro dell'oratorio nobile di Nostra Donna d'Orto San Michele: --Qual fu il maggior maestro di dipignere, che altro, che sia stato da Giotto in fuori? -- Chi dicea che fu Cimabue, chi Stefano, chi Bernardo, e chi Buffalmacco, e chi uno e chi un altro. Taddeo Gaddi, che era nella brigata, disse:

--Per certo assai valentri dipintori sono stati, e che hanno dipinto per forma, ch'è impossibile a natura umana poterlo fare; ma questa arte è venuta e viene mancando tutto dì. (Franco Sacchetti, Opera, ed. Aldo Borlenghi, Milan, 1957, pp. 418-419.)

8) Filippo Villani, Liber de civitatis florentiae famosis civibus

VII, De pictoribus, (section)

Post hunc, strata iam in novis via, Giottus non solum illustris famae decore antiquis pictoribus comparandus, sed arte et ingenio praeferendus, in pristinam dignitatem nomenque maximum picturam restituit. Huius enim figuratae radio imagines ita liniamentis naturae conveniunt, ut vivere et anhelitum spirare contuentibus viderentur: exemplares etiam actus, gestusque conficere adeo proprie, ut loqui, flere, laetari et alia agere, non sine delectatione contuentis, et laudantis ingenium manumque artificis prospectentur, aestimantibus multis nec sculptas quidem. Pictores non inferioris ingenii his, quos liberales artes fecere magistros, cum illius artis praecepta scriptis demandata studio et doctrina percipiant: hi solum ab alto ingenio tenacique memoria quae in arte sentiant mutuuntur.

Fuit sane Giottus, seposita arte picturae, vir magni consilii, et qui multarum rerum usum habuerat: historiarum insuper notitiam plenam habens, ita poesis extitit aemulator, ut pingere quae ille fingeret subtiliter considerantibus perpendatur.

Fuit etiam, ut virum decuit prudentissimum, famae potius quam lucri cupidus: unde ampliandi nominis cupidine, per omnes fere Italiae civitates famosas, locis spectabilibus aliquid pinxit: Romae praesertim in foribus ecclesiae Sancti Petri trans Tiberim, musaico periclitantes navi Apostolos artificiosissime figuravit, ut confluenti orbi terrarum ad Urbem, indulgentiarum temporibus, de se arteque sua spectaculum faceret. Pinxit insuper speculorum suffragio semetipsum, sibique contemporaneum Dantem, in tabula altaris Capellae Palatii Potestatis.

Ab hoc viro laudabili, velut a fonte abundantissimo et sincero picturae, rivuli indictissimi defluerunt, qui novatam aemulatricem naturae picturam pretiosam placidamque conficerent... (Philippi Villani, Liber de civitatis florentiae famosis civibus, ed. Gustavi Camilli Galletti, Florence, 1847, pp. 35-36.)

9) Cennino d'Andrea Cennini, Il libro dell'arte

Capitolo Primo della Prima Parte, (section)

Cennino, d'Andrea Cennini da Cholle di Valdessa nato,-- (fui informato nella detta arte xii anni da Anagnolo di Taddeo da Firenze, mio maestro; il quale imparo la detta arte da Taddeo suo padre; il quale suo padre fu battezzato da Giotto, e fu suo discepolo anni xxiii; il quale Giotto rimuto l'arte del dipingnere di grecho in latino, e ridusse al moderno; e ebe l'arte piu compiute ch'avessi mai piu nessuno)... (Cennino d'Andrea Cennini, Il libro dell'arte, ed. Daniel V. Thompson, Jr., I, New Haven, 1932, p. 2.)

10) Benvenuto Rambaldi da Imola, Comentum super Dantis Aldigherij

Comoediam, Comentum Purgatorii, (section)

Hic poeta confirmat dictum suum per exempla moderna, quae clare manifestant expositionem factam; et primo ponit exemplum duorum concivium suorum, quorum unus nomine Cimabos fuit excellens pictor. Alter nomine Giottus fuit excellentior illo; ideo cito derogavit gloriae eius. Ad literam ergo, dicit poeta, vel Odorisius: Cimabue, tuus florentinus, credette tener lo campo nella pintura, idest, victoriam gloriae in arte pingendi, sed spes eius est delusa, quia non reperit se in aetatibus grossis, imo subtilioribus. Unde dicit: et ora ha Giotto il grido, idest, rumore famae et

gloriae, sì che la fama di colui, scilicet, Cimabovis, oscura. Et hic nota, lector, quod poeta noster merito facit commendationem Giotti, ratione civitatis, ratione virtutis, ratione familiaritatis. De isto namque Giotto faciunt mentionem et laudem alii duo poetae florentini, scilicet Petrarca et Boccatus, qui scribit, quod tanta fuit excellentia ingenii et artis huius nobilis pictoris, quod nullam rem rerum natura produxit, quam iste non repraesentaret tam propriam, ut oculus intuentium saepe falleretur accipiens rem pictam pro vera. Accidit autem semel quod dum Giottus pingeret Paduae, adhuc satis juvenis, unam cappellam in loco ubi fuit olim theatrum, sive harena, Dantes pervenit ad locum: quem Giottus honorifice receptum duxit ad domum suam, ubi Dantes videns plures infantulos eius summe deformes, et, ut cito dicam, simillimos patri, petivit: egregie magister, nimis miror, quod cum in arte pictoria dicamini non habere parem, unde est, quod alienas figuras facitis tam formosas, vestras vero tam turpes! Cui Giottus subridens, praesto respondit: Quia pingo de die, sed fingo de nocte. Haec responsio summe placuit Danti, non quia sibi esset nova, cum inveniatur ab ingenio hominis. Iste Giottus vixit postea diu; nam mortuus est in MCCCXXXVI. Et sic nota, quod Giottus adhuc tenet campum, quia nondum venit alius eo subtilior, cum tamen fecerit aliquando magnos errores in picturis suis, ut audivi a magnis ingeniis. Ista ars pingendi et sculpendi habuit olim mirabiliores artifices apud graecos et latinos, ut patet per Plinium in naturali historia. (Benevenuti de Rambaldis de Imola, Comentum super Dantis Aldigherij Comoediam, ed. J. P. Lacaïta, III, Florence, 1887, pp. 312-313.)

11) Matteo Palmieri, Della vita civile, (section).

Di quinci veggiamo innanzi a Giotto la pittura morta, e maestra di figure da ridere, da lui rilevata, e da'suoi discepoli mantenuta, e ad altri data, essere venuta, ed essere in molti quanto più può degnissima. L'intaglio e l'architettura da noi indrieto per lunghissimo tempo, maestre di sciocche maraviglie, in nella età nostra si sono rilevate, tornate in luce, e da più maestri pulitesi e fatte perfette. (Matteo Palmieri, Della vita civile, in Scrittori politici, Milan, 1839, p. 342.)

12) Lorenzo Ghiberti, I commentari

Commentario Secondo, (section)

(2) Cominciò l'arte della pittura a sormontare in Etruria. In una villa allato alla città di Firenze, la quale si chiamava Vespignano, nacque un fanciullo di mirabile ingegno, il quale si ritraeva del naturale una pecora. In su passando Cimabue pittore per la strada a Bologna vide il fanciullo sedente in terra e disegnava in su una lastra una pecora. Prese grandissima ammirazione del fanciullo, essendo di sì piccola età fare tanto bene. Domandò, veggendo aver l'arte da natura, il fanciullo come egli aveva nome. Rispose e disse: --Per nome io son chiamato Giotto: il mio padre à nome Bondoni e sta in questa casa che è appresso. --disse. Cimabue andò con Giotto al padre: aveva bellissima presenza: chiese al padre il fanciullo: il padre era poverissimo. Concedetegli il fanciullo e Cimabue menò seco Giotto e fu discepolo di Cimabue: tenea la maniera greca, in quella maniera ebbe in Etruria grandissima fama: fecesi Giotto grande nell'arte della pittura.

(3) Arrecò l'arte nuova, lascio la rozzezza de' Greci, sormonto eccellentissimamente in Etruria. E fecionsi egregissime opere e specialmente nella città di Firenze ed in molti altri luoghi, ed assai discepoli furono tutti dotti al pari degli antichi Greci. Vide Giotto nell'arte quello che gli altri non aggiunsono. Arreco l'arte naturale e la gentilezza con essa, non uscendo delle misure. Fu peritissimo in tutta l'arte, fu inventore e trovatore di tanta dottrina, la quale era stata sepolta circa d'anni 600. Quando la natura vuole concedere alcuna cosa, la concede senza veruna avarizia. (Lorenzo Ghiberti, I commentari, ed. Ottavio Morisani, Naples, 1947, pp. 32-33.)

13) Leonardo da Vinci, Codex Atlanticus, 141a

Come la pittura d'età in età va declinando e pēdēdosi, quādo pittori non ànno per autore altro che la fatta pittura

Siccome il pittore avrà la sua pittura di poca ecciellenza, se quello piglia per autore l'altrui pitture, ma s'egli jnparerà dalle cose naturali farà bono frutto, come vedemo in ne' pittori dopo i Romani, i quali senpre imitarono l'uno dall'altro e di età in età senpre andava detta arte i dechinazione; dopo questi venne Giotto Fiorētino, il quale /nō è stato

cōtēto allo imitare l'opere di Cimabue suo maestro⁷ nato
 ī mōti soletari, abitati solo da capre e simil bestie,
 --questo, sēdo volto dalla natura a simile arte, comīciò
 a disegnare sopra i sassi li atti delle capre delle
 quali lui era guardatore; e così comīciò a fare tutti li
 animali che nel paese si trovavā in tal modo, che questo
 dopo molto studio avāzò nō che i maestri della sua età,
 ma tutti quelli di molti secoli passati; dopo questo
 l'arte ricadde, perchè tutti imitavano le fatte pitture,
 e così di secolo ī secolo ādò declinādo īsino a tātō,
 che Tomaso fiorētino, cognominato Masaccio, mostrò con
 opera perfetta co me quelli che pigliavano per autore
 altro che la natura, maestra dei maestri, s'afaticavano
 īuano... (The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci, ed.
 Jean Paul Richter and Irma A. Richter, I, London, 1939,
 pp. 371-372.)

14) Giorgio Vasari, Le vite de'più eccellenti pittori
 scultori ed architettori, Giotto, (sections)

- A. Quell'obbligo stesso che hanno gli artefici pittori
 alla natura, la quale serve continuamente per esempio
 a coloro che, cavando il buono dalle parti di lei
 migliori e più belle, di contraffarla ed imitarla
 s'ingegnano sempre; avere, per mio credere, si deve a
 Giotto, pittore fiorentino: periocchè, essendo stati
 sotterrati tanti anni dalle rovine delle guerre i modi
 delle buone pitture e i dintorni di quelle, egli solo,
 ancora che nato fra artefici inetti, per dono di Dio,
 quella che era per mala via, buona. E veramente fu
 miracolo grandissimo, che quella età e grossa ed inetta
 avesse forza d'operare in Giotto sì dottamente, che il
 disegno, del quale poca o niuna cognizione avevano gli
 uomini di que'tempi, mediante lui ritornasse del tutto
 in vita.
- B. ...diyenne così buono imitatore della natura, che
 sbandì affatto quella goffa maniera greca, e risuscitò
 la moderna e buona arte della pittura...
- C. E perchè, altre quello che aveva Giotto da natura, fu
 studiosissimo, ed andò sempre nuove cose pensando e
 dalla natura cavando, meritò d'esser chiamato discepolo
 della natura, e non d'altri. (Giorgio Vasari, Le vite
 de'più eccellenti pittori scultori ed architettori, ed.
 Gaetano Milanesi, I, Florence, 1906, A-p. 369, B-p.
 372, C-p. 378.)

15) Leon Battista Alberti, Della pittura

Libro Secondo, (section)

Lodasi la nave dipinta ad Roma in quale el nostro toscano dipintore Giotto pose undici discepoli, tutti commossi da paura vedendo uno de suoi compagni passeggiare sopra l'acqua, ch  ivi expresse ciascuno con suo viso et gesto porgere suo certo inditio d'animo turbato, tale che in ciascuno erano suoi diversi movimenti et stati. (Leon Battista Alberti, Della pittura, ed. Luigi Mall , Florence, 1950, p. 95.)

16) Angelo Poliziano, Inscription accompanying medallion of Giotto, Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence.

Ille ego sum per quem pictura exstincta revixit,
 Cui quam recta manus, tam fuit et facilis.
 Naturae deerat, nostrae quod defuit Arti:
 Plus licuit nulli pingere nec melius.
 Miraris turrem egregiam sacro aere sonantem:
 Haec quoque de modulo crevit ad astra meo.
 Denique sum Jottus: quid opus fuit illa referre?
 Hoc Nomen longi carminis instar erat.

Ob. an MCCCXXXVI. Cives pos. B.M. MCCCCLXXXX. (From Filippo Villani, Le vite d'uomini illustri fiorentini, annotated by Giammaria Mazzuchelli, Florence, 1847, p. 124.)



Figure 1. Giotto, Death of Saint Francis, c. 1315-1320,
Bardi **Chapel**, Santa Croce, Florence

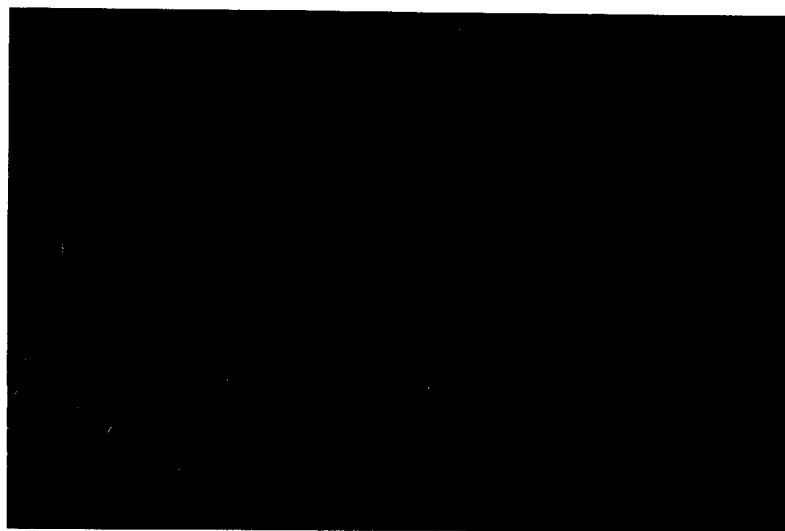


Figure 2. Giotto, Navicella, c. 1301-1305, (mosaic restored
in the seventeenth century), Basilica of Saint
Peter, Rome

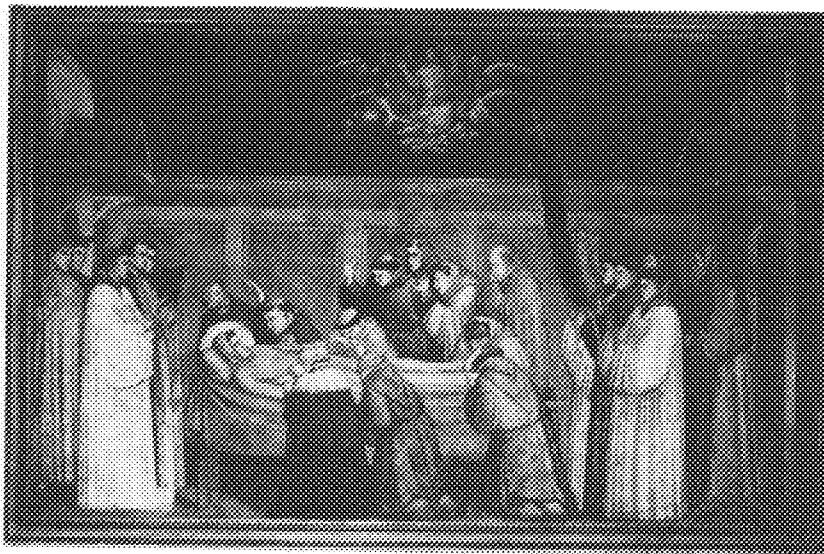


Figure 1. Giotto, Death of Saint Francis, c. 1315-1320,
Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

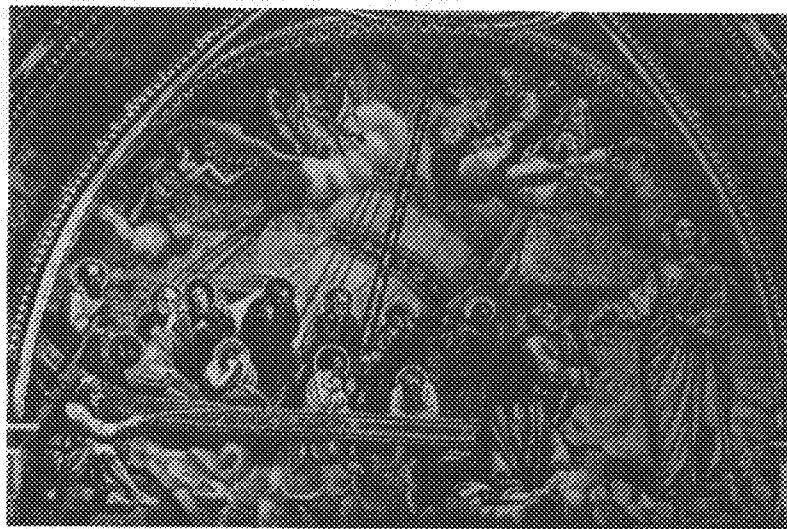


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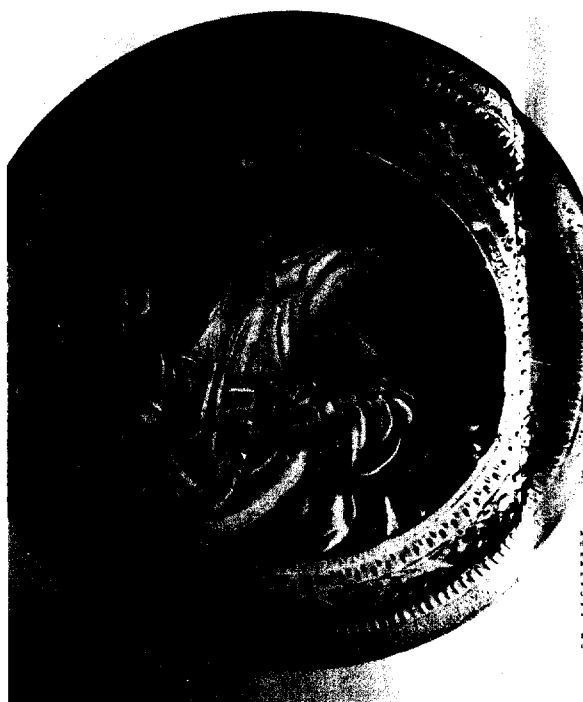


Figure 3. Benedetto da Maiano, Portrait of Giotto, 1490,
Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence



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Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence

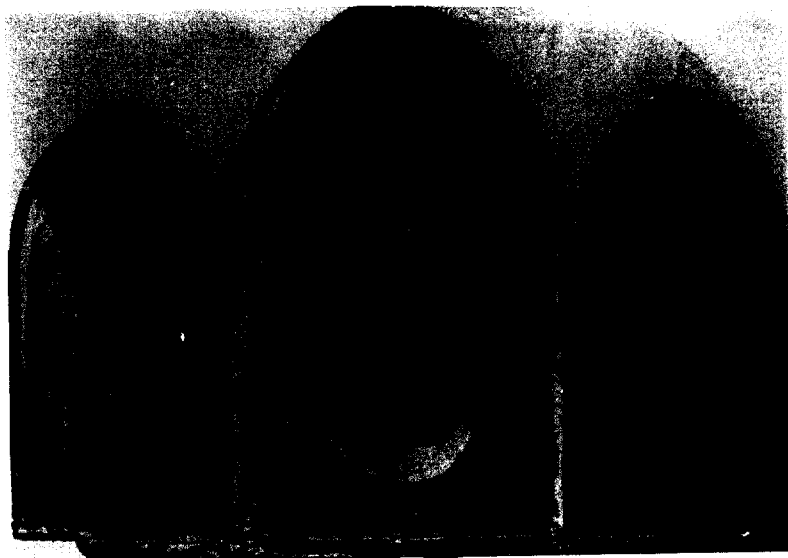


Figure 4. Masaccio, San Giovenale Triptych, 1422, San
Giovenale, Cascia di Reggello

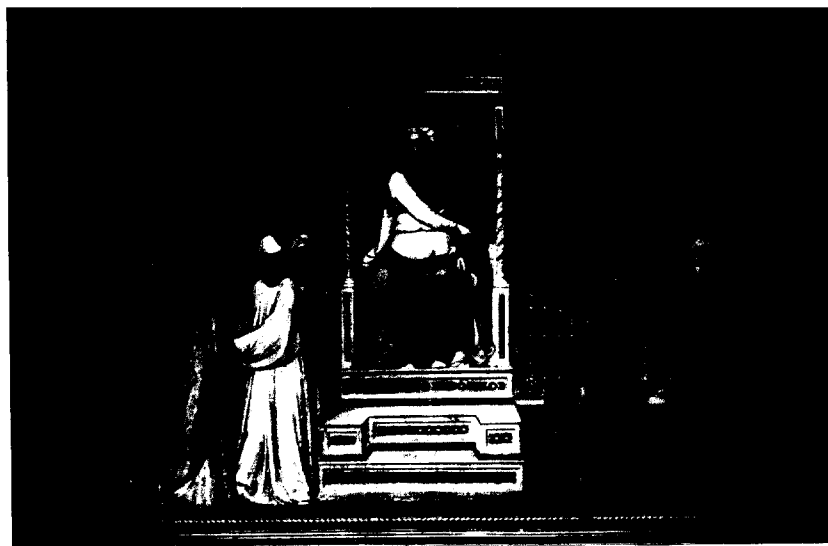


Figure 5. Giotto, Trial by Fire, c. 1315-1320, Bardi Chapel,
Santa Croce, Florence

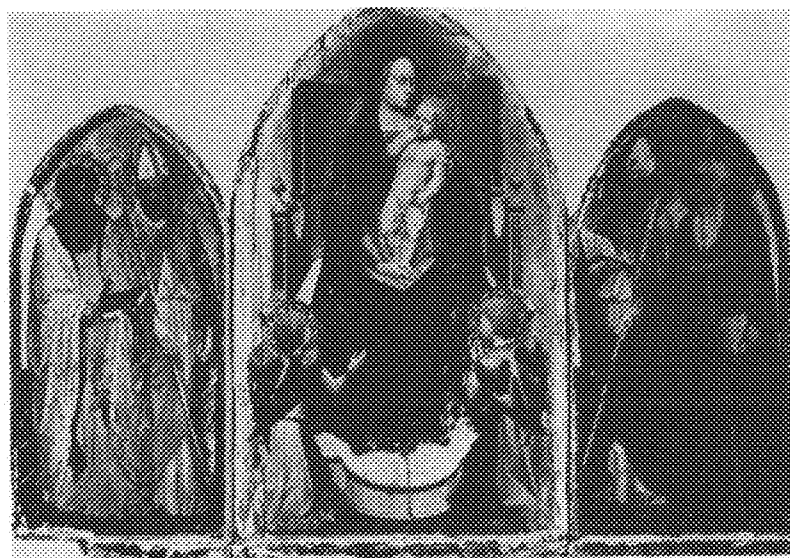


Figure 4. Masaccio, San Giovenale Triptych, 1422, San
Giovenale, Cascia di Reggello

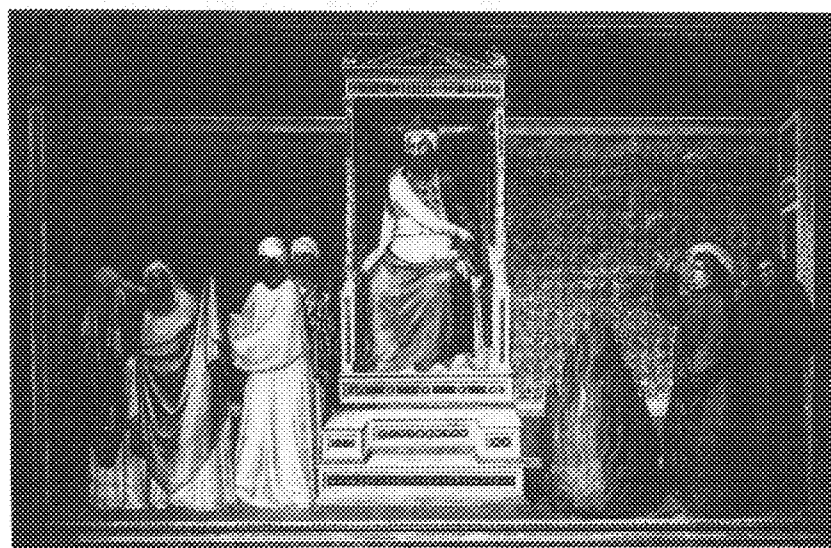


Figure 5. Giotto, Trial by Fire, c. 1315-1320, Bardi Chapel,
Santa Croce, Florence

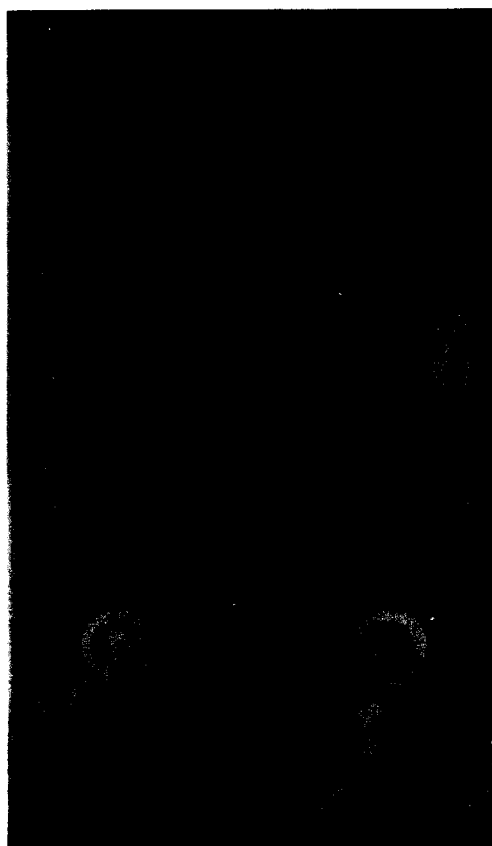


Figure 6. Masaccio, Pisa Polyptych, detail, 1426,
National Gallery, London



Figure 6. Masaccio, Pisa Polyptych, detail, 1426,
National Gallery, London



Figure 7. Giotto, Resurrection of Drusiana, c. mid 1320s,
Peruzzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence



Figure 8. Masaccio, The Tribute Money, c. 1425, Brancacci
Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence

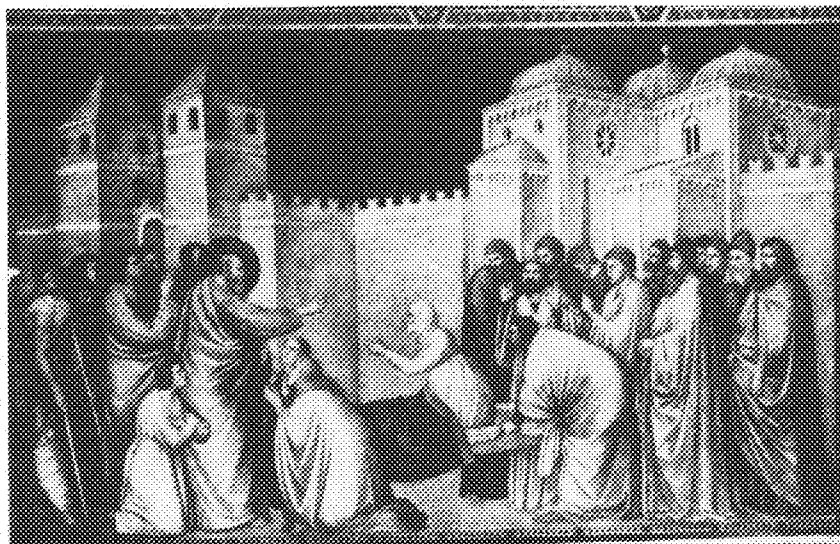


Figure 7. Giotto, Resurrection of Drusiana, c. mid 1320s,
Peruzzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence



Figure 8. Masaccio, The Tribute Money, c. 1425, Brancacci
Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence



Figure 9. Masaccio, St. Peter Baptizing the Neophytes, 1425, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence



Figure 10. Masaccio and Filippino Lippi, The Raising of the Son of Theophilus, 1427, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence

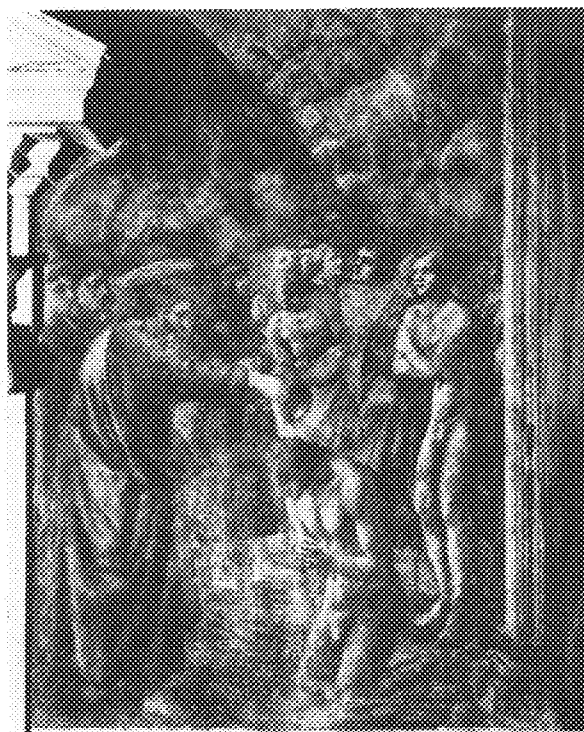


Figure 9. Masaccio, St. Peter Baptizing the Neophytes, 1425, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence



Figure 10. Masaccio and Filippino Lippi, The Raising of the Son of Theophilus, 1427, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence



Figure 11. Giotto, St. Francis Renouncing his Inheritance,
c. 1315-1320, Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence



Figure 12. Giotto, Ascension of St. John, c. mid 1320s, Peruzzi
Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

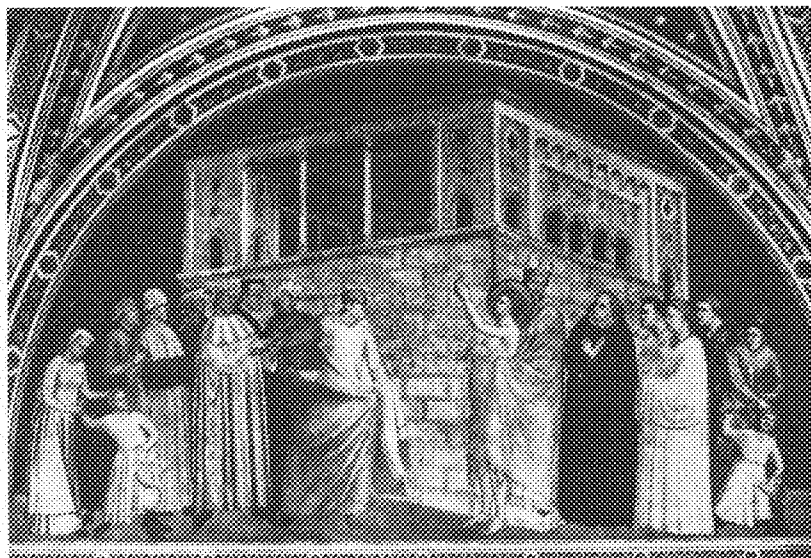


Figure 11. Giotto, St. Francis Renouncing his Inheritance,
c. 1315-1320, Bardì Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

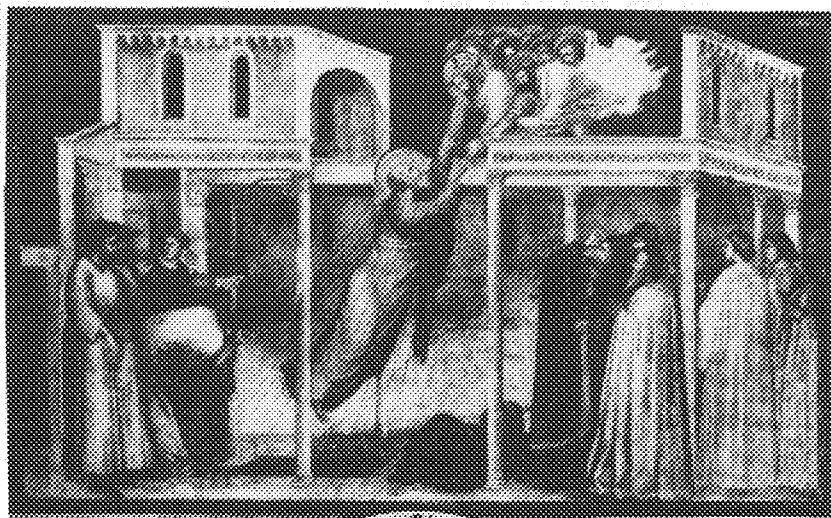


Figure 12. Giotto, Ascension of St. John, c. mid 1320s, Peruzzi
Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence



Figure 13. Giotto, Apparition at Arles, c. 1315-1320,
Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

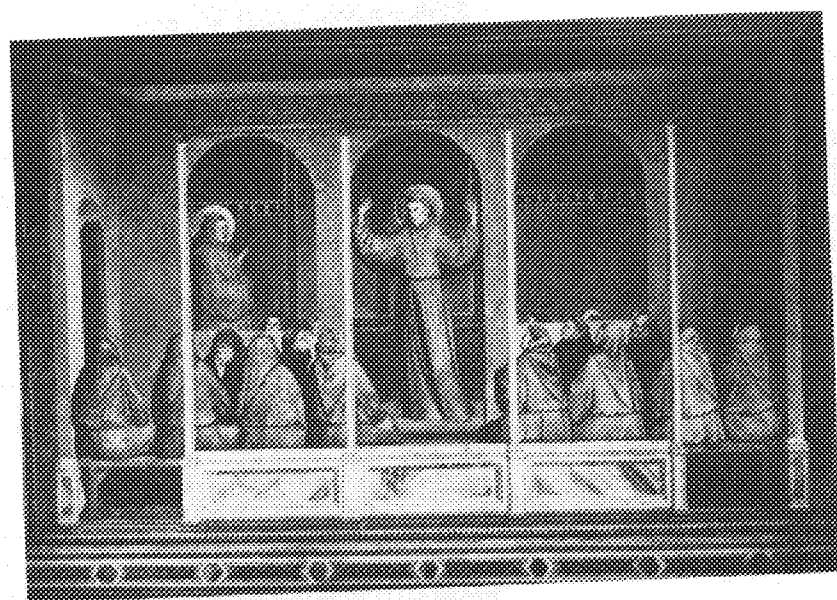


Figure 13. Giotto, Apparition at Arles, c. 1315-1320,
Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

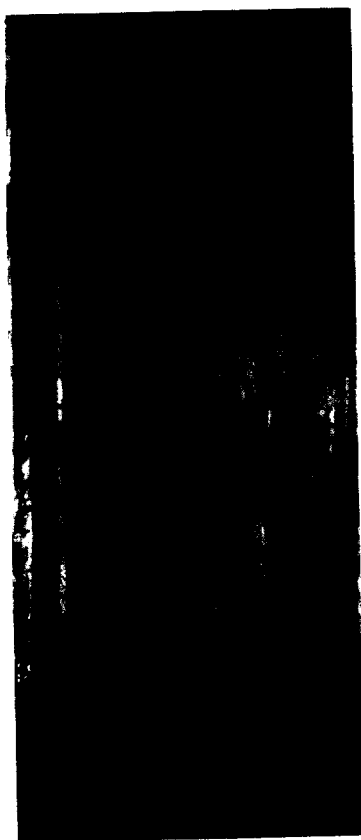


Figure 14. Masaccio, Expulsion of Adam and Eve,
c. 1425, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria
del Carmine, Florence



Figure 14. Masaccio, Expulsion of Adam and Eve,
c. 1425, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria
del Carmine, Florence



Figure 15. (Left) Masaccio, St. Peter Healing with his Shadow, 1427, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence



Figure 16. (Right) Masaccio, Distribution of the Alms, 1427, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence

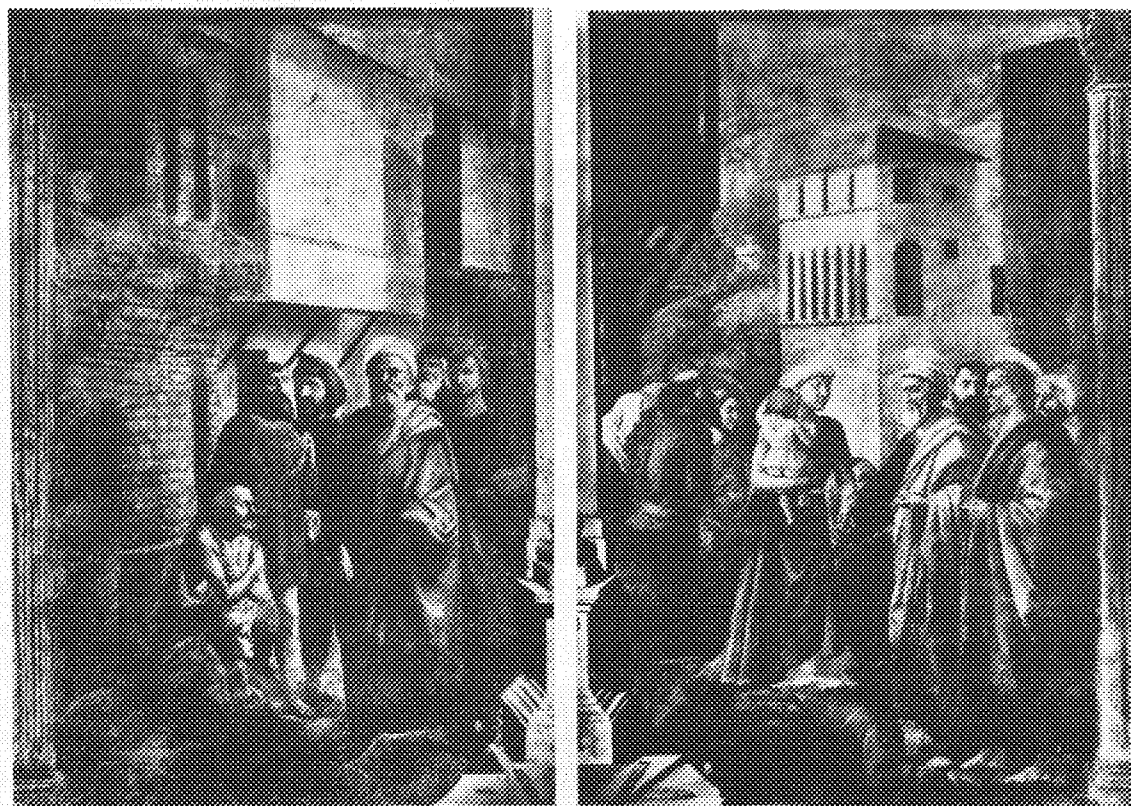


Figure 15. (Left) Masaccio, St. Peter Healing with his Shadow, 1427, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence

Figure 16. (Right) Masaccio, Distribution of the Alms, 1427, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence

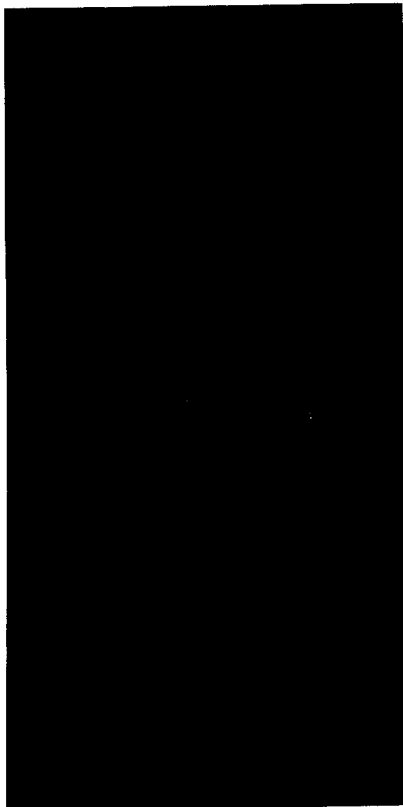


Figure 17. Masaccio, Trinity, c. 1425-1427, Santa Maria Novella, Florence



Figure 18. Masolino, The Healing of the Lame Man and the Resurrection of Tabitha, c. 1424-1425, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence

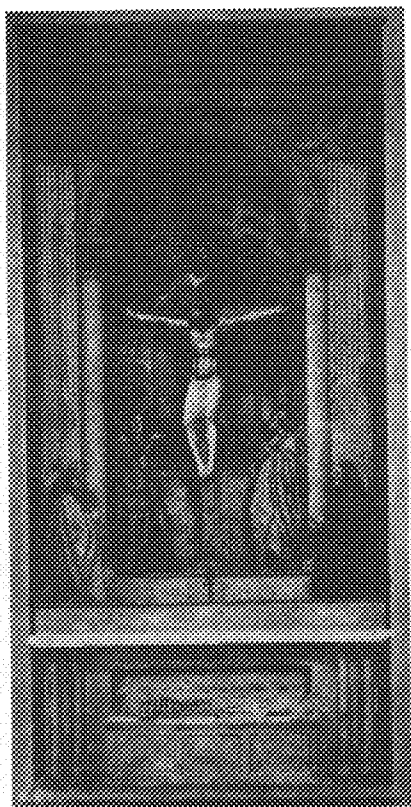


Figure 17. Masaccio, Trinity, c. 1425-1427, Santa Maria Novella, Florence



Figure 18. Masolino, The Healing of the Lame Man and the Resurrection of Tabitha, c. 1424-1425, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence

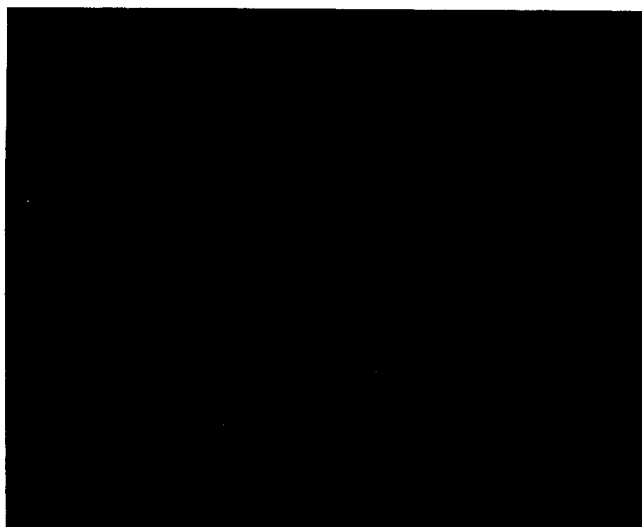


Figure 19. Giotto, Lamentation, c. 1305-1310, Arena Chapel,
Padua

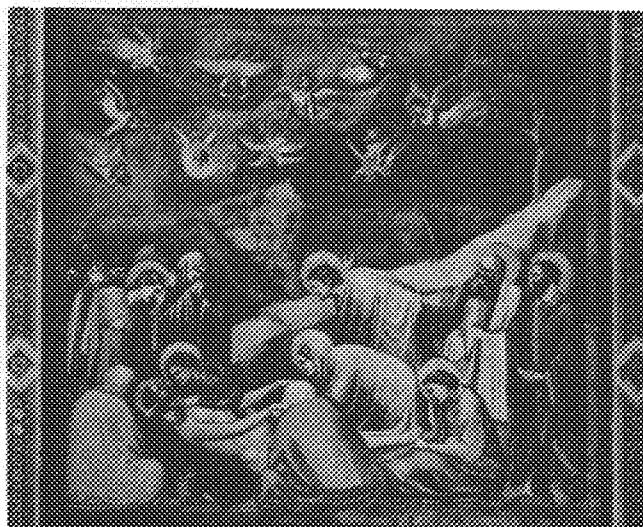


Figure 19. Giotto, Lamentation, c. 1305-1310, Arena Chapel, Padua

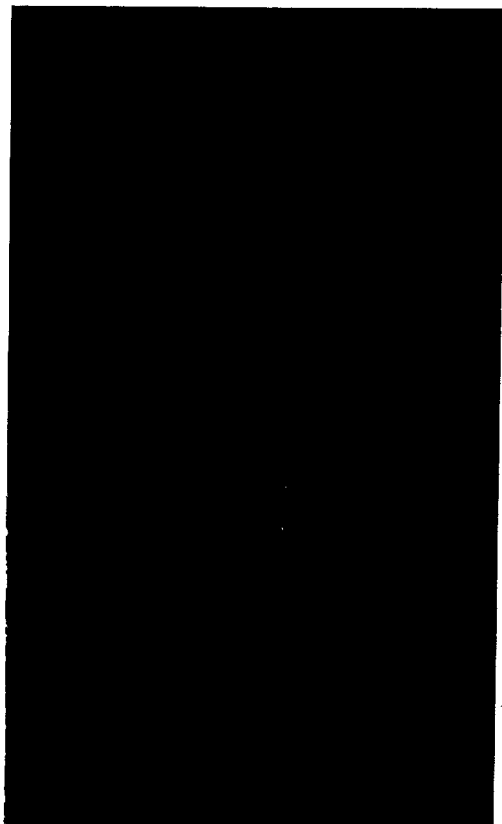


Figure 20. Piero della Francesca, An-
nunciation, c. 1452-1466, San Fran-
cesco, Arezzo

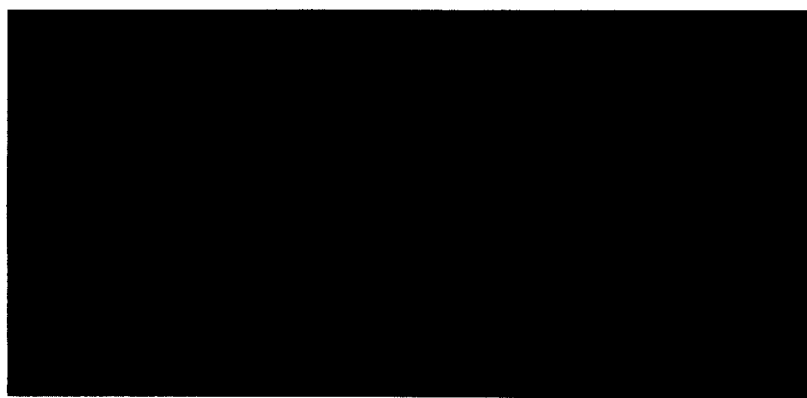


Figure 21. Piero della Francesca, The Finding and the Proving
of the True Cross, c. 1452-1466, San Francesco,
Arezzo



Figure 20. Piero della Francesca, Annunciation, c. 1452-1466, San Francesco, Arezzo



Figure 21. Piero della Francesca, The Finding and the Proving of the True Cross, c. 1452-1466, San Francesco, Arezzo



Figure 22. Piero della Francesca, Flagellation, c. 1453-1460,
Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Palazzo Ducale,
Urbino

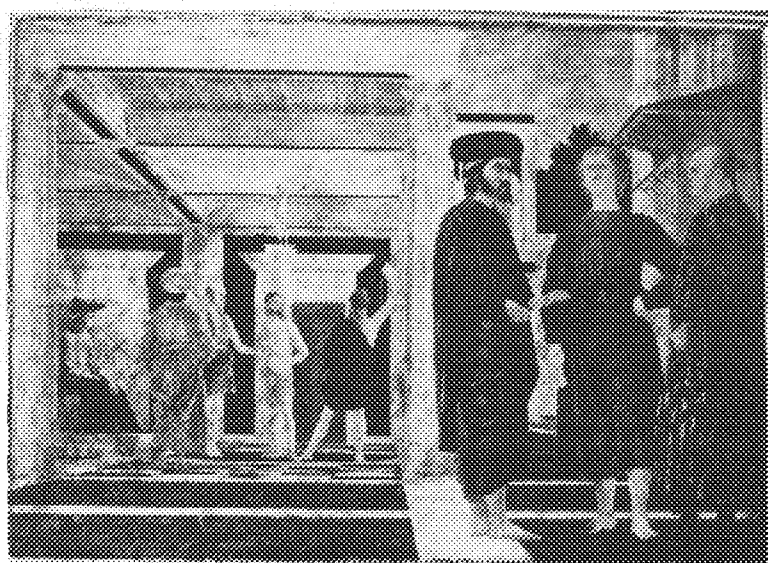


Figure 22. Piero della Francesca, Flagellation, c. 1453-1460,
Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Palazzo Ducale,
Urbino



Figure 23. Piero della Francesca, Brera Altarpiece, 1472-1474, Brera Gallery, Milan



Figure 24. Piero della Francesca, Queen of Sheba at the Bridge and the Meeting of Solomon, c. 1452-1466, San Francesco, Arezzo

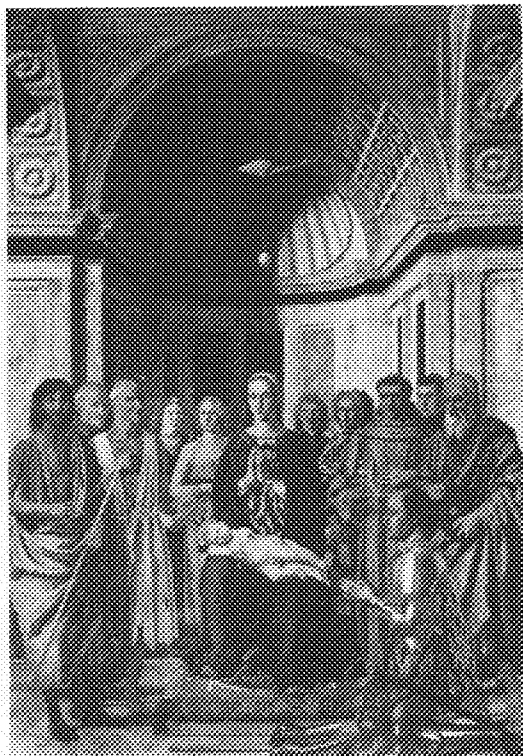


Figure 23. Piero della Francesca, Brera Altarpiece, 1472-1474, Brera Gallery, Milan



Figure 24. Piero della Francesca, Queen of Sheba at the Bridge and the Meeting of Solomon, c. 1452-1466, San Francesco, Arezzo



Figure 25. Piero della Francesca, Victory of Constantine over Maxentius, c. 1452-1466, San Francesco, Arezzo



Figure 26. Giotto, Birth of the Virgin, c. 1305-1310, Arena Chapel, Padua



Figure 25. Piero della Francesca, Victory of Constantine over Maxentius, c. 1452-1466, San Francesco, Arezzo



Figure 26. Giotto, Birth of the Virgin, c. 1305-1310, Arena Chapel, Padua



Figure 27. Giotto, Teaching in the Temple, c. 1305-1310,
Arena Chapel, Padua



Figure 28. Giotto, Feast of Herod, c. mid 1320s, Peruzzi
Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

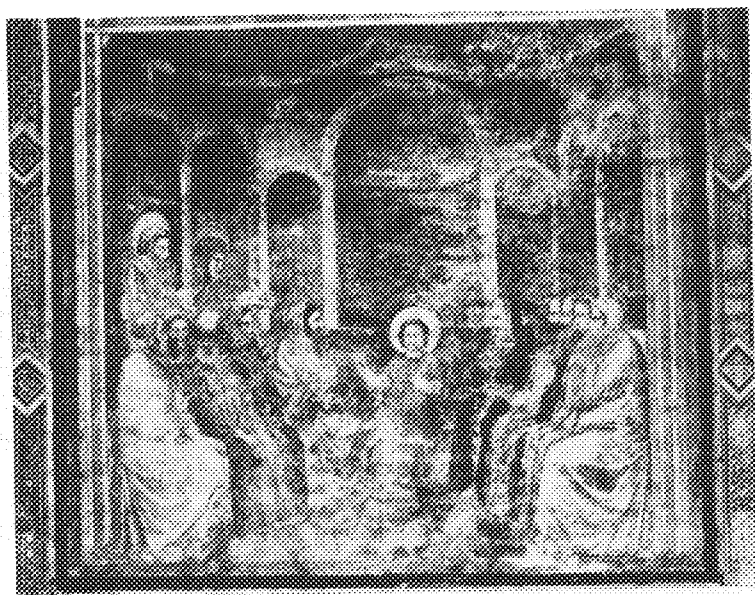


Figure 27. Giotto, Teaching in the Temple, c. 1305-1310,
Arena Chapel, Padua

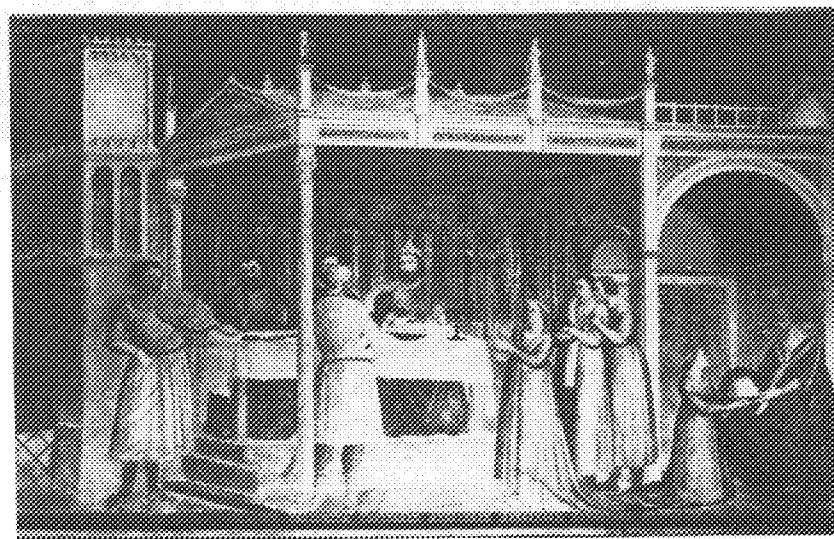


Figure 28. Giotto, Feast of Herod, c. mid 1320s, Peruzzi
Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence



Figure 29. Maso di Banco, Raising of the Two Magicians,
c. 1340, Bardi di Vernio Chapel, Santa Croce,
Florence



Figure 29. Maso di Banco, Raising of the Two Magicians,
c. 1340, Bardi di Vernio Chapel, Santa Croce,
Florence

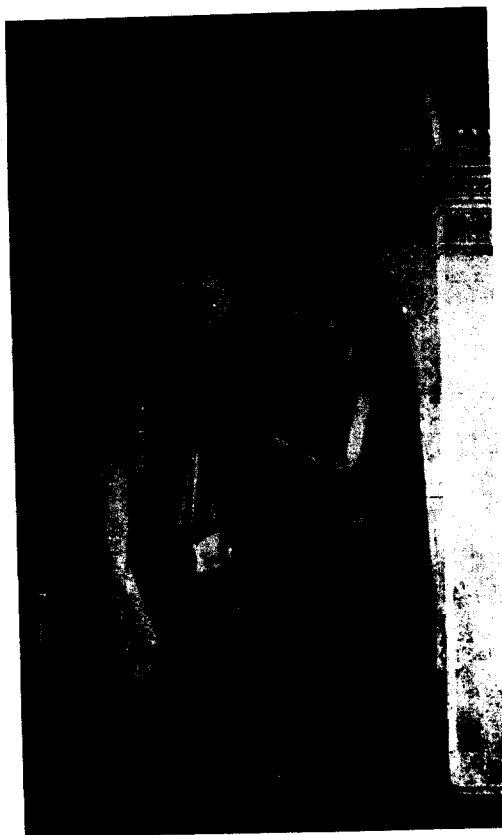


Figure 30. Piero della Francesca, Mary Magdalen, 1466-1468,
Arezzo Cathedral, Arezzo



Figure 30. Piero della Francesca, Mary Magdalen, 1466-1468,
Arezzo Cathedral, Arezzo



Figure 31. Piero della Francesca,
Prophet, c. 1452-1466, San Fran-
cesco, Arezzo



Figure 32. Michelangelo, Drawing
after Giotto, Ascension of St. John,
c. 1489-1492, Musée du Louvre, Paris



Figure 31. Piero della Francesca,
Prophet, c. 1452-1466, San Fran-
cesco, Arezzo



Figure 32. Michelangelo, Drawing
after Giotto, Ascension of St. John,
c. 1489-1492, Musée du Louvre, Paris



Figure 33. Michelangelo, Drawing
after Masaccio, The Tribute Money,
c. 1489-1492, Staatliche Graphische
Sammlung, Munich



Figure 34. Michelangelo, Drawing of a
Philosopher or Astrologer, c. 1489-1492,
British Museum, London



Figure 33. Michelangelo, Drawing after Masaccio, The Tribute Money, c. 1489-1492, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich



Figure 34. Michelangelo, Drawing of a Philosopher or Astrologer, c. 1489-1492, British Museum, London



Figure 35. Domenico Ghirlandaio, Confirmation of the Order,
1483-1486, Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinita, Florence



Figure 36. Giotto, Confirmation of the Order,
c. 1315-1320, Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence



Figure 35. Domenico Ghirlandaio, Confirmation of the Order,
1483-1486, Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinita, Florence

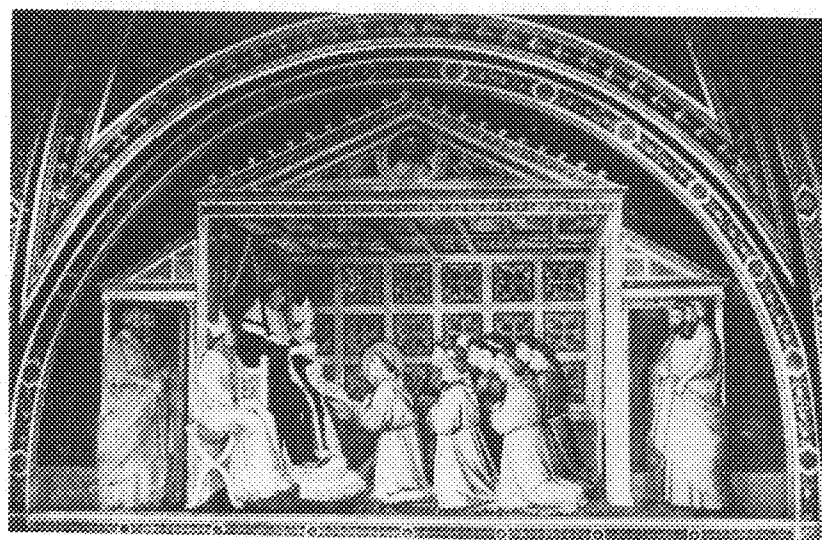


Figure 36. Giotto, Confirmation of the Order,
c. 1315-1320, Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

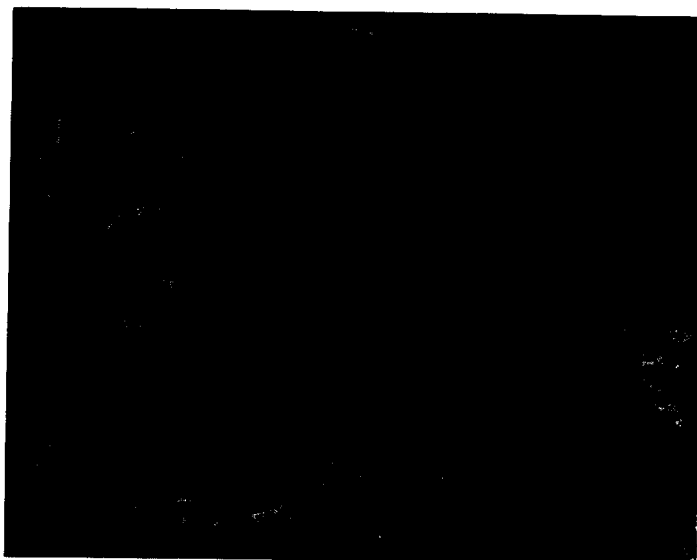


Figure 37. Domenico Ghirlandaio, Trial by Fire, 1483-1486,
Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinita, Florence

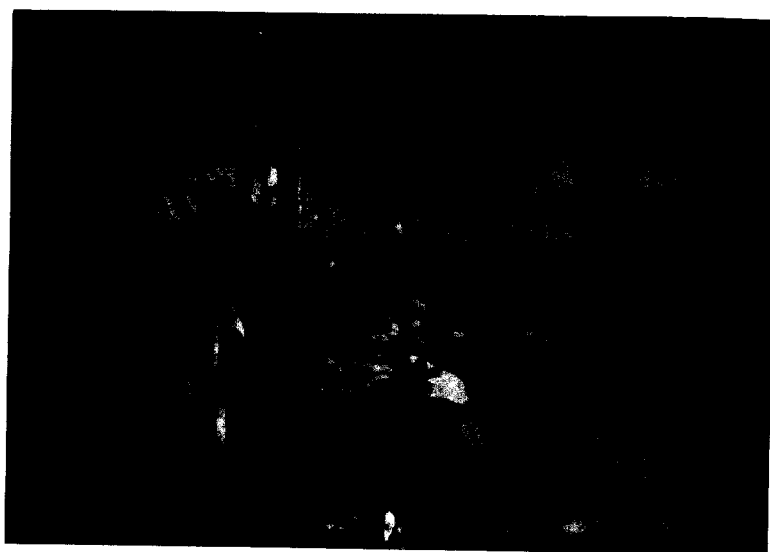


Figure 38. Domenico Ghirlandaio, Funeral of St. Francis,
1483-1486, Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinita,
Florence

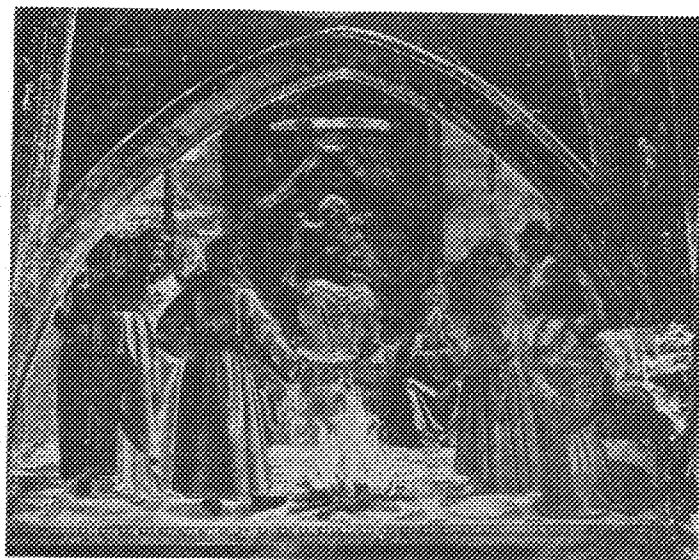


Figure 37. Domenico Ghirlandaio, Trial by Fire, 1483-1486,
Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinita, Florence



Figure 38. Domenico Ghirlandaio, Funeral of St. Francis,
1483-1486, Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinita,
Florence



Figure 39. Giotto Workshop, Death of the Virgin, c. 1320s,
Staatliche Museen, Berlin-Dahlem



Figure 40. Michelangelo, Creation of Eve, 1511, Sistine
Chapel, Vatican, Rome

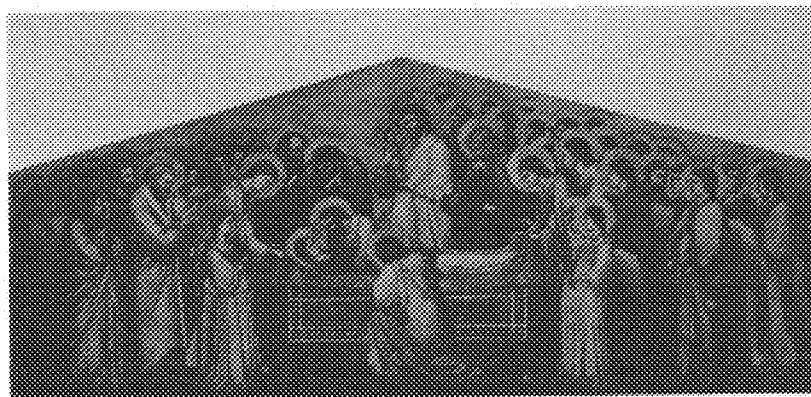


Figure 39. Giotto Workshop, Death of the Virgin, c. 1320s,
Staatliche Museen, Berlin-Dahlem

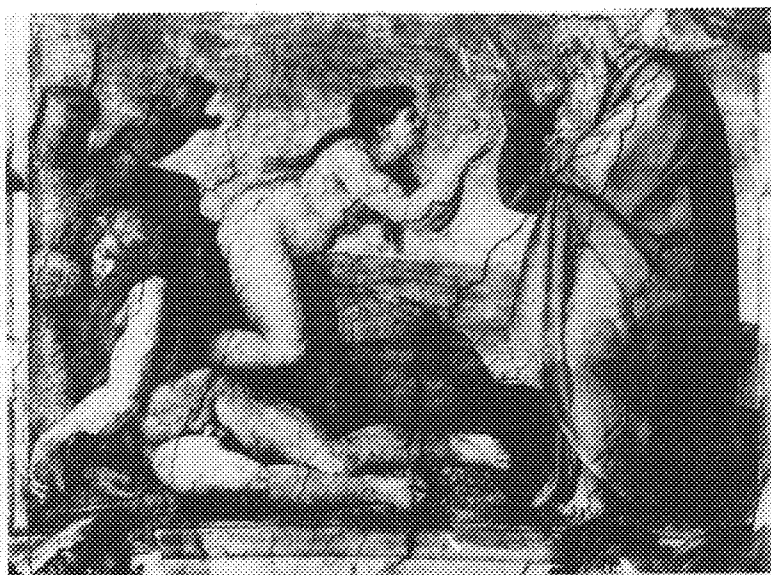


Figure 40. Michelangelo, Creation of Eve, 1511, Sistine
Chapel, Vatican, Rome



Figure 41. Michelangelo, Creation of Adam, 1511, Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome



Figure 42. Michelangelo, Temptation and Expulsion of Adam and Eve, 1509-1510, Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome

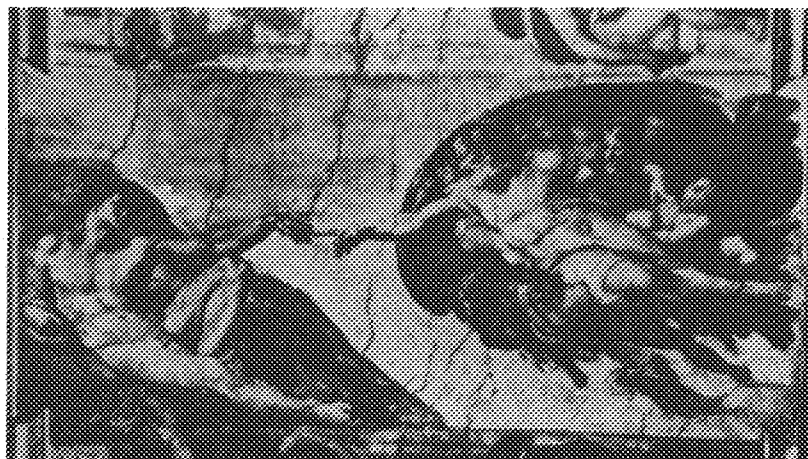


Figure 41. Michelangelo, Creation of Adam, 1511, Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome

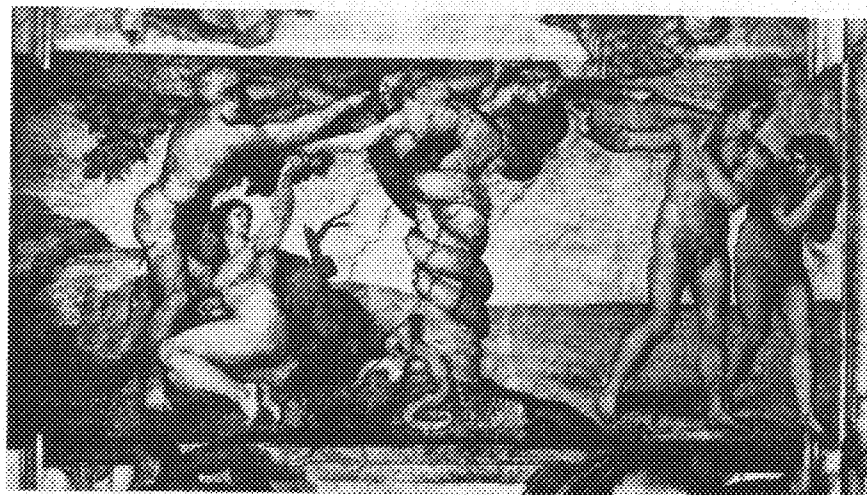


Figure 42. Michelangelo, Temptation and Expulsion of Adam and Eve, 1509-1510, Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome



Figure 43. Michelangelo, The Sacrifice of Noah, 1509,
Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome



Figure 44. Michelangelo, The Punishment of Haman, 1511, Sistine
Chapel, Vatican, Rome

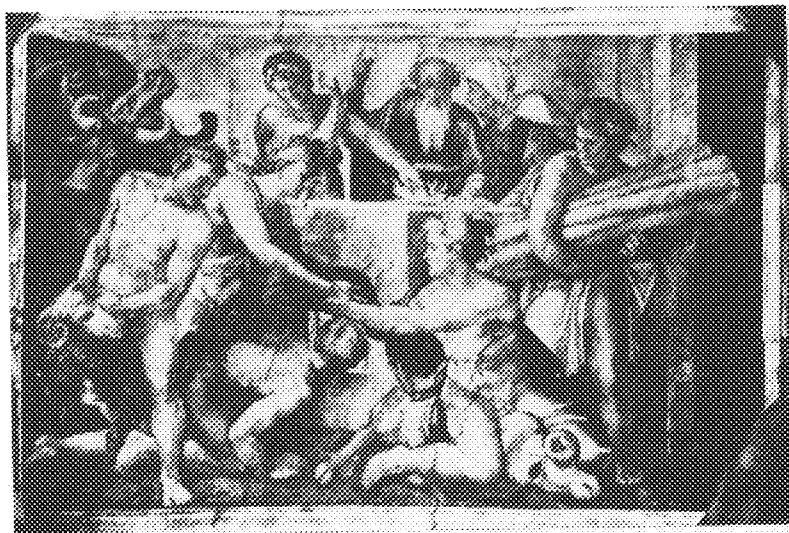


Figure 43. Michelangelo, The Sacrifice of Noah, 1509, Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome

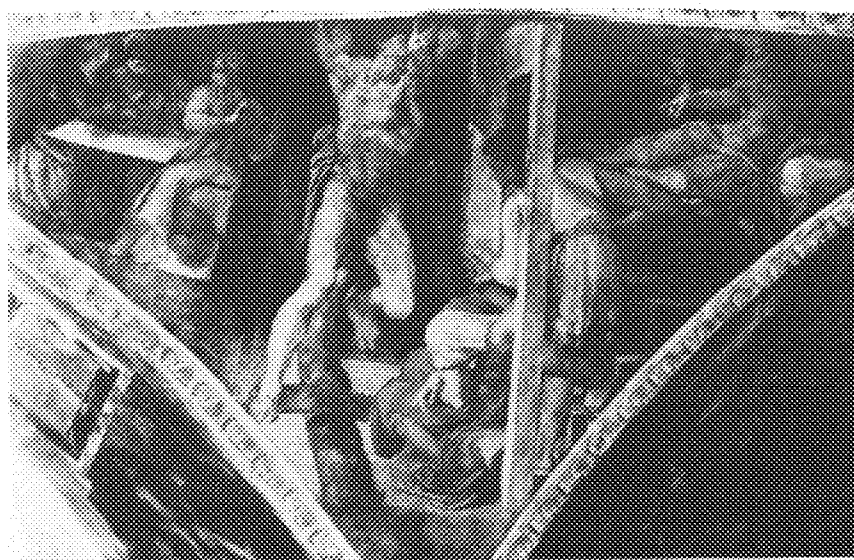


Figure 44. Michelangelo, The Punishment of Haman, 1511, Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome



Figure 45. Giotto, Birth and Naming of St. John the Baptist,
c. mid 1320s, Peruzzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence



Figure 46. Michelangelo, Judith and Holofernes, 1509, Sistine
Chapel, Vatican, Rome

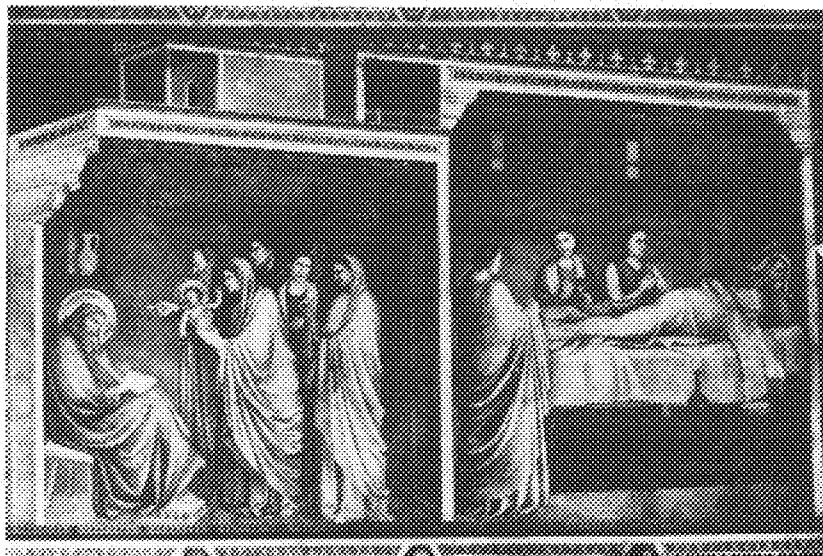


Figure 45. Giotto, Birth and Naming of St. John the Baptist,
c. mid 1320s, Peruzzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence

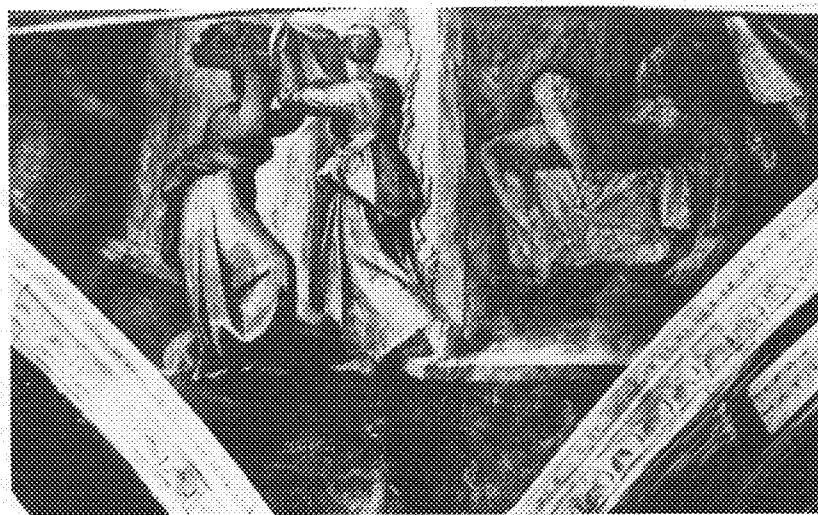


Figure 46. Michelangelo, Judith and Holofernes, 1509, Sistine
Chapel, Vatican, Rome

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Approved:

P. W. Bissell

Date:

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