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SCULPTORS AND ARCHITECTS, VOL. 03 (OF 10) ***

LIVES OF THE MOST EMINENT PAINTERS SCULPTORS & ARCHITECTS

BY GIORGIO VASARI:

**VOLUME III. FILARETE AND SIMONE TO MANTEGNA
1912**

**NEWLY TRANSLATED BY GASTON Du C. DE VERE. WITH FIVE HUNDRED
ILLUSTRATIONS: IN TEN VOLUMES**

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EMINENT PAINTERS
SCULPTORS & ARCHITECTS
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1511-1574

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ANTONIO FILARETE AND SIMONE

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LIVES OF ANTONIO FILARETE AND SIMONE

SCULPTORS OF FLORENCE

If Pope Eugenius IV, when he resolved to make the bronze door for S. Pietro in Rome, had used diligence in seeking for men of excellence to execute that work (and he would easily have been able to find them at that time, when Filippo di Ser Brunellesco, Donatello, and other rare craftsmen were alive), it would not have been carried out in the deplorable manner which it reveals to us in our own day. But perchance the same thing happened to him that is very often wont to happen to the greater number of Princes, who either have no understanding of such works or take very little delight in them. Now, if they were to consider how important it is to show preference to men of excellence in public works, by reason of the fame that comes from these, it is certain that neither they nor their ministers would be so negligent; for the reason that he who encumbers himself with poor and inept craftsmen ensures but a short life to his works or his fame, not to mention that injury is done to the public interest and to the age in which he was born, for it is firmly believed by all who come after, that, if there had been better masters to be found in that age, the Prince would have availed himself rather of them than of the inept and vulgar.

Now, after being created Pontiff in the year 1431, Pope Eugenius IV, hearing that the Florentines were having the doors of S. Giovanni made by Lorenzo Ghiberti, conceived a wish to try to make one of the doors of S. Pietro in like manner in bronze. But since he had no knowledge of such works, he entrusted the matter to his ministers, with whom Antonio Filarete, then a youth, and Simone, the brother of Donatello, both sculptors of Florence, had so much interest, that the work was allotted to them. Putting their hands to this, therefore, they toiled for twelve years to complete it; and although Pope Eugenius fled from Rome and was much harassed by reason of the Councils, yet those who had charge of S. Pietro contrived to prevent that work from being abandoned. Filarete, then, wrought that door in low-relief, making a simple division, with two upright figures in each part—namely, the Saviour and the Madonna above, and S. Peter and S. Paul below; and at the foot of S. Peter is that Pope on his knees, portrayed from life. Beneath each figure, likewise, there is a little scene from the life of the Saint that is above; below S. Peter, his crucifixion, and below S. Paul, his beheading; and beneath the Saviour and the Madonna, also, some events from their lives. At the foot of the inner side of the said door, to amuse himself, Antonio made a little scene in bronze, wherein he portrayed himself and Simone and their disciples going with an ass laden with good cheer to take their pleasure in a vineyard. But since they were not always at work on the said door during the whole of those twelve years, they also made in S. Pietro some marble tombs for Popes and Cardinals, which were thrown to the ground in the building of the new church.

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BRONZE DOORS (*After Antonio Filarete. Rome: S. Peter's*)

After these works, Antonio was summoned to Milan by Duke Francesco Sforza, then Gonfalonier of Holy Church (who had seen his works in Rome), to the end that there might be made with his design, as it afterwards was, the Albergo de' poveri di Dio,^[1] which is a hospital that serves for sick men and women, and for the innocent children born out of wedlock. The division for the men in this place is in the form of a cross, and extends 160 braccia in all directions; and that of the women is the same. The width is 16 braccia, and within the four square sides that enclose the crosses of each of these two divisions there are four courtyards surrounded by porticoes, loggie, and rooms for the use of the director, the officials, the servants, and the nurses of the hospital, all very commodious and useful. On one side there is a channel with water continually running for the service of the hospital and for grinding corn, with no small benefit and convenience for that place, as all may imagine. Between the two divisions of the hospital there is a cloister, 80 braccia in extent in one direction and 160 in the other, in the middle of which is the church, so contrived as to serve for both divisions. In a word, this place is so well built and designed, that I do not believe that there is its like in Europe. According to the account of Filarete himself, the first stone of this building was laid with a solemn procession of the whole of the clergy of Milan, in the presence of Duke Francesco Sforza, the Lady Bianca Maria, and all their children, with the Marquis of Mantua, the Ambassador of King Alfonso of Arragon, and many other lords. On the first stone which was laid in the foundations, as well as on the medals, were these words:

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FRANCISCUS SFORTIA DUX IV, QUI AMISSUM PER PRÆCESSORUM OBITUM
URBIS IMPERIUM RECUPERAVIT, HOC MUNUS CHRISTI PAUPERIBUS DEDIT
FUNDAVITQUE MCCCCLVII, DIE XII APRIL.

These scenes were afterwards depicted on the portico by Maestro Vincenzo di Zoppa, a Lombard, since no better master could be found in those parts.

A work by the same Antonio, likewise, was the principal church of Bergamo, which he built with no less diligence and judgment than he had shown in the above-named hospital. And because he also took delight in writing, the while that these works of his were in progress he wrote a book divided into three parts. In the first he treats of the measurements of all edifices, and of all that is necessary for the purpose of building. In the second he speaks of the methods of building, and of the manner wherein a most beautiful and most convenient city might be laid out. In the third he invents new forms of buildings, mingling the ancient with the modern. The whole work is divided into twenty-four books, illustrated throughout by drawings from his own hand; but, although there is something of the good to be found in it, it is nevertheless mostly ridiculous, and perhaps the most stupid book that was ever written. It was dedicated by him in the year 1464 to the Magnificent Piero di Cosimo de' Medici, and it is now in the collection of the most Illustrious Lord Duke Cosimo. And in truth, since he put himself to so great pains, the book might be commended in some sort, if he had at least made some records of the masters of his day and of their works; but as there are few to be found therein, and those few are scattered throughout the book without method and in the least suitable places, he has toiled only to beggar himself, as the saying goes, and to be thought a man of little judgment for meddling with something that he did not understand.

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**VINCENZIO DI ZOPPA (FOPPA): MADONNA
AND CHILD**

(Setignano: Berenson Collection. Panel)

[View larger image](#)

But I have said quite enough about Filarete, and it is now time to turn to Simone, the brother of Donato. This man, after the work of the door, made the bronze tomb of Pope Martin. He likewise made some castings that were sent to France, of many of which the fate is not known. For the Church of the Ermini, in the Canto alla Macine in Florence, he wrought a life-size Crucifix for carrying in processions, and to render it the lighter he made it of cork. In S. Felicita he made a terra-cotta figure of S. Mary Magdalene in Penitence, three braccia and a half in height and beautifully proportioned, and revealing the muscles in such a manner as to show that he had a very good knowledge of anatomy. He also wrought a marble tombstone for the Company of the Nunziata in the Church of the Servi, inlaying it with a figure in grey and white marble in the manner of a painting (which was much extolled), like the work already mentioned as having been done by the Sienese Duccio in the Duomo of Siena. At Prato he made the bronze grille for the Chapel of the Girdle. At Forlì, over the door of the Canon's house, he wrought a Madonna with two angels in low-relief; and he adorned the Chapel of the Trinità in S. Francesco with work in half-relief for Messer Giovanni da Riolo. In the Church of S. Francesco at Rimini, for Sigismondo Malatesti, he built the Chapel of S. Sigismondo, wherein there are many elephants, the device of that lord, carved in marble. To Messer Bartolommeo Scamisci, Canon of the Pieve of Arezzo, he sent a Madonna with the Child in her arms, made of terra-cotta, with certain angels in half-relief, very well executed; which Madonna is now in the said Pieve, set up against a column. For the baptismal font of the Vescovado of Arezzo, likewise, he wrought, in some scenes in low-relief, a Christ being baptized by S. John. In the Church of the Nunziata in Florence he made a marble tomb for Messer Orlando de' Medici. Finally, at the age of fifty-five, he rendered up his spirit to God who had given it to him. Nor was it long before Filarete, having returned to Rome, died at the age of sixty-nine, and was buried in the Minerva, where he had caused Giovanni Foccora, a painter of no small repute, to make a portrait of Pope Eugenius, while he was staying in Rome in the service of that Pontiff. The portrait of Antonio, by his own hand, is at the beginning of his book, where he gives instructions for building. His disciples were Varrone and Niccolò, both Florentines, who made the marble statue for Pope Pius II near Pontemolle, at the time when he brought the head of S. Andrew to Rome. By order of the same Pope they restored Tigoli almost from the foundations; and in S. Pietro they made the ornament of marble that is above the columns of the chapel wherein the said head of S. Andrew is preserved. Near that chapel is the tomb of the said Pope Pius, made by Pasquino da Montepulciano, a disciple of Filarete, and Bernardo Ciuffagni. This Bernardo wrought a tomb of marble for Gismondo Malatesti in S. Francesco at Rimini, making his portrait there from nature; and he also executed some works, so it is said, in Lucca and in Mantua.



TOMB OF POPE MARTIN
(After the bronze relief by
Simone. Rome: S. Giovanni
in Laterano)
Anderson
[View larger image](#)

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GIULIANO DA MAIANO

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LIFE OF GIULIANO DA MAIANO

SCULPTOR AND ARCHITECT

No small error do those fathers of families make who do not allow the minds of their children to run the natural course in their childhood, and do not suffer them to follow the calling that is most in accordance with their taste; for to try to turn them to something for which they have no inclination is manifestly to prevent them from ever being excellent in anything, because we almost always find that those who labour at something that they do not like make little progress in any occupation whatsoever. On the other hand, those who follow the instinct of nature generally become excellent and famous in the arts that they pursue; as was seen clearly in Giuliano da Maiano. The father of this man, after living a long time on the hill of Fiesole, in the part called Maiano, working at the trade of stone-cutter, finally betook himself to Florence, where he opened a shop for the sale of dressed stone, keeping it furnished with the sort of work that is apt very often to be called for without warning by those who are erecting some building. Living in Florence, then, there was born to him a son, Giuliano, whom his father, growing convinced in the course of time that he had a good intelligence, proposed to make into a notary, for it appeared to him that his own occupation of stone-cutting was too laborious and too unprofitable an exercise. But this did not come to pass, because, although Giuliano went to a grammar-school for a little, his thoughts were never there, and in consequence he made no progress; nay, he played truant very often, and showed that he had his mind wholly set on

sculpture, although at first he applied himself to the calling of joiner and also gave attention to drawing.

It is said that in company with Giusto and Minore, masters of tarsia,^[2] he wrought the seats of the Sacristy of the Nunziata, and likewise those of the choir that is beside the chapel, and many things in the Badia of Florence and in S. Marco; and that, having acquired a name through these works, he was summoned to Pisa, in the Duomo of which he wrought the seat that is beside the high-altar, in which the priest, the deacon, and the sub-deacon sit when Mass is being sung; making in tarsia on the back of this seat, with tinted and shaded woods, the three prophets that are seen therein. In this work he availed himself of Guido del Servellino and Maestro Domenico di Mariotto, joiners of Pisa, to whom he taught the art so well that they afterwards wrought the greater part of that choir both with carvings and with tarsia-work; which choir has been finished in our own day, with a manner no little better, by Batista del Cervelliera of Pisa, a man truly ingenious and fanciful.

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But to return to Giuliano; he made the presses of the Sacristy of S. Maria del Fiore, which were held at that time to be admirable examples of tarsia and inlaid-work. Now, while Giuliano thus continued to devote himself to tarsia, to sculpture, and to architecture, Filippo di Ser Brunellesco died; whereupon, being chosen by the Wardens of Works to succeed him, he made the borders, incrusting with black and white marble, which are round the circular windows below the vault of the cupola; and at the corners he placed the marble pilasters on which Baccio d'Agnolo afterwards laid the architrave, frieze, and cornice, as will be told below. It is true that, as it appears from some designs by his hand that are in our book, he wished to make another arrangement of frieze, cornice, and gallery, with pediments on each of the eight sides of the cupola; but he had not time to put this into execution, for, being carried away by an excess of work from one day to another, he died.

Before this happened, however, he went to Naples and designed the architecture of the magnificent Palace at Poggio Reale for King Alfonso, with the beautiful fountains and conduits that are in the courtyard. In the city, likewise, he made designs for many fountains, some for the houses of noblemen and some for public squares, with beautiful and fanciful inventions; and he had the said Palace of Poggio Reale all wrought with paintings by Piero del Donzello and his brother Polito. Working in sculpture, likewise, for the said King Alfonso, then Duke of Calabria, he wrought scenes in low-relief over a door (both within and without) in the great hall of the Castle of Naples; and he made a marble gate for the castle after the Corinthian Order, with an infinite number of figures, giving to that work the form of a triumphal arch, on which stories from the life of that King and some of his victories are carved in marble. Giuliano also wrought the decorations of the Porta Capovana, making therein many varied and beautiful trophies; wherefore he well deserved that great love should be felt for him by that King, who, rewarding him liberally for his labours, enriched his descendants.

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Giuliano had taught to his nephew Benedetto the arts of tarsia and architecture, and something about working in marble; and Benedetto was living in Florence, devoting himself to working at tarsia, because this brought him greater gains than the other arts did. Now Giuliano was summoned to Rome by Messer Antonio Rosello of Arezzo, Secretary to Pope Paul II, to enter the service of that Pontiff. Having gone thither, he designed the loggie of travertine in the first court of the Palace of S. Pietro, with three ranges of columns, of which the first is on the lowest floor, where there are now the Signet Office and other offices; the second is above this, where the Datary and other prelates live; and the third and last is where those rooms are that look out on the court of S. Pietro, which he adorned with gilded ceilings and other ornaments. From his design, likewise, were made the marble loggie from which the Pope gives his benediction—a very great work, as may still be seen to-day. But the most stupendous and marvellous work that he made was the palace that he built for that Pope, together with the Church of S. Marco in Rome, for which there was used an infinite quantity of travertine blocks, said to have been excavated from certain vineyards near the Arch of Constantine, where they served as buttresses for the foundations of that part of the Colosseum which is now in ruins, perchance because of the weakening of that edifice.

Giuliano was sent by the same Pontiff to the Madonna of Loreto, where he rebuilt the foundations and greatly enlarged the body of the church, which had formerly been small and built over piers in rustic-work. He did not go higher than the string-course that was there already; but he summoned his nephew Benedetto to that place, and he, as will be told, afterwards raised the cupola. Being then forced to return to Naples in order to finish the works that he had begun, Giuliano received a commission from King Alfonso for a gate near the castle, which was to include more than eighty figures, which Benedetto had to execute in Florence; but the whole remained unfinished by reason of the death of that King. There are still some relics of these figures in the Misericordia in Florence, and there were others in our own day in the Canto alla Macine; but I do not know where these are now to be found. Before the death of the King, however, Giuliano died in Naples at the age of seventy, and was greatly honoured with rich obsequies; for the King had fifty men clothed in mourning, who accompanied Giuliano to the grave, and then he gave orders that a marble tomb should be made for him.

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The continuation of his work was left to Polito, who completed the conduits for the waters of Poggio Reale. Benedetto, devoting himself afterwards to sculpture, surpassed his uncle Giuliano in excellence, as will be told; and in his youth he was the rival of a sculptor named Modanino da Modena, who worked in terra-cotta, and who wrought for the said Alfonso a Pietà with an infinite number of figures in the round, made of terra-cotta and coloured, which were executed with very

great vivacity, and were placed by the King in the Church of Monte Oliveto, a very highly honoured monastery in the city of Naples. In this work the said King is portrayed on his knees, and he appears truly more than alive; wherefore Modanino was remunerated by him with very great rewards. But when the King died, as it has been said, Polito and Benedetto returned to Florence; where, no long time after, Polito followed Giuliano into eternity. The sculptures and pictures of these men date about the year of our salvation 1447.



S. SEBASTIAN (*After the marble by Benedetto da Maiano. Florence: Oratorio della Misericordia*)
Alinari

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PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA

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LIFE OF PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA

[PIERO BORGHESE]

PAINTER OF BORGO A SAN SEPOLCRO

Truly unhappy are those who, labouring at their studies in order to benefit others and to make their own name famous, are hindered by infirmity and sometimes by death from carrying to perfection the works that they have begun. And it happens very often that, leaving them all but finished or in a fair way to completion, they are falsely claimed by the presumption of those who seek to conceal their asses' skin under the honourable spoils of the lion. And although time, who is called the father of truth, sooner or later makes manifest the real state of things, it is none the less true that for a certain space of time the true craftsman is robbed of the honour that is due to his labours; as happened to Piero della Francesca of Borgo a San Sepolcro. He, having been held a rare master of the difficulties of drawing regular bodies, as well as of arithmetic and geometry,

was yet not able—being overtaken in his old age by the infirmity of blindness, and finally by the close of his life—to bring to light his noble labours and the many books written by him, which are still preserved in the Borgo, his native place. The very man who should have striven with all his might to increase the glory and fame of Piero, from whom he had learnt all that he knew, was impious and malignant enough to seek to blot out the name of his teacher, and to usurp for himself the honour that was due to the other, publishing under his own name, Fra Luca dal Borgo, all the labours of that good old man, who, besides the sciences named above, was excellent in painting.

Piero was born in Borgo a San Sepolcro, which is now a city, although it was not one then; and he was called Della Francesca after the name of his mother, because she had been left pregnant with him at the death of her husband, his father, and because it was she who had brought him up and assisted him to attain to the rank that his good-fortune held out to him. Piero applied himself in his youth to mathematics, and although it was settled when he was fifteen years of age that he was to be a painter, he never abandoned this study; nay, he made marvellous progress therein, as well as in painting. He was employed by Guidobaldo Feltrino the elder, Duke of Urbino, for whom he made many very beautiful pictures with little figures, which have been for the most part ruined on the many occasions when that state has been harassed by wars. Nevertheless, there were preserved there some of his writings on geometry and perspective, in which sciences he was not inferior to any man of his own time, or perchance even to any man of any other time; as is demonstrated by all his works, which are full of perspectives, and particularly by a vase drawn in squares and sides, in such a manner that the base and the mouth can be seen from the front, from behind, and from the sides; which is certainly a marvellous thing, for he drew the smallest details therein with great subtlety, and foreshortened the curves of all the circles with much grace. Having thus acquired credit and fame at that Court, he resolved to make himself known in other places; wherefore he went to Pesaro and Ancona, whence, in the very thick of his work, he was summoned by Duke Borso to Ferrara, where he painted many apartments in his palace, which were afterwards destroyed by Duke Ercole the elder in the renovation of the palace, insomuch that there is nothing by the hand of Piero left in that city, save a chapel wrought in fresco in S. Agostino; and even that has been injured by damp. Afterwards, being summoned to Rome, he painted two scenes for Pope Nicholas V in the upper rooms of his palace, in competition with Bramante da Milano; but these also were thrown to the ground by Pope Julius II—to the end that Raffaello da Urbino might paint there the Imprisonment of S. Peter and the Miracle of the Corporale of Bolsena—together with certain others that had been painted by Bramantino, an excellent painter in his day.

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**PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA: BATTISTA
SFORZA, WIFE OF FEDERIGO DA
MONTEFELTRO**

(Florence: Uffizi, 1300. Panel)

[View larger image](#)

Now, seeing that I cannot write the life of this man, nor particularize his works, because they have been ruined, I will not grudge the labour of making some record of him, for it seems an apt occasion. In the said works that were thrown to the ground, so I have heard tell, he had made some heads from nature, so beautiful and so well executed that speech alone was wanting to give them life. Of these heads not a few have come to light, because Raffaello da Urbino had them copied in order that he might have the likenesses of the subjects, who were all people of importance; for among them were Niccolò Fortebraccio, Charles VII, King of France, Antonio Colonna, Prince of Salerno, Francesco Carmignuola, Giovanni Vitellesco, Cardinal Bessarione, Francesco Spinola, and Battista da Canneto. All these portraits were given to Giovio by Giulio Romano, disciple and heir of Raffaello da Urbino, and they were placed by Giovio in his museum at Como. Over the door of S. Sepolcro in Milan I have seen a Dead Christ wrought in foreshortening by the hand of the same man, in which, although the whole picture is not more than one braccio in height, there is an effect of infinite length, executed with facility and with judgment. By his hand, also, are some apartments and loggie in the house of the Marchesino Ostanesia in the same city, wherein there are many pictures wrought by him that show mastery and very great power in the foreshortening of the figures. And without the Porta Vercellina, near the Castle, in certain stables now ruined and destroyed, he painted some grooms currying horses, among which there was one so lifelike and so well wrought, that another horse, thinking it a real one, lashed out at it repeatedly with its hooves.



PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA: FEDERIGO DA MONTEFELTRO DUKE OF URBINO
(*Florence: Uffizi, 1300. Panel*)

[View larger image](#)

But to return to Piero della Francesca; his work in Rome finished, he returned to the Borgo, where his mother had just died; and on the inner side of the central door of the Pieve he painted two saints in fresco, which are held to be very beautiful. In the Convent of the Friars of S. Augustine he painted the panel of the high-altar, which was a thing much extolled; and he wrought in fresco a Madonna della Misericordia for a company, or rather, as they call it, a confraternity; with a Resurrection of Christ in the Palazzo de' Conservadori, which is held the best of all the works that are in the said city, and the best that he ever made. In company with Domenico da Vinezia, he painted the beginning of a work on the vaulting of the Sacristy of S. Maria at Loreto; but they left it unfinished from fear of plague, and it was afterwards completed by Luca da Cortona,^[3] a disciple of Piero, as will be told in the proper place.

Going from Loreto to Arezzo, Piero painted for Luigi Bacci, a citizen of Arezzo, the Chapel of the High-altar of S. Francesco, belonging to that family, the vaulting of which had been already begun by Lorenzo di Bicci. In this work there are Stories of the Cross, from that wherein the sons of Adam are burying him and placing under his tongue the seed of the tree from which there came the wood for the said Cross, down to the Exaltation of the Cross itself performed by the Emperor Heraclius, who, walking barefoot and carrying it on his shoulder, is entering with it into

Jerusalem. Here there are many beautiful conceptions and attitudes worthy to be extolled; such as, for example, the garments of the women of the Queen of Sheba, executed in a sweet and novel manner; many most lifelike portraits from nature of ancient persons; a row of Corinthian columns, divinely well proportioned; and a peasant who, leaning with his hands on his spade, stands listening to the words of S. Helena—while the three Crosses are being disinterred—with so great attention, that it would not be possible to improve it. Very well wrought, also, is the dead body that is restored to life at the touch of the Cross, together with the joy of S. Helena and the marvelling of the bystanders, who are kneeling in adoration. But above every other consideration, whether of imagination or of art, is his painting of Night, with an angel in foreshortening who is flying with his head downwards, bringing the sign of victory to Constantine, who is sleeping in a pavilion, guarded by a chamberlain and some men-at-arms who are seen dimly through the darkness of the night; and with his own light the angel illuminates the pavilion, the men-at-arms, and all the surroundings. This is done with very great thought, for Piero gives us to know in this darkness how important it is to copy things as they are and to ever take them from the true model; which he did so well that he enabled the moderns to attain, by following him, to that supreme perfection wherein art is seen in our own time. In this same story he represented most successfully in a battle fear, animosity, dexterity, vehemence, and all the other emotions that can be imagined in men who are fighting, and likewise all the incidents of battle, together with an almost incredible carnage, what with the wounded, the fallen, and the dead. In these Piero counterfeited in fresco the glittering of their arms, for which he deserves no less praise than he does for the flight and submersion of Maxentius painted on the other wall, wherein he made a group of horses in foreshortening, so marvellously executed that they can be truly called too beautiful and too excellent for those times. In the same story he made a man, half nude and half clothed in the dress of a Saracen, riding a lean horse, which reveals a very great mastery of anatomy, a science little known in his age. For this work, therefore, he well deserved to be richly rewarded by Luigi Bacci, whom he portrayed there in the scene of the beheading of a King, together with Carlo and others of his brothers and many Aretines who were then distinguished in letters; and to be loved and revered ever afterwards, as he was, in that city, which he had made so illustrious with his works.

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THE RESURRECTION
(After the fresco by Piero della Francesca. Borgo San Sepolchro)

Alinari

[View larger image](#)

In the Vescovado of the same city, also, he made a S. Mary Magdalene in fresco beside the door of the sacristy; and for the Company of the Nunziata he painted the banner that is carried in processions. At the head of a cloister at S. Maria delle Grazie, without that district, he painted S. Donatus in his robes, seated in a chair drawn in perspective, together with certain boys; and in a niche high up on a wall of S. Bernardo, for the Monks of Monte Oliveto, he made a S. Vincent,

which is much esteemed by craftsmen. In a chapel at Sargiano, a seat of the Frati Zoccolanti di S. Francesco, without Arezzo, he painted a very beautiful Christ praying by night in the Garden.

In Perugia, also, he wrought many works that are still to be seen in that city; as, for example, a panel in distemper in the Church of the Nuns of S. Anthony of Padua, containing a Madonna with the Child in her lap, S. Francis, S. Elizabeth, S. John the Baptist, and S. Anthony of Padua. Above these is a most beautiful Annunciation, with an Angel that seems truly to have come out of Heaven; and, what is more, a row of columns diminishing in perspective, which is indeed beautiful. In the predella there are scenes with little figures, representing S. Anthony restoring a boy to life; S. Elizabeth saving a child that has fallen into a well; and S. Francis receiving the Stigmata. In S. Ciriaco at Ancona, on the altar of S. Giuseppe, he painted a most beautiful scene of the Marriage of Our Lady.

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Piero, as it has been said, was a very zealous student of art, and gave no little attention to perspective; and he had a very good knowledge of Euclid, insomuch that he understood all the best curves drawn in regular bodies better than any other geometrician, and the clearest elucidations of these matters that we have are from his hand. Now Maestro Luca dal Borgo, a friar of S. Francis, who wrote about the regular geometrical bodies, was his pupil; and when Piero, after having written many books, grew old and finally died, the said Maestro Luca, claiming the authorship of these books, had them printed as his own, for they had fallen into his hands after the death of Piero.

Piero was much given to making models in clay, on which he spread wet draperies with an infinity of folds, in order to make use of them for drawing.

A disciple of Piero was Lorentino d'Angelo of Arezzo, who made many pictures in Arezzo, imitating his manner, and completed those that Piero, overtaken by death, left unfinished. Near the S. Donatus that Piero wrought in the Madonna delle Grazie, Lorentino painted in fresco some stories of S. Donatus, with very many works in many other places both in that city and in the district, partly because he would never stay idle, and partly to assist his family, which was then very poor. In the said Church of the Grazie the same man painted a scene wherein Pope Sixtus IV, between the Cardinal of Mantua and Cardinal Piccolomini (who was afterwards Pope Pius III), is granting an indulgence to that place; in which scene Lorentino portrayed from the life, on their knees, Tommaso Marzi, Piero Traditi, Donato Rosselli, and Giuliano Nardi, all citizens of Arezzo and Wardens of Works for that building. In the hall of the Palazzo de' Priori, moreover, he portrayed from the life Cardinal Galeotto da Pietramala, Bishop Guglielmino degli Ubertini, and Messer Angelo Albergotti, Doctor of Laws; and he made many other works, which are scattered throughout that city.



PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA: THE BAPTISM IN JORDAN

(London: National Gallery, 665. Panel)

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It is said that once, when the Carnival was close at hand, the children of Lorentino kept beseeching him to kill a pig, as it is the custom to do in that district; and that, since he had not the means to buy one, they would say, "What will you do about buying a pig, father, if you have no money?" To which Lorentino would answer, "Some Saint will help us." But when he had said this many times and the season was passing by without any pig appearing, they had lost hope, when at length there arrived a peasant from the Pieve a Quarto, who wished to have a S. Martin painted in fulfilment of a vow, but had no means of paying for the picture save a pig, which was worth five lire. This man, coming to Lorentino, told him that he wished to have the S. Martin painted, but that he had no means of payment save the pig. Whereupon they came to an agreement, and Lorentino painted him the Saint, while the peasant brought him the pig; and so the Saint provided the pig for the poor children of this painter. [Pg 23]

Another disciple of Piero was Pietro da Castel della Pieve,^[4] who painted an arch above S. Agostino, and a S. Urban for the Nuns of S. Caterina in Arezzo, which has been thrown to the ground in rebuilding the church. His pupil, likewise, was Luca Signorelli of Cortona, who did him more honour than all the others.

Piero Borghese, whose pictures date about the year 1458, became blind through an attack of catarrh at the age of sixty, and lived thus up to the eighty-sixth year of his life. He left very great possessions in the Borgo, with some houses that he had built himself, which were burnt and destroyed in the strife of factions in the year 1536. He was honourably buried by his fellow-citizens in the principal church, which formerly belonged to the Order of Camaldoli, and is now the Vescovado. Piero's books are for the most part in the library of Frederick II, Duke of Urbino, and they are such that they have deservedly acquired for him the name of the best geometrician of his time. [Pg 24]



THE VISION OF CONSTANTINE
(After the fresco by Piero della
Francesca. Arezzo: S. Francesca)

Alinari

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FRA GIOVANNI DA FIESOLE

FRA GIOVANNI DA FIESOLE

[*FRA ANGELICO*]

PAINTER OF THE ORDER OF PREACHING FRIARS

Fra Giovanni Angelico da Fiesole, who was known in the world as Guido, was no less excellent as painter and illuminator than he was upright as churchman, and for both one and the other of these reasons he deserves that most honourable record should be made of him. This man, although he could have lived in the world with the greatest comfort, and could have gained whatever he wished, besides what he possessed, by means of those arts, of which he had a very good knowledge even in his youth, yet resolved, for his own peace and satisfaction, being by nature serious and upright, and above all in order to save his soul, to take the vows of the Order of Preaching Friars; for the reason that, although it is possible to serve God in all walks of life, nevertheless it appears to some men that they can gain salvation in monasteries better than in the world. Now in proportion as this plan succeeds happily for good men, so, on the contrary, it has a truly miserable and unhappy issue for a man who takes the vows with some other end in view.

There are some choral books illuminated by the hand of Fra Giovanni in his Convent of S. Marco in Florence, so beautiful that words are not able to describe them; and similar to these are some others that he left in S. Domenico da Fiesole, wrought with incredible diligence. It is true, indeed, that in making these he was assisted by an elder brother, who was likewise an illuminator and well practised in painting.

One of the first works in painting wrought by this good father was a panel in the Certosa of Florence, which was placed in the principal chapel (belonging to Cardinal Acciaiuoli); in which panel is a Madonna with the Child in her arms, and with certain very beautiful angels at her feet, sounding instruments and singing; at the sides are S. Laurence, S. Mary Magdalene, S. Zanobi, and S. Benedict; and in the predella are little stories of these Saints, wrought in little figures with infinite diligence. In the cross of the said chapel are two other panels by the hand of the same man; one containing the Coronation of Our Lady, and the other a Madonna with two saints, wrought with most beautiful ultramarine blues. Afterwards, in the tramezzo^[5] of S. Maria Novella, beside the door opposite to the choir, he painted in fresco S. Dominic, S. Catherine of Siena, and S. Peter Martyr; and some little scenes in the Chapel of the Coronation of Our Lady in the said tramezzo. On canvas, fixed to the doors that closed the old organ, he painted an Annunciation, which is now in the convent, opposite to the door of the lower dormitory, between one cloister and the other.

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This father was so greatly beloved for his merits by Cosimo de' Medici, that, after completing the construction of the Church and Convent of S. Marco, he caused him to paint the whole Passion of Jesus Christ on a wall in the chapter-house; and on one side all the Saints who have been heads and founders of religious bodies, mourning and weeping at the foot of the Cross, and on the other side S. Mark the Evangelist beside the Mother of the Son of God, who has swooned at the sight of the Saviour of the world Crucified, while round her are the Maries, all grieving and supporting her, with S. Cosimo and S. Damiano. It is said that in the figure of S. Cosimo Fra Giovanni portrayed from the life Nanni d' Antonio di Banco, a sculptor and his friend. Below this work, in a frieze above the panelling, he made a tree with S. Dominic at the foot of it, and, in certain medallions encircled by the branches, all the Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, Saints, and Masters of Theology whom his Order of Preaching Friars had produced up to that time. In this work he made many portraits from nature, being assisted by the friars, who sent for them to various places; and they were the following: S. Dominic in the middle, grasping the branches of the tree; Pope Innocent V, a Frenchman; the Blessed Ugone, first Cardinal of that Order; the Blessed Paolo, Florentine and Patriarch; S. Antonino, Archbishop of Florence; the Blessed Giordano, a German, and the second General of that Order; the Blessed Niccolò; the Blessed Remigio, a Florentine; and the martyr Boninsegno, a Florentine; all these are on the right hand. On the left are Benedict II^[6] of Treviso; Giandomenico, a Florentine Cardinal; Pietro da Palude, Patriarch of Jerusalem; Alberto Magno, a German; the Blessed Raimondo di Catalonia, third General of the Order; the Blessed Chiaro, a Florentine, and Provincial of Rome; S. Vincenzo di Valenza; and the Blessed Bernardo, a Florentine. All these heads are truly gracious and very beautiful. Then, over certain lunettes in the first cloister, he made many very beautiful figures in fresco, and a Crucifix with S. Dominic at the foot, which is much extolled; and in the dormitory, besides many other things throughout the cells and on the surface of the walls, he painted a story from the New Testament, of a beauty beyond the power of words to describe. Particularly beautiful and marvellous is the panel of the high-altar of that church; for, besides the fact that the Madonna rouses all who see her to devotion by her simplicity, and that the Saints that surround her are like her in this, the predella, in which there are stories of the martyrdom of S. Cosimo, S. Damiano, and others, is so well painted, that one cannot imagine it possible ever to see a work executed with greater diligence, or little figures more delicate or better conceived than these are.

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In S. Domenico da Fiesole, likewise, he painted the panel of the high-altar, which has been retouched by other masters and injured, perchance because it appeared to be spoiling. But the predella and the Ciborium of the Sacrament have remained in better preservation; and the

innumerable little figures that are to be seen there, in a Celestial Glory, are so beautiful, that they appear truly to belong to Paradise, nor can any man who approaches them ever have his fill of gazing on them. In a chapel of the same church is a panel by his hand, containing the Annunciation of Our Lady by the Angel Gabriel, with features in profile, so devout, so delicate, and so well executed, that they appear truly to have been made rather in Paradise than by the hand of man; and in the landscape at the back are Adam and Eve, because of whom the Redeemer was born from the Virgin. In the predella, also, there are some very beautiful little scenes.

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But superior to all the other works that Fra Giovanni made, and the one wherein he surpassed himself and gave supreme proof of his talent and of his knowledge of art, was a panel that is beside the door of the same church, on the left hand as one enters, wherein Jesus Christ is crowning Our Lady in the midst of a choir of angels and among an infinite multitude of saints, both male and female, so many in number, so well wrought, and with such variety in the attitudes and in the expressions of the heads, that incredible pleasure and sweetness are felt in gazing at them; nay, one is persuaded that those blessed spirits cannot look otherwise in Heaven, or, to speak more exactly, could not if they had bodies; for not only are all these saints, both male and female, full of life and sweet and delicate in expression, but the whole colouring of that work appears to be by the hand of a saint or an angel like themselves; wherefore it was with very good reason that this excellent monk was ever called Fra Giovanni Angelico. Moreover, the stories of the Madonna and of S. Dominic in the predella are divine in their own kind; and I, for one, can declare with truth that I never see this work without thinking it something new, and that I never leave it sated.

In the Chapel of the Nunziata in Florence which Piero di Cosimo de' Medici caused to be built, he painted the doors of the press (in which the silver is kept) with little figures executed with much diligence. This father painted so many pictures, now to be found in the houses of Florentine citizens, "that I sometimes stand marvelling how one single man could execute so much work to such perfection, even in the space of many years. The Very Reverend Don Vincenzo Borghini, Director of the Hospital of the Innocenti, has a very beautiful little Madonna by the hand of this father; and Bartolommeo Gondi, as devoted a lover of these arts as any gentleman that one could think of, has a large picture, a small one, and a Crucifix, all by the same hand. The pictures that are in the arch over the door of S. Domenico are also by the same man; and in the Sacristy of S. Trinita there is a panel containing a Deposition from the Cross, into which he put so great diligence, that it can be numbered among the best works that he ever made. In S. Francesco, without the Porta a S. Miniato, there is an Annunciation; and in S. Maria Novella, besides the works already named, he painted with little scenes the Paschal candle and some Reliquaries which are placed on the altar in the most solemn ceremonies.

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THE TRANSFIGURATION
(After the fresco by Fra Giovanni da Fiesole [Fra Angelico]. Florence: S. Marco)

Over a door of the cloister of the Badia in the same city he painted a S. Benedict, who is making a sign enjoining silence. For the Linen-manufacturers he painted a panel that is in the Office of their Guild; and in Cortona he painted a little arch over the door of the church of his Order, and likewise the panel of the high-altar. At Orvieto, on a part of the vaulting of the Chapel of the Madonna in the Duomo, he began certain prophets, which were finished afterwards by Luca da Cortona. For the Company of the Temple in Florence he painted a Dead Christ on a panel; and in the Church of the Monks of the Angeli he made a Paradise and a Hell with little figures, wherein he showed fine judgment by making the blessed very beautiful and full of jubilation and celestial gladness, and the damned all ready for the pains of Hell, in various most woeful attitudes, and bearing the stamp of their sins and unworthiness on their faces. The blessed are seen entering the gate of Paradise in celestial dance, and the damned are being dragged by demons to the eternal pains of Hell. This work is in the aforesaid church, on the right hand as one goes towards the high-altar, where the priest sits when Mass is sung. For the Nuns of S. Piero Martire—who now live in the Monastery of S. Felice in Piazza, which used to belong to the Order of Camaldoli—he painted a panel with Our Lady, S. John the Baptist, S. Dominic, S. Thomas, and S. Peter Martyr, and a number of little figures. And in the tramezzo^[7] of S. Maria Nuova there may also be seen a panel by his hand.

These many labours having made the name of Fra Giovanni illustrious throughout all Italy, Pope Nicholas V sent for him and caused him to adorn that chapel of his Palace in Rome wherein the Pope hears Mass with a Deposition from the Cross and some very beautiful stories of S. Laurence, and also to illuminate some books, which are most beautiful. In the Minerva he painted the panel of the high-altar, and an Annunciation that is now set up against a wall beside the principal chapel. He also painted for the said Pope in the Palace the Chapel of the Sacrament, which was afterwards destroyed by Paul III in the making of a staircase through it. In that work, which was an excellent example of his manner, he had wrought in fresco some scenes from the life of Jesus Christ, and he had made therein many portraits from life of distinguished persons of those times, which would probably now be lost if Giovio had not caused the following among them to be preserved for his museum—namely, Pope Nicholas V; the Emperor Frederick, who came to Italy at that time; Frate Antonino, who was afterwards Archbishop of Florence; Biondo da Forlì; and Ferrante of Arragon. Now Fra Giovanni appeared to the Pope to be, as indeed he was, a person of most holy life, peaceful and modest; and, since the Archbishopric of Florence was at that time vacant, the Pope had judged him worthy of that rank; but the said friar, hearing this, implored His Holiness to find another man, for the reason that he did not feel himself fitted for ruling others, whereas his Order contained a brother most learned and well able to govern, a Godfearing man and a friend of the poor, on whom that dignity would be conferred much more fittingly than on himself. The Pope, hearing this and remembering that what he said was true, granted him the favour willingly; and thus the Archbishopric of Florence was given to Frate Antonino of the Order of Preaching Friars, a man truly very famous both for sanctity and for learning, and of such a character, in short, that he was deservedly canonized in our own day by Adrian VI.



S. STEPHEN PREACHING
(After the fresco by Fra Giovanni da Fiesole [Fra Angelico] Rome: The Vatican, Chapel of Nicholas V)
Anderson
[View larger image](#)

Great excellence was that of Fra Giovanni, and a thing truly very rare, to resign a dignity and honour and charge so important, offered to himself by a Supreme Pontiff, in favour of the man whom he, with his singleness of eye and sincerity of heart, judged to be much more worthy of it than himself. Let the churchmen of our own times learn from this holy man not to take upon themselves charges that they cannot worthily carry out, and to yield them to those who are most worthy of them. Would to God, to return to Fra Giovanni (and may this be said without offence to the upright among them), that all churchmen would spend their time as did this truly angelic father, seeing that he spent every minute of his life in the service of God and in benefiting both the world and his neighbour. And what can or ought to be desired more than to gain the kingdom of Heaven by living a life of holiness, and to win eternal fame in the world by labouring virtuously? And in truth a talent so extraordinary and so supreme as that of Fra Giovanni could not and should not descend on any save a man of most holy life, for the reason that those who work at religious and holy subjects should be religious and holy men; for it is seen, when such works are executed by persons of little faith who have little esteem for religion, that they often arouse in men's minds evil appetites and licentious desires; whence there comes blame for the evil in their works, with praise for the art and ability that they show. Now I would not have any man deceive himself by considering the rude and inept as holy, and the beautiful and excellent as licentious; as some do, who, seeing figures of women or of youths adorned with loveliness and beauty beyond the ordinary, straightway censure them and judge them licentious, not perceiving that they are very wrong to condemn the good judgment of the painter, who holds the Saints, both male and female, who are celestial, to be as much more beautiful than mortal man as Heaven is superior to earthly beauty and to the works of human hands; and, what is worse, they reveal the unsoundness and corruption of their own minds by drawing evil and impure desires out of works from which, if they were lovers of purity, as they seek by their misguided zeal to prove themselves to be, they would gain a desire to attain to Heaven and to make themselves acceptable to the Creator of all things, in whom, as most perfect and most beautiful, all perfection and beauty have their source. What would such men do if they found themselves, or rather, what are we to believe that they do when they actually find themselves, in places containing living beauty, accompanied by licentious ways, honey-sweet words, movements full of grace, and eyes that ravish all but the stoutest of hearts, if the very image of beauty, nay, its mere shadow, moves them so profoundly? However, I would not have any believe that I approve of those figures that are painted in churches in a state of almost complete nudity, for in these cases it is seen that the painter has not shown the consideration that was due to the place; because, even although a man has to show how much he knows, he should proceed with due regard for circumstances and pay respect to persons, times, and places.

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Fra Giovanni was a man of great simplicity, and most holy in his ways; and his goodness may be

perceived from this, that, Pope Nicholas V wishing one morning to entertain him at table, he had scruples of conscience about eating meat without leave from his Prior, forgetting about the authority of the Pontiff. He shunned the affairs of the world; and, living a pure and holy life, he was as much the friend of the poor as I believe his soul to be now the friend of Heaven. He was continually labouring at his painting, and he would never paint anything save Saints. He might have been rich, but to this he gave no thought; nay, he used to say that true riches consist only in being content with little. He might have ruled many, but he would not, saying that it was less fatiguing and less misleading to obey others. He had the option of obtaining dignities both among the friars and in the world, but he despised them, declaring that he sought no other dignity save that of seeking to avoid Hell and draw near to Paradise. And what dignity, in truth, can be compared to that which all churchmen, nay, all men, should seek, and which is to be found only in God and in a life of virtue? He was most kindly and temperate; and he lived chastely and withdrew himself from the snares of the world, being wont very often to say that he who pursued such an art had need of quiet and of a life free from cares, and that he whose work is connected with Christ must ever live with Christ. He was never seen in anger among his fellow-friars, which is a very notable thing, and almost impossible, it seems to me, to believe; and it was his custom to admonish his friends with a simple smile. With incredible sweetness, if any sought for works from him, he would say that they had only to gain the consent of the Prior, and that then he would not fail them. In short, this never to be sufficiently extolled father was most humble and modest in all his works and his discourse, and facile and devout in his pictures; and the Saints that he painted have more the air and likeness of Saints than those of any other man. It was his custom never to retouch or improve any of his pictures, but to leave them ever in the state to which he had first brought them; believing, so he used to say, that this was the will of God. Some say that Fra Giovanni would never have taken his brushes in his hand without first offering a prayer. He never painted a Crucifix without the tears streaming down his cheeks; wherefore in the countenances and attitudes of his figures one can recognize the goodness, nobility, and sincerity of his mind towards the Christian religion.

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FRA GIOVANNI DA FIESOLE (FRA ANGELICO): THE ANNUNCIATION

(Cortona: Gesù Gallery. Panel)

[View larger image](#)

He died in 1455 at the age of sixty-eight, and left disciples in Benozzo, a Florentine, who ever imitated his manner, and Zanobi Strozzi, who painted pictures and panels throughout all Florence for the houses of citizens, and particularly a panel that is now in the tramezzo^[8] of S. Maria Novella, beside that by Fra Giovanni, and one in S. Benedetto, a monastery of the Monks of Camaldoli without the Porta a Pinti, now in ruins. The latter panel is at present in the little Church of S. Michele in the Monastery of the Angeli, before one enters the principal church, set up against the wall on the right as one approaches the altar. There is also a panel in the Chapel of the Nasi in S. Lucia, and another in S. Romeo; and in the guardaroba of the Duke there is the portrait of Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, with that of Bartolommeo Valori, in one and the same picture by the hand of the same man. Another disciple of Fra Giovanni was Gentile da Fabriano, as was also Domenico di Michelino, who painted the panel for the altar of S. Zanobi in S. Apollinare at Florence, and many other pictures.

Fra Giovanni was buried by his fellow-friars in the Minerva in Rome, near the lateral door beside

the sacristy, in a round tomb of marble, with himself, portrayed from nature, lying thereon. The following epitaph may be read, carved in the marble: [Pg 36]

NON MIHI SIT LAUDI, QUOD ERAM VELUT ALTER APELLES,
SED QUOD LUCRA TUIS OMNIA, CHRISTE, DABAM;
ALTERA NAM TERRIS OPERA EXTANT, ALTERA CÆLO.
URBS ME JOANNEM FLOS TULIT ETRURIAE.

In S. Maria del Fiore are two very large books illuminated divinely well by the hand of Fra Giovanni, which are held in great veneration and richly adorned, nor are they ever seen save on days of the highest solemnity.

A celebrated and famous illuminator at the same time as Fra Giovanni was one Attavante, a Florentine, of whom I know no other name. This man, among many other works, illuminated a Silius Italicus, which is now in S. Giovanni e Polo in Venice; of which work I will not withhold certain particulars, both because they are worthy of the attention of craftsmen, and because, to my knowledge, no other work by this master is to be found; nor should I know even of this one, had it not been for the affection borne to these noble arts by the Very Reverend Maestro Cosimo Bartoli, a gentleman of Florence, who gave me information about it, to the end that the talent of Attavante might not remain, as it were, buried out of sight.

In the said book, then, the figure of Silius has on the head a helmet with a crest of gold and a chaplet of laurel; he is wearing a blue cuirass picked out with gold in the ancient manner, while he is holding a book in his right hand, and the left he has on a short sword. Over the cuirass he has a red chlamys, fastened in front with a knot, and fringed with gold, which hangs down from his shoulders. The inside of this chlamys is seen to be of changing colours and embroidered with gold. His buskins are yellow, and he is standing on his right foot in a niche. The next figure in this work represents Scipio Africanus. He is wearing a yellow cuirass, and his sword-belt and sleeves, which are blue in colour, are all embroidered with gold. On his head he has a helmet with two little wings and a fish by way of crest. The young man's countenance is fair and very beautiful; and he is raising his right arm proudly, holding in that hand a naked sword, while in the left hand [Pg 37]

he has the scabbard, which is red and embroidered with gold. The hose are green in colour and plain; and the chlamys, which is blue, has a red lining with a fringe of gold all round, and it is fastened at the throat, leaving the front quite open, and falling behind with beautiful grace. This young man, who stands in a niche of mixed green and grey marble, with blue buskins embroidered with gold, is looking with indescribable fierceness at Hannibal, who faces him on the opposite page of the book. This figure of Hannibal is that of a man about thirty-six years of age; he is frowning, with two furrows in his brow expressive of impatience and anger, and he, too, is looking fixedly at Scipio. On his head he has a yellow helmet, with a green and yellow dragon for crest and a serpent for chaplet. He is standing on his left foot and raising his right arm, with which he holds the shaft of an ancient javelin, or rather, of a little partisan. His cuirass is blue, his sword-belt partly blue and partly yellow, his sleeves of changing blue and red, and his buskins yellow. His chlamys, of changing red and yellow, is fastened on the right shoulder and lined with green; and, holding his left hand on his sword, he is standing in a niche of varicoloured marbles, yellow, white, and changing. On another page is Pope Nicholas V, portrayed from the life, with a mantle of changing purple and red and all embroidered with gold. He is without a beard and in full profile, and he is looking towards the beginning of the book, which is opposite to him; and he is pointing to it with his right hand, as though in a marvel. The niche is green, white, and red. Then in the border there are certain little half-length figures in an ornament composed of ovals and circles, and other things of that kind, together with an infinite number of little birds and children, so well wrought that nothing more could be desired. Close to this, in like manner, are Hanno the Carthaginian, Hasdrubal, Laelius, Massinissa, C. Salinator, Nero, Sempronius, M. Marcellus, Q. Fabius, the other Scipio, and Vibius. At the end of the book there is seen a Mars in an antique chariot drawn by two reddish horses. On his head he has a helmet of red and gold, with two little wings; on his left arm he has an antique shield, which he holds before him, and in his right hand a naked sword. He is standing on his left foot only, holding the other in the air. He [Pg 38]

has a cuirass in the antique manner, all red and gold, as are his hose and his buskins. His chlamys is blue without, and within all green and embroidered with gold. The chariot is covered with red cloth embroidered with gold, with a border of ermine all round; and it stands in a verdant and flowery champaign country, surrounded by cliffs and rocks; while landscapes and cities are seen in the distance, with a sky of a most marvellous blue. On the opposite page is a young Neptune, whose clothing is in the shape of a long shirt, embroidered all round with the colour formed from *terretta verde*. The flesh-colour is very pale. In his right hand he is holding a little trident, and with his left he is raising his dress. He is standing with both feet on the chariot, which has a covering of red, embroidered with gold and fringed all round with sable. This chariot has four wheels, like that of Mars, but it is drawn by four dolphins, and accompanied by three sea-nymphs, two boys, and a great number of fishes, all wrought with a water-colour similar to the *terretta*, and very beautiful in expression. After these is seen Carthage in despair, in the form of a woman standing upright with dishevelled hair. Her upper garment is green, and it is open from the waist downwards, being lined with red cloth embroidered in gold; and through this opening there may be seen another garment, delicate and of changing purple and white colour. The sleeves are red and gold, with certain puffs and floating folds made by the upper garment, and she is stretching out her left hand towards Rome, who is opposite to her, as though saying, "What is thy wish? I have my answer ready;" and in her right hand she holds a naked sword, with an air of frenzy. Her buskins are blue, and she is standing on a rock in the middle of the sea, surrounded by a very beautiful sky. Rome is a maiden as beautiful as it is possible for man to

imagine, with dishevelled hair and certain tresses wrought with infinite grace. Her clothing is pure red, with only an embroidered border at the foot; the lining of her robe is yellow, and the garment beneath, which is seen through the opening, is of changing purple and white. Her buskins are green; in her right hand she has a sceptre, in her left a globe; and she, too, is standing on a rock, in the midst of a sky that could not be more beautiful than it is. Now, although I have striven to the best of my power to show with what great art these figures were wrought by Attavante, let no one believe that I have said more than a very small part of what might be said about their beauty, seeing that, considering the time, there are no better examples of illumination to be seen, nor any work wrought with more invention, judgment, and design; and the colours, above all, could not be more beautiful or laid in their places more delicately, so perfect is their grace.

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LEON BATISTA ALBERTI

LIFE OF LEON BATISTA ALBERTI

ARCHITECT OF FLORENCE

Very great is the advantage bestowed by learning, without exception, on all those craftsmen who take delight in it, but particularly on sculptors, painters, and architects, for it opens up the way to invention in all the works that are made; not to mention that a man cannot have a perfect judgment, be his natural gifts what they may, if he is deprived of the complemental advantage of being assisted by learning. For who does not know that it is necessary, in choosing sites for buildings, to show enlightenment in the avoidance of danger from pestiferous winds, insalubrious air, and the smells and vapours of impure and unwholesome waters? Who is ignorant that a man must be able, in whatever work he is seeking to carry out, to reject or adopt everything for himself after mature consideration, without having to depend on help from another man's theory? For theory, when separated from practice, is generally of very little use; but when the two chance to come together, there is nothing that is more helpful to our life, both because art becomes much richer and more perfect by the aid of science, and because the counsels and the writings of learned craftsmen have in themselves greater efficacy and greater credit than the words or works of those who know nothing but mere practice, whether they do it well or ill. And that all this is true is seen manifestly in Leon Batista Alberti, who, having studied the Latin tongue, and having given attention to architecture, to perspective, and to painting, left behind him books written in such a manner, that, since not one of our modern craftsmen has been able to expound these matters in writing, although very many of them in his own country have excelled him in working, it is generally believed—such is the influence of his writings over the pens and speech of the learned—that he was superior to all those who were actually superior to him in work. Wherefore, with regard to name and fame, it is seen from experience that writings have greater power and longer life than anything else; for books go everywhere with ease, and everywhere they command belief, if only they be truthful and not full of lies. It is no marvel, then, if the famous Leon Batista is known more for his writings than for the work of his hands.

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This man, born in Florence of the most noble family of the Alberti, of which we have spoken in another place, devoted himself not only to studying geography and the proportions of antiquities, but also to writing, to which he was much inclined, much more than to working. He was excellent in arithmetic and geometry, and he wrote ten books on architecture in the Latin tongue, which were published by him in 1481, and may now be read in a translation in the Florentine tongue made by the Reverend Maestro Cosimo Bartoli, Provost of S. Giovanni in Florence. He wrote three books on painting, now translated into the Tuscan tongue by Messer Lodovico Domenichi; he composed a treatise on traction and on the rules for measuring heights, as well as the books on the "Vita Civile," and some erotic works in prose and verse; and he was the first who tried to reduce Italian verse to the measure of the Latin, as is seen in the following epistle by his pen:

Questa per estrema miserabile pistola mando
A te, che spregi miseramente noi.

Arriving at Rome in the time of Nicholas V, who had turned the whole of Rome upside down with his manner of building, Leon Batista, through the agency of Biondo da Forlì, who was much his friend, became intimate with that Pope, who had previously carried out all his building after the advice of Bernardo Rossellino, a sculptor and architect of Florence, as will be told in the Life of his brother Antonio. This man, having put his hand to restoring the Pope's Palace and to certain works in S. Maria Maggiore, thenceforward, according to the will of the Pope, ever sought the

advice of Leon Batista. Wherefore, using one of them as adviser and the other as executor, the Pope carried out many useful and praiseworthy works, such as the restoring of the conduit of the Acqua Vergine, which was in ruins; and there was made the fountain on the Piazza de' Trevi, with those marble ornaments that are seen there, on which are the arms of that Pontiff and of the Roman people.

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Afterwards, having gone to Signor Sigismondo Malatesti of Rimini, he made for him the model of the Church of S. Francesco, and in particular that of the façade, which was made of marble; and likewise the side facing towards the south, which was built with very great arches and with tombs for the illustrious men of that city. In short, he brought that building to such a form that in point of solidity it is one of the most famous temples in Italy. Within it are six most beautiful chapels, one of which, dedicated to S. Jerome, is very ornate; and in it are preserved many relics brought from Jerusalem. In the same chapel are the tombs of the said Signor Sigismondo and of his wife, constructed very richly of marble in the year 1450; on one there is the portrait of Sigismondo himself, and in another part of the work there is that of Leon Batista.

After this, in the year 1457, when the very useful method of printing books was discovered by Johann Gutenberg the German, Leon Batista, working on similar lines, discovered a way of tracing natural perspectives and of effecting the diminution of figures by means of an instrument, and likewise the method of enlarging small things and reproducing them on a greater scale; all ingenious inventions, useful to art and very beautiful.

In Leon Batista's time Giovanni di Paolo Rucellai wished to build the principal façade of S. Maria Novella entirely of marble at his own expense, and he spoke of this to Leon Batista, who was very much his friend; and having received from him not only counsel, but the actual model, Giovanni resolved to have the work executed at all costs, in order to leave it behind him as a memorial of himself. A beginning having been made, therefore, it was finished in the year 1477, to the great satisfaction of all the city, which was pleased with the whole work, but particularly with the door, from which it is seen that Leon Batista took more than ordinary pains. For Cosimo Rucellai, likewise, he made the design for the palace which that man built in the street which is called La Vigna, and that for the loggia which is opposite to it. In the latter, having turned his arches over columns close together, both in the front and at the ends, since he wished to adhere to this plan and not to make one single arch, he had a certain space left over on each side; wherefore he was forced to make certain projections at the inner corners. And then, when he wished to turn the arch of the inner vaulting, having seen that he could not give it the shape of a half-circle, which would have been flat and awkward, he resolved to turn certain small arches at the corners from one projection to another; and this lack of judgment in design gives us to know clearly that practice is necessary as well as science, for the judgment can never become perfect unless science attains to experience by actual work.

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It is said that the same man made the design for the house and garden of these Rucellai in the Via della Scala. This house is built with much judgment and very commodious, for, besides many other conveniences, it has two loggie, one facing south and the other west, both very beautiful, and made without arches on the columns, which is the true and proper method that the ancients used, for the reason that the architraves which are placed on the capitals of the columns lie level, whereas a four-sided thing like a curving arch cannot rest on a round column without the corners jutting out over space. The good method, therefore, demands that architraves should rest on columns, and that, when arches are to be turned, pilasters and not columns should be made.

For the same Rucellai Leon Batista made a chapel in the same manner in S. Pancrazio, which rests on great architraves placed on two columns and two pilasters, piercing the wall of the church below; which is a difficult thing, but safe; wherefore this work is one of the best that this architect ever made. In the middle of this chapel is a tomb of marble, wrought very well in the form of a rather long oval, and similar, as may be read on it, to the Sepulchre of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem.



FAÇADE OF S. ANDREA
(After Leon Batista Alberti. Mantua)

Alinari

[View larger image](#)

About the same time Lodovico Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, wished to build the tribune and the principal chapel in the Nunziata, the Church of the Servi in Florence, after the design and model of Leon Batista; and pulling down a square chapel, old, not very large, and painted in the ancient manner, which stood at the head of the church, he built the said tribune in the bizarre and difficult form of a round temple surrounded by nine chapels, all curving in a round arch, and each within in the shape of a niche. Now, since the arches of the said chapels rest on the pilasters in front, the result is that the stone dressings of the arches, inclining towards the wall, tend to draw ever backwards in order to meet the said wall, which turns in the opposite direction according to the shape of the tribune; wherefore, when the said arches of the chapels are looked at from the side, it appears that they are falling backwards, and that they are clumsy, as indeed they are, although the proportions are correct, and the difficulties of the method must be remembered. Truly it would have been better if Leon Batista had avoided this method, for, although there is some credit for the difficulty of its execution, it is clumsy both in great things and in small, and it cannot have a good result. And that this is true of great things is proved by the great arch in front, which forms the entrance to the said tribune; for, although it is very beautiful on the outer side, on the inner side, where it has to follow the curve of the chapel, which is round, it appears to be falling backwards and to be extremely clumsy. This Leon Batista would perhaps not have done, if, in addition to science and theory, he had possessed practical experience in working; for another man would have avoided this difficulty, and would have rather aimed at grace and greater beauty for the edifice. The whole work is otherwise in itself very beautiful, bizarre, and difficult; and nothing save great courage could have enabled Leon Batista to vault that tribune in those times in the manner that he did. Being then summoned by the same Marquis Lodovico to Mantua, Leon Batista made for him the models of the Church of S. Andrea and of some other works; and on the road leading from Mantua to Padua there may be seen certain temples built after his manner. Many of the designs and models of Leon Batista were carried into execution by Salvestro Fancelli, a passing good architect and sculptor of Florence, who, according to the desire of the said Leon Batista, executed with judgment and extraordinary diligence all the works that he undertook in Florence. For those in Mantua he employed one Luca, a Florentine, who, living ever afterwards in that city and dying there, left his name—so Filarete tells us—to the family of the Luchi, which is still there to-day. It was no small good-fortune for him to have friends who understood him and were able and willing to serve him, because architects cannot be always standing over their work, and it is of the greatest use to them to have a faithful and loving assistant; and if any man ever knew it, I know it very well by long experience.

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In painting Leon Batista did not do great or very beautiful works, for the few by his hand that are to be seen do not show much perfection; nor is this to be wondered at, seeing that he devoted himself more to his studies than to draughtsmanship. Yet he could express his conceptions well enough in drawing, as may be seen from some sketches by his hand that are in our book, in which

there are drawn the Bridge of S. Angelo and the covering that was made for it with his design in the form of a loggia, for protection from the sun in summer and from the rain and wind in winter. This work he was commissioned to execute by Pope Nicholas V, who had intended to carry out many similar works throughout the whole of Rome; but death intervened to hinder him. There is a work of Leon Batista's in a little Chapel of Our Lady on the abutment of the Ponte alla Carraja in Florence—namely, an altar-predella, containing three little scenes with some perspectives, which he was much more able to describe with the pen than to paint with the brush. In the house of the Palla Rucellai family, also in Florence, there is a portrait of himself made with a mirror; and a panel with rather large figures in chiaroscuro. He also made a picture of Venice in perspective, with S. Marco, but the figures therein were executed by other masters; and this is one of the best examples of his painting that there are to be seen.

Leon Batista was a person of most honest and laudable ways, the friend of men of talent, and very open and courteous to all; and he lived honourably and like a gentleman—which he was—through the whole course of his life. Finally, having reached a mature enough age, he passed content and tranquil to a better life, leaving a most honourable name behind him.

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LAZZARO VASARI

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LIFE OF LAZZARO VASARI

PAINTER OF AREZZO

Truly great is the pleasure of those who find one of their ancestors and of their own family to have been distinguished and famous in some profession, whether that of arms, or of letters, or of painting, or any other noble calling whatsoever; and those men who find some honourable mention of one of their forefathers in history, if they gain nothing else thereby, have an incitement to virtue and a bridle to restrain them from doing anything unworthy of a family which has produced illustrious and very famous men. How great is this pleasure, as I said at the beginning, I have experienced for myself in finding that one among my ancestors, Lazzaro Vasari, was famous as a painter in his day not only in his native place, but throughout all Tuscany; and that certainly not without reason, as I could clearly prove, if it were permissible for me to speak as freely of him as I have spoken of others. But, since I was born of his blood, it might be readily believed that I had exceeded all due bounds in praising him; wherefore, leaving on one side the merits of the man himself and of the family, I will simply tell what I cannot and should not under any circumstances withhold, if I would not fall short of the truth, on which all history hangs.

Lazzaro Vasari, then, a painter of Arezzo, was very much the friend of Piero della Francesca of Borgo a San Sepolcro, and ever held intercourse with him while Piero was working, as it has been said, in Arezzo. And, as it often comes to pass, this friendship brought him nothing but advantage, for the reason that, whereas Lazzaro had formerly devoted himself only to making little figures for certain works according to the custom of those times, he was persuaded by Piero della Francesca to set himself to do bigger things. His first work in fresco was a S. Vincent in S. Domenico at Arezzo, in the second chapel on the left as one enters the church; and at his feet he painted himself and his young son Giorgio kneeling, clothed in honourable costumes of those times, and recommending themselves to the Saint, because the boy had inadvertently cut his face with a knife. Although there is no inscription on this work, yet certain memories of old men belonging to our house and the fact that it contains the Vasari arms, enable us to attribute it to him without a doubt. Of this there must certainly have been some record in that convent, but their papers and everything else have been destroyed many times by soldiers, and I do not marvel at the lack of records. The manner of Lazzaro was so similar to that of Piero Borghese, that very little difference could be seen between one and the other. Now it was very much the custom at that time to paint various things, such as the quarterings of arms, on the caparisons of horses, according to the rank of those who bore them; and in this work Lazzaro was an excellent master, and the rather as it was his province to make very graceful little figures, which were very well suited to such caparisons. Lazzaro wrought for Niccolò Piccino and for his soldiers and captains many things full of stories and arms, which were held in great price, with so much profit for himself, that the gains that he drew from this work enabled him to recall to Arezzo many of his brothers, who were living at Cortona and working at the manufacture of earthenware vases. He also brought into his house his nephew, Luca Signorelli of Cortona, his sister's son, whom he placed, by reason of his good intelligence, with Piero Borghese, to the end that he might learn the art of painting; which he contrived to do very well, as will be told in the proper place.

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Lazzaro, then, devoting himself continually to the study of art, became every day more excellent, as is shown by some very good drawings by his hand that are in our book. And because he took

much pleasure in depicting certain natural effects full of emotions, in which he expressed very well weeping, laughing, crying, fear, trembling, and the like, his pictures are mostly full of such inventions; as may be seen in a little chapel painted in fresco by his hand in S. Gimignano at Arezzo, wherein there is a Crucifix, with the Madonna, S. John, and the Magdalene at the foot of the Cross, in various attitudes, and weeping so naturally, that they acquired credit and fame for him among his fellow-citizens. For the Company of S. Antonio, in the same city, he painted a cloth banner that is borne in processions, on which he wrought Jesus Christ at the Column, naked and bound and so lifelike, that He appears to be trembling, and, with His shoulders all drawn together, to be enduring with incredible humility and patience the blows that two Jews are giving Him. One of these, firmly planted on his feet, is plying his scourge with both his hands, turning his back towards Christ in an attitude full of cruelty. The other is seen in profile, raising himself on tip-toe; and grasping the scourge with his hands, and gnashing his teeth, he is wielding it with so great rage that words are powerless to express it. Both these men Lazzaro painted with their garments torn, the better to reveal the nude, contenting himself with covering after a fashion their private and less honourable parts. This work painted on cloth has lasted all these years—which truly makes me marvel—right up to our own day; and by reason of its beauty and excellence the men of that Company caused a copy to be made of it by the French Prior,^[9] as we will relate in the proper place. At Perugia, also, Lazzaro wrought some stories of the Madonna, with a Crucifix, in a chapel beside the Sacristy of the Church of the Servi. In the Pieve of Montepulciano he executed a predella with little figures, and at Castiglione Aretino he painted a panel in distemper in S. Francesco; together with many other works, which, for the sake of brevity, I refrain from describing, more particularly many chests that are in the houses of citizens, which he painted with little figures. In the Palace of the Guelphs in Florence, among the ancient arms, there may be seen some caparisons wrought very well by him. He also painted a banner for the Company of S. Sebastiano, containing the said Saint at the column, with certain angels crowning him; but it is now spoilt and all eaten away by time.

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In Lazzaro's time there was one who made glass windows in Arezzo, Fabiano Sassoli, a young Aretine of great excellence in that profession, as is proved by those of his works that are in the Vescovado, the Abbey, the Pieve, and other places in that city; but he knew little of design, and he was very far from reaching the excellence of those that Parri Spinelli made. Wherefore he determined that, even as he knew well how to fire, to put together, and to mount the glass, so he would make some work that should also be passing good with regard to the painting; and he caused Lazzaro to execute for him two cartoons of his own invention, in order to make two windows for the Madonna delle Grazie. Having obtained these from Lazzaro, who was his friend and a courteous craftsman, he made the said windows, which turned out so beautiful and so well wrought that there are not many to which they have to give precedence. In one there is a very beautiful Madonna; and in the other, which is by far the better of the two, there is the Resurrection of Christ, with an armed man in foreshortening in front of the Sepulchre; and it is a marvel, considering the small size of the window and consequently of the picture, how those figures can appear so large in so small a space. Many other things could I tell of Lazzaro, who was a very good draughtsman, as may be seen from certain drawings in our book; but I think it best for me to pass them by.

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Lazzaro was a pleasant person and very witty in his speech; and although he was much given to pleasure, nevertheless he never strayed from the path of right living. His life lasted seventy-two years, and he left a son called Giorgio, who occupied himself continually with the ancient Aretine vases of terra-cotta; and at the time when Messer Gentile of Urbino, Bishop of Arezzo, was dwelling in that city, Giorgio rediscovered the method of giving red and black colours to terra-cotta vases, such as those that the ancient Aretines made up to the time of King Porsena. Being a most industrious person, he made large vases with the potter's wheel, one braccio and a half in height, which are still to be seen in his house. Men say that while searching for vases in a place where he thought that the ancients had worked, he found three arches of their ancient furnaces three braccia below the surface in a field of clay near the bridge at Calciarella, a place called by that name; and round these he found some of the mixture for making the vases, and many broken ones, with four that were whole. These last were given by Giorgio, through the mediation of the Bishop, to the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici on his visiting Arezzo; wherefore they were the source and origin of his entering into the service of that most exalted family, in which he remained ever afterwards. Giorgio worked very well in relief, as may be seen from some heads by his hand that are in his house. He had five sons, who all followed the same calling; two of them, Lazzaro and Bernardo, were good craftsmen, of whom the latter died very young in Rome; and in truth, by reason of his intelligence, which is known to have been dexterous and ready, if death had not snatched him so prematurely from his house, he would have brought honour to his native place.

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The elder Lazzaro died in 1452, and his son, Giorgio, died in 1484 at the age of sixty-eight; and both were buried in the Pieve of Arezzo at the foot of their own Chapel of S. Giorgio, where the following verses were set up after a time in praise of Lazzaro:

ARETII EXULTET TELLUS CLARISSIMA; NAMQUE EST
REBUS IN ANGUSTIS, IN TENUIQUE LABOR.
VIX OPERUM ISTIUS PARTES COGNOSCERE POSSIS:
MYRMECIDES TACEAT; CALLICRATES SILEAT.

Finally, the last Giorgio Vasari, writer of this history, in gratitude for the benefits for which he has to thank in great measure the excellence of his ancestors, having received the principal

chapel of the said Pieve as a gift from his fellow-citizens and from the Wardens of Works and Canons, as was told in the Life of Pietro Laurati, and having brought it to the condition that has been described, has made a new tomb in the middle of the choir, which is behind the altar; and in this he has laid the bones of the said Lazzaro the elder and Giorgio the elder, having removed them from their former resting-place, and likewise those of all the other members of the said family, both male and female; and thus he has made a new burial-place for all the descendants of the house of Vasari. In like manner, the body of his mother (who died in Florence in the year 1557), after having remained for some years in S. Croce, has been deposited by him in the said tomb, according to her own desire, together with Antonio, her husband and his father, who died of plague at the end of the year 1527. In the predella that is below the panel of the said altar there are portraits from nature, made by the said Giorgio, of Lazzaro, of the elder Giorgio, his grandfather, of his father Antonio, and of his mother Monna Maddalena de' Tacci. And let this be the end of the Life of Lazzaro Vasari, painter of Arezzo.

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ANTONELLO DA MESSINA

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LIFE OF ANTONELLO DA MESSINA

PAINTER

When I consider within my own mind the various qualities of the benefits and advantages that have been conferred on the art of painting by many masters who have followed the second manner, I cannot do otherwise than call them, by reason of their efforts, truly industrious and excellent, because they sought above all to bring painting to a better condition, without thinking of discomfort, expense, or any particular interest of their own. They continued, then, to employ no other method of colouring save that of distemper for panels and for canvases, which method had been introduced by Cimabue in the year 1250, when he was working with those Greeks, and had been afterwards followed by Giotto and by the others of whom we have spoken up to the present; and they were still adhering to the same manner of working, although the craftsmen recognized clearly that pictures in distemper were wanting in a certain softness and liveliness, which, if they could be obtained, would be likely to give more grace to their designs, loveliness to their colouring, and greater facility in blending the colours together; for they had ever been wont to hatch their works merely with the point of the brush. But although many had made investigations and sought for something of the sort, yet no one had found any good method, either by the use of liquid varnish or by the mixture of other kinds of colours with the distemper. Among many who made trial of these and other similar expedients, but all in vain, were Alesso Baldovinetti, Pesello, and many others, not one of whom succeeded in giving to his works the beauty and excellence that he had imagined. And even if they had found what they were seeking, they still lacked the method of making their figures on panel adhere as well as those painted on walls, and also that of making them so that they could be washed without destroying the colours, and would endure any shock in handling. These matters a great number of craftsmen had discussed many times in common, but without result.

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This same desire was felt by many lofty minds that were devoted to painting beyond the bounds of Italy—namely, by all the painters of France, Spain, Germany, and other countries. Now, while matters stood thus, it came to pass that, while working in Flanders, Johann^[10] of Bruges, a painter much esteemed in those parts by reason of the great mastery that he had acquired in his profession, set himself to make trial of various sorts of colours, and, as one who took delight in alchemy, to prepare many kinds of oil for making varnishes and other things dear to men of inventive brain, such as he was. Now, on one occasion, having taken very great pains with the painting of a panel, and having brought it to completion with much diligence, he gave it the varnish and put it to dry in the sun, as is the custom. But, either because the heat was too violent, or perchance because the wood was badly joined together or not seasoned well enough, the said panel opened out at the joinings in a ruinous fashion. Whereupon Johann, seeing the harm that the heat of the sun had done to it, determined to bring it about that the sun should never again do such great damage to his works. And so, being disgusted no less with his varnish than with working in distemper, he began to look for a method of making a varnish that should dry in the shade, without putting his pictures in the sun. Wherefore, after he had made many experiments with substances both pure and mixed together, he found at length that linseed oil and oil of nuts dried more readily than all the others that he had tried. These, then, boiled together with other mixtures of his, gave him the varnish that he—nay, all the painters in the world—had long desired. Afterwards, having made experiments with many other substances, he saw that mixing the colours with those oils gave them a very solid consistency, not only securing the work, when dried, from all danger from water, but also making the colour so brilliant as to give it lustre by

itself without varnish; and what appeared most marvellous to him was this, that it could be blended infinitely better than distemper. Rejoicing greatly over such a discovery, as was only reasonable, Johann made a beginning with many works and filled all those parts with them, with incredible pleasure for others and very great profit for himself; and, assisted by experience from day to day, he kept on ever making greater and better works.

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No long time passed before the fame of his invention, spreading not only throughout Flanders but through Italy and many other parts of the world, awakened in all craftsmen a very great desire to know by what method he gave so great a perfection to his works. These craftsmen, seeing his works and not knowing what means he employed, were forced to extol him and to give him immortal praise, and at the same time to envy him with a blameless envy, the rather as he refused for some time to allow himself to be seen at work by anyone, or to reveal his secret to any man. At length, however, having grown old, he imparted it to Roger of Bruges, his pupil, who passed it on to his disciple Ausse^[11] and to the others whom we have mentioned in speaking of colouring in oil with regard to painting. But with all this, although merchants did a great business in his pictures and sent them all over the world to Princes and other great persons, to their own great profit, yet the knowledge did not spread beyond Flanders; and although these pictures had a very pungent odour, given to them by the mixture of colours and oils, particularly when they were new, so that it seemed possible for the secret to be found out, yet for many years it was not discovered. But certain Florentines, who traded between Flanders and Naples, sent to King Alfonso I of Naples a panel with many figures painted in oil by Johann, which became very dear to that King both for the beauty of the figures and for the novel invention shown in the colouring; and all the painters in that kingdom flocked together to see it, and it was consummately extolled by all.

Now there was one Antonello da Messina, a person of good and lively intelligence, of great sagacity, and skilled in his profession, who, having studied design for many years in Rome, had first retired to Palermo, where he had worked for many years, and finally to his native place, Messina, where he had confirmed by his works the good opinion that his countrymen had of his excellent ability in painting. This man, then, going once on some business of his own from Sicily to Naples, heard that the said King Alfonso had received from Flanders the aforesaid panel by the hand of Johann of Bruges, painted in oil in such a manner that it could be washed, would endure any shock, and was in every way perfect. Thereupon, having contrived to obtain a view of it, he was so strongly impressed by the liveliness of the colours and by the beauty and harmony of that painting, that he put on one side all other business and every thought and went off to Flanders. Having arrived in Bruges, he became very intimate with the said Johann, making him presents of many drawings in the Italian manner and other things, insomuch that the latter, moved by this and by the respect shown by Antonello, and being now old, was content that he should see his method of colouring in oil; wherefore Antonello did not depart from that place until he had gained a thorough knowledge of that way of colouring, which he desired so greatly to know. And no long time after, Johann having died, Antonello returned from Flanders in order to revisit his native country and to communicate to all Italy a secret so useful, beautiful, and advantageous. Then, having stayed a few months in Messina, he went to Venice, where, being a man much given to pleasure and very licentious, he resolved to take up his abode and finish his life, having found there a mode of living exactly suited to his taste. And so, putting himself to work, he made there many pictures in oil according to the rules that he had learned in Flanders; these are scattered throughout the houses of noblemen in that city, where they were held in great esteem by reason of the novelty of the work. He made many others, also, which were sent to various places. Finally, having acquired fame and great repute there, he was commissioned to paint a panel that was destined for S. Cassiano, a parish church in that city. This panel was wrought by Antonio with all his knowledge and with no sparing of time; and when finished, by reason of the novelty of the colouring and the beauty of the figures, which he had made with good design, it was much commended and held in very great price. And afterwards, when men heard of the new secret that he had brought from Flanders to that city, he was ever loved and cherished by the magnificent noblemen of Venice throughout the whole course of his life.

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ANTONELLO DA MESSINA: PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN
 (*Berlin: Kaiser Friedrich Museum, 18. Panel*)
[View larger image](#)

Among the painters who were then in repute in Venice, a certain Maestro Domenico was held very excellent. This man, on the arrival of Antonello in Venice, received him with such great lovingness and courtesy, that he could not have shown more to a very dear and cherished friend. For this reason Antonello, who would not be beaten in courtesy by Maestro Domenico, after a few months taught him the secret and method of colouring in oil. Nothing could have been dearer to Domenico than this extraordinary courtesy and friendliness; and well might he hold it dear, since it caused him, as he had foreseen, to be greatly honoured ever afterwards in his native city. Grossly deceived, in truth, are those who think that, while they grudge to others even those things that cost them nothing, they should be served by all for the sake of their sweet smile, as the saying goes. The courtesies of Maestro Domenico Viniziano wrested from the hands of Antonello that which he had won for himself with so much fatigue and labour, and which he would probably have refused to hand over to any other even for a large sum of money. But since, with regard to Maestro Domenico, we will mention in due time all that he wrought in Florence, and who were the men with whom he generously shared the secret that he had received as a courteous gift from another, let us pass to Antonello.

After the panel for S. Cassiano, he made many pictures and portraits for various Venetian noblemen. Messer Bernardo Vecchiotti, the Florentine, has a painting by his hand of S. Francis and S. Dominic, both in the one picture, and very beautiful. Then, after receiving a commission from the Signoria to paint certain scenes in their Palace (which they had refused to give to Francesco di Monsignore of Verona, although he had been greatly favoured by the Duke of Mantua), he fell sick of a pleurisy and died at the age of forty-nine, without having set a hand to the work. He was greatly honoured in his obsequies by the craftsmen, by reason of the gift bestowed by him on art in the form of the new manner of colouring, as the following epitaph testifies:

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D. O. M.

ANTONIUS PICTOR, PRÆCIPUUM MESSANÆ SUÆ ET SICILIÆ TOTIUS
 ORNAMENTUM, HAC HUMO CONTEGITUR. NON SOLUM SUIS PICTURIS, IN
 QUIBUS SINGULARE ARTIFICIUM ET VENUSTAS FUIT, SED ET QUOD
 COLORIBUS OLEO MISCENDIS SPLENDOREM ET PERPETUITATEM
 PRIMUS ITALICÆ PICTURÆ CONTULIT, SUMMO SEMPER ARTIFICIUM
 STUDIO CELEBRATUS.

The death of Antonello was a great grief to his many friends, and particularly to the sculptor Andrea Riccio, who wrought the nude marble statues of Adam and Eve, held to be very beautiful, which are seen in the courtyard of the Palace of the Signoria in Venice. Such was the end of Antonello, to whom our craftsmen should certainly feel no less indebted for having brought the

method of colouring in oil into Italy than they should to Johann of Bruges for having discovered it in Flanders. Both of them benefited and enriched the art; for it is by means of this invention that craftsmen have since become so excellent, that they have been able to make their figures all but alive. Their services should be all the more valued, inasmuch as there is no writer to be found who attributes this manner of colouring to the ancients; and if it could be known for certain that it did not exist among them, this age would surpass all the excellence of the ancients by virtue of this perfection. Since, however, even as nothing is said that has not been said before, so perchance nothing is done that has not been done before, I will let this pass without saying more; and praising consummately those who, in addition to draughtsmanship, are ever adding something to art, I will proceed to write of others.



**ANTONELLO DA MESSINA: THE
CRUCIFIXION**
*(London: National Gallery, 1166.
Panel)*

[View larger image](#)

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ALESSO BALDOVINETTI



THE ANNUNCIATION
(After the panel by Alesso Baldovinetti. Florence: Uffizi, 56)
Anderson
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LIFE OF ALESSO BALDOVINETTI

PAINTER OF FLORENCE

So great an attraction has the noble art of painting, that many eminent men have deserted the callings in which they might have become very rich, and, drawn by their inclination against the wishes of their parents, have followed the promptings of their nature and devoted themselves to painting, to sculpture, or to some similar pursuit. And, to tell the truth, if a man estimates riches at their true worth and no higher, and regards excellence as the end of all his actions, he acquires treasures very different from silver and gold; not to mention that he is never afraid of those things that rob us in a moment of those earthly riches, which are foolishly esteemed by men at more than their true value. Recognizing this, Alesso Baldovinetti, drawn by a natural inclination, abandoned commerce—in which his relatives had ever occupied themselves, insomuch that by practising it honourably they had acquired riches and lived like noble citizens—and devoted himself to painting, in which he showed a peculiar ability to counterfeit very well the objects of nature, as may be seen in the pictures by his hand.

This man, while still very young, and almost against the wish of his father, who would have liked him to give his attention to commerce, devoted himself to drawing; and in a short time he made so much progress therein, that his father was content to allow him to follow the inclination of his nature. The first work that Alesso executed in fresco was in S. Maria Nuova, on the front wall of the Chapel of S. Gilio, which was much extolled at that time, because, among other things, it contained a S. Egidio that was held to be a very beautiful figure. In like manner, he painted in S. Trinita the chapel in fresco and the chief panel in distemper, for Messer Gherardo and Messer Bongianni Gianfigliuzzi, most honourable and wealthy gentlemen of Florence. In this chapel Alesso painted some scenes from the Old Testament, which he first sketched in fresco and then finished on the dry, tempering his colours with yolk of egg mingled with a liquid varnish prepared over a fire. This vehicle, he thought, would preserve the paintings from damp; but it was so strong that where it was laid on too thickly the work has peeled off in many places; and thus, whereas he thought he had found a rare and very beautiful secret, he was deceived in his hopes.

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He drew many portraits from nature, and in the scene of the Queen of Sheba going to hear the wisdom of Solomon, which he painted in the aforesaid chapel, he portrayed the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici, father of Pope Leo X, and Lorenzo della Volpaia, a most excellent maker of

clocks and a very fine astrologer, who was the man who made for the said Lorenzo de' Medici the very beautiful clock that the Lord Duke Cosimo now has in his Palace; in which clock all the wheels of the planets are perpetually moving, which is a rare thing, and the first that was ever made in this manner. In the scene opposite to that one Alesso portrayed Luigi Guicciardini the elder, Luca Pitti, Diotisalvi Neroni, and Giuliano de' Medici, father of Pope Clement VII; and beside the stone pilaster he painted Gherardo Gianfigliazzi the elder, the Chevalier Messer Bongianni, who is wearing a blue robe, with a chain round his neck, and Jacopo and Giovanni, both of the same family. Near these are Filippo Strozzi the elder and the astrologer Messer Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanelli. On the vaulting are four patriarchs, and on the panel is the Trinity, with S. Giovanni Gualberto kneeling, and another Saint. All these portraits are very easily recognized from their similarity to those that are seen in other works, particularly in the houses of their descendants, whether in gesso or in painting. Alesso gave much time to this work, because he was very patient and liked to execute his works at his ease and convenience.



ALESSO BALDOVINETTI: MADONNA AND CHILD IN A LANDSCAPE
(Paris: Louvre, 1300B. Panel)

[View larger image](#)

He drew very well, as may be seen from a mule drawn from nature in our book, wherein the curves of the hair over the whole body are done with much patience and with beautiful grace. Alesso was very diligent in his works, and he strove to be an imitator of all the minute details that Mother Nature creates. He had a manner somewhat dry and harsh, particularly in draperies. He took much delight in making landscapes, copying them from the life of nature exactly as they are; wherefore there are seen in his pictures streams, bridges, rocks, herbs, fruits, roads, fields, cities, castles, sand, and an infinity of other things of the kind. In the Nunziata at Florence, in the court, exactly behind the wall where the Annunciation itself is painted, he painted a scene in fresco, retouched on the dry, in which there is a Nativity of Christ, wrought with so great labour and diligence that one could count the stalks and knots of the straw in a hut that is there; and he also counterfeited there the ruin of a house with the stones mouldering, all eaten away and consumed by rain and frost, and a thick ivy root that covers a part of the wall, wherein it is to be observed that with great patience he made the outer side of the leaves of one shade of green, and the under side of another, as Nature does, neither more nor less; and, in addition to the shepherds, he made a serpent, or rather, a grass-snake, crawling up a wall, which is most life-like.

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It is said that Alesso took great pains to discover the true method of making mosaic, but that he never succeeded in anything that he wanted to do, until at length he came across a German who was going to Rome to obtain some indulgences. This man he took into his house, and he gained from him a complete knowledge of the method and the rules for executing mosaic, insomuch that afterwards, having set himself boldly to work, he made some angels holding the head of Christ over the bronze doors of S. Giovanni, in the arches on the inner side. His good method of working

becoming known by reason of this work, he was commissioned by the Consuls of the Guild of Merchants to clean and renovate all the vaulting of that church, which had been wrought, as has been said, by Andrea Tafi; for it had been spoilt in many places, and was in need of being renewed and restored. This he did with love and diligence, availing himself for that purpose of a wooden staging made for him by Cecca, who was the best architect of that age. Alesso taught the craft of mosaic to Domenico Ghirlandajo, who portrayed him afterwards near himself in the Chapel of the Tornabuoni in S. Maria Novella, in the scene where Joachim is driven from the Temple, in the form of a clean-shaven old man with a red cap on his head.

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Alesso lived eighty years, and when he began to draw near to old age, as one who wished to be able to attend with a quiet mind to the studies of his profession, he retired into the Hospital of S. Paolo, as many men are wont to do. And perhaps to the end that he might be received more willingly and better treated (or it may have been by chance), he had a great chest carried into his rooms in the said hospital, giving out that it contained a good sum of money. Wherefore the Director and the other officials of the hospital, believing this to be true, and knowing that he had bequeathed to the hospital all that might be found after his death, showed him all the attention in the world. But on the death of Alesso, there was nothing found in it save drawings, portraits on paper, and a little book that explained the preparation of the stones and stucco for mosaic and the method of using them. Nor was it any marvel, so men said, that no money was found there, because he was so open-handed that he had nothing that did not belong as much to his friends as to himself.

A disciple of Alesso was the Florentine Graffione, who wrought in fresco, over the door of the Innocenti, that figure of God the Father and those angels that are still there. It is said that the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici, conversing one day with Graffione, who was an original, said to him, "I wish to have all the ribs of the inner cupola adorned with mosaic and stucco-work;" and that Graffione replied, "You have not the masters." To which Lorenzo answered, "We have enough money to make some." Graffione instantly retorted, "Ah, Lorenzo, 'tis not the money that makes the masters, but the masters that make the money." This man was a bizarre and fantastic person. In his house he would never eat off any table-cloth save his own cartoons, and he slept in no other bed than a chest filled with straw, without sheets.

But to return to Alesso; he took leave of his art and of his life in 1448, and he was honourably buried by his relatives and fellow-citizens.



THE TRINITY
(After the panel by Graffione. Florence: S. Spirito)

Alinari

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VELLANO DA PADOVA

LIFE OF VELLANO DA PADOVA

SCULPTOR

So great is the effect of counterfeiting anything with love and diligence, that very often, when the manner of any master of these our arts has been well imitated by those who take delight in his works, the imitation resembles the thing imitated so closely, that no difference is discerned save by those who have a sharpness of eye beyond the ordinary; and it rarely comes to pass that a loving disciple fails to learn, at least in great measure, the manner of his master.

Vellano da Padova strove with so great diligence to counterfeit the manner and the method of Donato in sculpture, particularly in bronze, that in his native city of Padua he was left the heir to the excellence of the Florentine Donatello; and to this witness is borne by his works in the Santo, which nearly every man that has not a complete knowledge of the matter attributes to Donato, so that every day many are deceived, if they are not informed of the truth. This man, then, fired by the great praise that he heard given to Donato, the sculptor of Florence, who was then working in Padua, and by a desire for those profits that come into the hands of good craftsmen through the excellence of their works, placed himself under Donato in order to learn sculpture, and devoted himself to it in such a manner, that, with the aid of so great a master, he finally achieved his purpose; wherefore, before Donatello had finished his works and departed from Padua, Vellano had made such great progress in the art that great expectations were already entertained about him, and he inspired such confidence in his master as to induce him (and that rightly) to leave to his pupil all the equipment, designs, and models for the scenes in bronze that were to be made round the choir of the Santo in that city. This was the reason why, when Donato departed, as has been said, the commission for the whole of that work was publicly given to Vellano in his native city, to his very great honour. Whereupon he made all the scenes in bronze that are on the outer side of the choir of the Santo, wherein, among others, there is the scene of Samson embracing the column and destroying the temple of the Philistines, in which one sees the fragments of the ruined building duly falling, and the death of so many people, not to mention a great diversity of attitudes among them as they die, some through the ruins, and some through fear; and all this Vellano represented marvellously. In the same place are certain works in wax and the models for these scenes, and likewise some bronze candelabra wrought by the same man with much judgment and invention. From what we see, this craftsman appears to have had a very great desire to attain to the standard of Donatello; but he did not succeed, for he aimed too high in a most difficult art.

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Vellano also took delight in architecture, and was more than passing good in that profession; wherefore, having gone to Rome in the year 1464, at the time of Pope Paul the Venetian, for which Pontiff Giuliano da Maiano was architect in the building of the Vatican, he too was employed in many things; and by his hand, among other works that he made, are the arms of that Pontiff which are seen there with his name beside them. He also wrought many of the ornaments of the Palace of S. Marco for the same Pope, whose head, by the hand of Vellano, is at the top of the staircase. For that building the same man designed a stupendous courtyard, with a commodious and elegant flight of steps, but the death of the Pontiff intervened to hinder the completion of the whole. The while that he stayed in Rome, Vellano made many small things in marble and in bronze for the said Pope and for others, but I have not been able to find them. In Perugia the same master made a bronze statue larger than life, in which he portrayed the said Pope from nature, seated in his pontifical robes; and at the foot of this he placed his name and the year when it was made. This figure is in a niche of several kinds of stone, wrought with much diligence, without the door of S. Lorenzo, which is the Duomo of that city. The same man made many medals, some of which are still to be seen, particularly that of the aforesaid Pope, and those of Antonio Rosello of Arezzo and Batista Platina, both Secretaries to that Pontiff.

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JONAH CAST INTO THE SEA
(After the bronze relief by Vellano da Padova. Padua: S. Antonio)
Anderson

[View larger image](#)

Having returned after these works to Padua with a very good name, Vellano was held in esteem not only in his native city, but in all Lombardy and in the March of Treviso, both because up to that time there had been no craftsmen of excellence in those parts, and because he had very great skill in the founding of metals. Afterwards, when Vellano was already old, the Signoria of Venice determined to have an equestrian statue of Bartolommeo da Bergamo made in bronze; and they allotted the horse to Andrea del Verrocchio of Florence, and the figure to Vellano. On hearing this, Andrea, who thought that the whole work should fall to him, knowing himself to be, as indeed he was, a better master than Vellano, flew into such a rage that he broke up and destroyed the whole model of the horse that he had already finished, and went off to Florence. But after a time, being recalled by the Signoria, who gave him the whole work to do, he returned once more to finish it; at which Vellano felt so much displeasure that he departed from Venice, without saying a word or expressing his resentment in any manner, and returned to Padua, where he afterwards lived in honour for the rest of his life, contenting himself with the works that he had made and with being loved and honoured, as he ever was, in his native place. He died at the age of ninety-two, and was buried in the Santo with that distinction which his excellence, having honoured both himself and his country, had deserved. His portrait was sent to me from Padua by certain friends of mine, who had it, so they told me, from the very learned and very reverend Cardinal Bembo, whose love of our arts was no less remarkable than his supremacy over all other men of our age in all the rarest qualities and gifts both of mind and body.

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FRA FILIPPO LIPPI

LIFE OF FRA FILIPPO LIPPI

PAINTER OF FLORENCE

Fra Filippo di Tommaso Lippi, a Carmelite, was born in Florence in a street called Ardiglione, below the Canto alla Cuculia and behind the Convent of the Carmelites. By the death of his father Tommaso he was left a poor little orphan at the age of two, with no one to take care of him, for his mother had also died not long after giving him birth. He was left, therefore, in the charge of one Mona Lapaccia, his aunt, sister of his father, who brought him up with very great inconvenience to herself; and when he was eight years of age and she could no longer support him, she made him a friar in the aforesaid Convent of the Carmine. Living there, in proportion as

he showed himself dexterous and ingenious in the use of his hands, so was he dull and incapable of making any progress in the learning of letters, so that he would never apply his intelligence to them or regard them as anything save his enemies. This boy, who was called by his secular name of Filippo, was kept with others in the noviciate under the discipline of the schoolmaster, in order to see what he could do; but in place of studying he would never do anything save deface his own books and those of the others with caricatures. Whereupon the Prior resolved to give him every opportunity and convenience for learning to paint. There was then in the Carmine a chapel that had been newly painted by Masaccio, which, being very beautiful, pleased Fra Filippo so greatly that he would haunt it every day for his recreation; and continually practising there in company with many young men, who were ever drawing in it, he surpassed the others by a great measure in dexterity and knowledge, insomuch that it was held certain that in time he would do something marvellous. Nay, not merely in his maturity, but even in his early childhood, he executed so many works worthy of praise that it was a miracle. It was no long time before he wrought in terra-verde in the cloister, close to the Consecration painted by Masaccio, a Pope confirming the Rule of the Carmelites; and he painted pictures in fresco on various walls in many parts of the church, particularly a S. John the Baptist with some scenes from his life. And thus, making progress every day, he had learnt the manner of Masaccio very well, so that he made his works so similar to those of the other that many said that the spirit of Masaccio had entered into the body of Fra Filippo. On a pilaster in the church, close to the organ, he made a figure of S. Marziale which brought him infinite fame, for it could bear comparison with the works that Masaccio had painted. Wherefore, hearing himself so greatly praised by the voices of all, at the age of seventeen he boldly threw off his monastic habit.

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Now, chancing to be in the March of Ancona, he was disporting himself one day with some of his friends in a little boat on the sea, when they were all captured together by the Moorish galleys that were scouring those parts, and taken to Barbary, where each of them was put in chains and held as a slave; and thus he remained in great misery for eighteen months. But one day, seeing that he was thrown much into contact with his master, there came to him the opportunity and the whim to make a portrait of him; whereupon, taking a piece of dead coal from the fire, with this he portrayed him at full length on a white wall in his Moorish costume. When this was reported by the other slaves to the master (for it appeared a miracle to them all, since drawing and painting were not known in these parts), it brought about his liberation from the chains in which he had been held for so long. Truly glorious was it for this art to have caused one to whom the power of condemnation and punishment was granted by law, to do the very opposite—nay, in place of inflicting pains and death, to consent to show friendliness and grant liberty! After having wrought some works in colour for his master, he was brought safely to Naples, where he painted for King Alfonso, then Duke of Calabria, a panel in distemper for the Chapel of the Castle, where the guard-room now is.



FRA FILIPPO LIPPI: THE ANNUNCIATION
(London: National Gallery, 666. Panel)

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After this there came upon him a desire to return to Florence, where he remained for some months. There he wrought a very beautiful panel for the high-altar of the Nuns of S. Ambrogio, which made him very dear to Cosimo de' Medici, who became very much his friend for this reason. He also painted a panel for the Chapter-house of S. Croce, and another that was placed in the chapel of the house of the Medici, on which he painted the Nativity of Christ. For the wife of the said Cosimo, likewise, he painted a panel with the same Nativity of Christ and with S. John the Baptist, which was to be placed in the Hermitage of Camaldoli, in one of the hermits' cells, dedicated to S. John the Baptist, which she had caused to be built in proof of her devotion. And he painted some little scenes that were sent by Cosimo as a gift to Pope Eugenius IV, the Venetian; wherefore Fra Filippo acquired great favour with that Pope by reason of this work.

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It is said that he was so amorous, that, if he saw any women who pleased him, and if they were to be won, he would give all his possessions to win them; and if he could in no way do this, he would paint their portraits and cool the flame of his love by reasoning with himself. So much a slave was he to this appetite, that when he was in this humour he gave little or no attention to the works that he had undertaken; wherefore on one occasion Cosimo de' Medici, having commissioned him

to paint a picture, shut him up in his own house, in order that he might not go out and waste his time; but after staying there for two whole days, being driven forth by his amorous—nay, beastly—passion, one night he cut some ropes out of his bed-sheets with a pair of scissors and let himself down from a window, and then abandoned himself for many days to his pleasures. Thereupon, since he could not be found, Cosimo sent out to look for him, and finally brought him back to his labour; and thenceforward Cosimo gave him liberty to go out when he pleased, repenting greatly that he had previously shut him up, when he thought of his madness and of the danger that he might run. For this reason he strove to keep a hold on him for the future by kindnesses; and so he was served by Filippo with greater readiness, and was wont to say that the virtues of rare minds were celestial beings, and not slavish hacks.

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For the Church of S. Maria Primerana, on the Piazza of Fiesole, he painted a panel containing the Annunciation of Our Lady by the Angel, which shows very great diligence, and there is such beauty in the figure of the Angel that it appears truly a celestial thing. For the Nuns of the Murate he painted two panels: one, containing an Annunciation, is placed on the high-altar; and the other is on an altar in the same church, and contains stories of S. Benedict and S. Bernard. In the Palace of the Signoria he painted an Annunciation on a panel, which is over a door; and over another door in the said Palace he also painted a S. Bernard. For the Sacristy of S. Spirito in Florence he executed a panel with the Madonna surrounded by angels, and with saints on either side—a rare work, which has ever been held in the greatest veneration by the masters of these our arts. In the Chapel of the Wardens of Works in S. Lorenzo he wrought a panel with another Annunciation; with one for the Della Stufa Chapel, which he did not finish. For a chapel in S. Apostolo, in the same city, he painted a panel with some figures round a Madonna. In Arezzo, by order of Messer Carlo Marsuppini, he painted the panel of the Chapel of S. Bernardo for the Monks of Monte Oliveto, depicting therein the Coronation of Our Lady, surrounded by many saints; which picture has remained so fresh, that it appears to have been made by the hand of Fra Filippo at the present day. It was then that he was told by the aforesaid Messer Carlo to give attention to the painting of the hands, seeing that his works were much criticized in this respect; wherefore from that day onwards, in painting hands, Fra Filippo covered the greater part of them with draperies or with some other contrivance, in order to avoid the aforesaid criticism. In this work he portrayed the said Messer Carlo from the life.



THE VIRGIN ADORING

(After the panel by Fra Filippo Lippi. Florence: Accademia, 79)

Anderson

[View larger image](#)

For the Nuns of Annalena in Florence he painted a Manger on a panel; and some of his pictures are still to be seen in Padua. He sent two little scenes with small figures, painted by his hand, to Cardinal Barbo in Rome; these were very excellently wrought, and executed with great diligence. Truly marvellous was the grace with which he painted, and very perfect the harmony that he

gave to his works, for which he has been ever esteemed by craftsmen and honoured by our modern masters with consummate praise; nay, so long as the voracity of time allows his many excellent labours to live, he will be held in veneration by every age. In Prato, near Florence, where he had some relatives, he stayed for many months, executing many works throughout that whole district in company with Fra Diamante, a friar of the Carmine, who had been his comrade in the noviciate. After this, having been commissioned by the Nuns of S. Margherita to paint the panel of their high-altar, he was working at this when there came before his eyes a daughter of Francesco Buti, a citizen of Florence, who was living there as a ward or as a novice. Having set eyes on Lucrezia (for this was the name of the girl), who was very beautiful and graceful, Fra Filippo contrived to persuade the nuns to allow him to make a portrait of her for a figure of Our Lady in the work that he was doing for them. With this opportunity he became even more enamoured of her, and then wrought upon her so mightily, what with one thing and another, that he stole her away from the nuns and took her off on the very day when she was going to see the Girdle of Our Lady, an honoured relic of that township, being exposed to view. Whereupon the nuns were greatly disgraced by such an event, and her father, Francesco, who never smiled again, made every effort to recover her; but she, either through fear or for some other reason, refused to come back—nay, she insisted on staying with Filippo, to whom she bore a male child, who was also called Filippo, and who became, like his father, a very excellent and famous painter.

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In S. Domenico, in the aforesaid Prato, there are two of his panels; and in the tramezzo^[12] of the Church of S. Francesco there is a Madonna, in the removing of which from the place where it was at first, it was cut out from the wall on which it was painted, in order not to spoil it, and bound round with wood, and then transported to that wall of the church where it is still to be seen to-day. In a courtyard of the Ceppo of Francesco di Marco, over a well, there is a little panel by the hand of the same man, containing the portrait of the said Francesco di Marco, the creator and founder of that holy place. In the Pieve of the said township, on a little panel over the side-door as one ascends the steps, he painted the Death of S. Bernard, by the touch of whose bier many cripples are being restored to health. In this picture are friars bewailing the death of their master, and it is a marvellous thing to see the beautiful expression of the sadness of lamentation in the heads, counterfeited with great art and resemblance to nature. Here there are draperies in the form of friars' gowns with most beautiful folds, which deserve infinite praise for their good design, colouring, and composition; not to mention the grace and proportion that are seen in the said work, which was executed with the greatest delicacy by the hand of Fra Filippo. The Wardens of Works for the said Pieve, in order to have some memorial of him, commissioned him to paint the Chapel of the High-Altar in that place; and he gave great proof of his worth in that work, which, besides its general excellence and masterliness, contains most admirable draperies and heads. He made the figures therein larger than life, thus introducing to our modern craftsmen the method of giving grandeur to the manner of our own day. There are certain figures with garments little used in those times, whereby he began to incite the minds of men to depart from that simplicity which should be called rather old-fashioned than ancient. In the same work are the stories of S. Stephen (the titular Saint of the said Pieve), distributed over the wall on the right hand—namely, the Disputation, the Stoning, and the Death of that Protomartyr, in whose face, as he disputes with the Jews, Filippo depicted so much zeal and so much fervour, that it is a difficult thing to imagine it, and much more to express it; and in the faces and the various attitudes of the Jews he revealed their hatred, disdain, and anger at seeing themselves overcome by him. Even more clearly did he make manifest the brutality and rage of those who are slaying him with stones, which they have grasped, some large, some small, with a horrible gnashing of teeth, and with gestures wholly cruel and enraged. None the less, amid so terrible an onslaught, S. Stephen, raising his countenance with great calmness to Heaven, is seen making supplication to the Eternal Father with the warmest love and fervour for the very men who are slaying him. All these conceptions are truly very beautiful, and serve to show to others how great is the value of invention and of knowing how to express emotions in pictures; and this he remembered so well, that in those who are burying S. Stephen he made gestures so dolorous, and some faces so afflicted and broken with weeping, that it is scarcely possible to look at them without being moved. On the other side he painted the Birth of S. John the Baptist, the Preaching, the Baptism, the Feast of Herod, and the Beheading of the Saint. Here, in his countenance as he is preaching, there is seen the Divine Spirit; with various emotions in the multitude that is listening, joy and sorrow both in the women and in the men, who are all hanging intently on the teaching of S. John. In the Baptism are seen beauty and goodness; and, in the Feast of Herod, the majesty of the banquet, the dexterity of Herodias, the astonishment of the company, and their immeasurable grief when the severed head is presented in the charger. Round the banqueting-table are seen innumerable figures with very beautiful attitudes, and with good execution both in the draperies and in the expressions of the faces. Among these, with a mirror, he portrayed himself dressed in the black habit of a prelate; and he made a portrait of his disciple Fra Diamante among those who are bewailing S. Stephen. This work is in truth the most excellent of all his paintings, both for the reasons mentioned above, and because he made the figures somewhat larger than life, which encouraged those who came after him to give grandeur to their manner. So greatly was he esteemed for his excellent gifts, that many circumstances in his life that were worthy of blame were passed over in consideration of the eminence of his great talents. In this work he portrayed Messer Carlo, the natural son of Cosimo de' Medici, who was then Provost of that church, which received great benefactions from him and from his house.

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In the year 1463, when he had finished this work, he painted a panel in distemper, containing a very beautiful Annunciation, for the Church of S. Jacopo in Pistoia, by order of Messer Jacopo

Bellucci, of whom he made therein a most vivid portrait from the life. In the house of Pulidoro Bracciolini there is a picture by his hand of the Birth of Our Lady; and in the Hall of the Tribunal of Eight in Florence he painted in distemper a Madonna with the Child in her arms, on a lunette. In the house of Lodovico Capponi there is another picture with a very beautiful Madonna; and in the hands of Bernardo Vecchietti, a gentleman of Florence and a man of a culture and excellence beyond my power of expression, there is a little picture by the hand of the same man, containing a very beautiful S. Augustine engaged in his studies. Even better is a S. Jerome in Penitence, of the same size, in the guardaroba of Duke Cosimo; for if Fra Filippo was a rare master in all his pictures, he surpassed himself in the small ones, to which he gave such grace and beauty that nothing could be better, as may be seen in the predelle of all the panels that he painted. In short, he was such that none surpassed him in his own times, and few in our own; and Michelagnolo has not only always extolled him, but has imitated him in many things.

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For the Church of S. Domenico Vecchio in Perugia, also, he painted a panel that was afterwards placed on the high-altar, containing a Madonna, S. Peter, S. Paul, S. Louis, and S. Anthony the Abbot. Messer Alessandro degli Alessandri, a Chevalier of that day and a friend of Filippo, caused him to paint a panel for the church of his villa at Vincigliata on the hill of Fiesole, containing a S. Laurence and other Saints, among whom he portrayed Alessandro and two sons of his.

Fra Filippo was much the friend of gay spirits, and he ever lived a joyous life. He taught the art of painting to Fra Diamante, who executed many pictures in the Carmine at Prato; and he did himself great credit by the close imitation of his master's manner, for he attained to the greatest perfection. Sandro Botticelli, Pesello, and Jacopo del Sellaio of Florence worked with Fra Filippo in their youth (the last-named painted two panels in S. Friano, and one wrought in distemper in the Carmine), with a great number of other masters, to whom he ever taught the art with great friendliness. He lived honourably by his labours, spending extraordinary sums on the pleasures of love, in which he continued to take delight right up to the end of his life. He was requested by the Commune of Spoleto, through the mediation of Cosimo de' Medici, to paint the chapel in their principal church (dedicated to Our Lady), which he brought very nearly to completion, working in company with Fra Diamante, when death intervened to prevent him from finishing it. Some say, indeed, that in consequence of his great inclination for his blissful amours some relations of the lady that he loved had him poisoned.

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MADONNA AND CHILD
(After the panel (tondo) by Fra Filippo Lippi. Florence: Pitti, 343)
Anderson

[View larger image](#)

Fra Filippo finished the course of his life in 1438, at the age of fifty-seven, and left a will entrusting to Fra Diamante his son Filippo, a little boy of ten years of age, who learnt the art of painting from his guardian. Fra Diamante returned with him to Florence, carrying away three hundred ducats, which remained to be received from the Commune of Spoleto for the work done;

with these he bought some property for himself, giving but a little share to the boy. Filippo was placed with Sandro Botticelli, who was then held a very good master; and the old man was buried in a tomb of red and white marble, which the people of Spoleto caused to be erected in the church that he had been painting.

His death grieved many friends, particularly Cosimo de' Medici, as well as Pope Eugenius, who offered in his life-time to give him a dispensation, so that he might make Lucrezia, the daughter of Francesco Buti, his legitimate wife; but this he refused to do, wishing to have complete liberty for himself and his appetites.

While Sixtus IV was alive, Lorenzo de' Medici became ambassador to the Florentines, and made the journey to Spoleto, in order to demand from that community the body of Fra Filippo, to the end that it might be laid in S. Maria del Fiore in Florence; but their answer to him was that they were lacking in ornaments, and above all in distinguished men, for which reason they demanded Filippo from him as a favour in order to honour themselves, adding that since there was a vast number of famous men in Florence, nay, almost a superfluity, he should consent to do without this one; and more than this he could not obtain. It is true, indeed, that afterwards, having determined to do honour to him in the best way that he could, he sent his son Filippino to Rome to paint a chapel for the Cardinal of Naples; and Filippino, passing through Spoleto, caused a tomb of marble to be erected for him at the commission of Lorenzo, beneath the organ and over the sacristy, on which he spent one hundred ducats of gold, which were paid by Nofri Tornabuoni, master of the bank of the Medici; and Lorenzo also caused Messer Angelo Poliziano to write the following epigram, which is carved on the said tomb in antique lettering:

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CONDITUS HIC EGO SUM PICTURÆ FAMA PHILIPPUS;
NULLI IGNOTA MEÆ EST GRATIA MIRA MANUS.
ARTIFICES POTUI DIGITIS ANIMARE COLORES,
SPERATAQUE ANIMOS FALLERE VOCE DIU.
IPSA MEIS STUPUIT NATURA EXPRESSA FIGURIS,
MEQUE SUIS FASSA EST ARTIBUS ESSE PAREM.
MARMOREO TUMULO MEDICES LAURENTIUS HIC ME
CONDIDIT; ANTE HUMILI PULVERE TECTUS ERAM.

Fra Filippo was a very good draughtsman, as may be seen in our book of drawings by the most famous painters, particularly in some wherein the panel of S. Spirito is drawn, with others showing the chapel in Prato.

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PAOLO ROMANO, MAESTRO MINO, AND CHIMENTI CAMICIA

LIVES OF PAOLO ROMANO AND MAESTRO MINO, SCULPTORS

[MINO DEL REGNO, OR MINO DEL REAME]

AND CHIMENTI CAMICIA, ARCHITECT

We have now to speak of Paolo Romano and Mino del Regno, who were contemporaries and of the same profession, but very different in character and in knowledge of art, for Paolo was modest and quite able, and Mino much less able, but so presumptuous and arrogant, that he was not only overbearing in his actions, but also with his speech exalted his own works beyond all due measure. When Pope Pius II gave a commission for a figure to the Roman sculptor Paolo, Mino tormented and persecuted him out of envy so greatly, that Paolo, who was a good and most modest man, was forced to show resentment. Whereupon Mino, falling into a rage with Paolo, offered to bet a thousand ducats that he would make a figure better than Paolo's; and this he said with the greatest presumption and effrontery, knowing the nature of Paolo, who disliked any annoyance, and believing that he would not accept such a challenge. But Paolo accepted the invitation, and Mino, half repentant, bet a hundred ducats merely to save his honour. The figures finished, the victory was given to Paolo as a rare and excellent master, which he was; and Mino was scorned as the sort of craftsman whose words were worth more than his works.

By the hand of Mino are certain works in marble at Naples, and a tomb at Monte Cassino, a seat

of the Black Friars in the kingdom of Naples; the S. Peter and the S. Paul that are at the foot of the steps of S. Pietro in Rome, and the tomb of Pope Paul II in S. Pietro. The figure that Paolo made in competition with Mino was the S. Paul that is to be seen on a marble base at the head of the Ponte S. Angelo, which stood unnoticed for a long time in front of the Chapel of Sixtus IV. It afterwards came to pass that one day Pope Clement VII observed this figure, which pleased him greatly, for he was a man of knowledge and judgment in such matters; wherefore he determined to have a S. Peter made of the same size, and also, after removing two little chapels of marble, dedicated to those Apostles, which stood at the head of the Ponte S. Angelo and obstructed the view of the Castle, to put these two statues in their place.

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It may be read in the work of Antonio Filarete that Paolo was not only a sculptor but also an able goldsmith, and that he wrought part of the twelve Apostles in silver which stood, before the sack of Rome, over the altar of the Papal Chapel. Part of the work of these statues was done by Niccolò della Guardia and Pietro Paolo da Todi, disciples of Paolo, who were afterwards passing good masters in sculpture, as is seen from the tombs of Pope Pius II and Pope Pius III, on which the said Pontiffs are portrayed from nature. By the hand of the same men are medals of three Emperors and other great persons. The said Paolo made a statue of an armed man on horseback, which is now on the ground in S. Pietro, near the Chapel of S. Andrea. A pupil of Paolo was the Roman Gian Cristoforo, who was an able sculptor; and there are certain works by his hand in S. Maria Trastevere and in other places.

Chimenti Camicia, of whose origin nothing is known save that he was a Florentine, was employed in the service of the King of Hungary, for whom he made palaces, gardens, fountains, churches, fortresses, and many other buildings of importance, with ornaments, carvings, decorated ceilings, and other things of the kind, which were executed with much diligence by Baccio Cellini. After these works, drawn by love for his country, Chimenti returned to Florence, whence he sent to Baccio (who remained there), as presents for the King, certain pictures by the hand of Berto Linaiuolo, which were held very beautiful in Hungary and much extolled by that King. This Berto (of whom I will not refrain from making this record as well), after having painted many pictures in a beautiful manner, which are in the houses of many citizens, died at the very height of his powers, cutting short the great expectations that had been formed of him. But to return to Chimenti; he had not been long in Florence when he returned to Hungary, where he continued to serve the King; but while he was journeying on the Danube in order to give designs for mills, in consequence of fatigue he was seized by a sickness, which carried him off in a few days to the other life. The works of these masters date about the year 1470.

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About the same time, during the pontificate of Pope Sixtus IV, there lived in Rome one Baccio Pintelli, a Florentine, who was rewarded for the great skill that he had in architecture by being employed by that Pope in all his building enterprises. With his design, then, were built the Church and Convent of S. Maria del Popolo, and certain highly ornate chapels therein, particularly that of Domenico della Rovere, Cardinal of San Clemente and nephew of that Pope. The same Pontiff erected a palace in Borgo Vecchio after the design of Baccio, which was then held to be a very beautiful and well-planned edifice. The same master built the Great Library under the apartments of Niccola, and that chapel in the Palace that is called the Sistine, which is adorned with beautiful paintings. He also rebuilt the structure of the new Hospital of S. Spirito in Sassia (which was burnt down almost to the foundations in the year 1471), adding to it a very long loggia and all the useful conveniences that could be desired. Within the hospital, along its whole length, he caused scenes to be painted from the life of Pope Sixtus, from his birth up to the completion of that building—nay, up to the end of his life. He also made the bridge that is called the Ponte Sisto, from the name of that Pontiff; this was held to be an excellent work, because Baccio built it with such stout piers and with the weight so well distributed, that it is very strong and very well founded. In the year of the Jubilee of 1475, likewise, he built many new little churches throughout Rome, which are recognized by the arms of Pope Sixtus—in particular, S. Apostolo, S. Pietro in Vincula, and S. Sisto. For Cardinal Guglielmo, Bishop of Ostia, he made the model of his church, with that of the façade and of the steps, in the manner wherein they are seen to-day. Many declare that the design of the Church of S. Pietro a Montorio in Rome was by the hand of Baccio, but I cannot say with truth that I have found this to be so. This church was built at the expense of the King of Portugal, almost at the same time that the Spanish nation had the Church of S. Jacopo erected in Rome.

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The talent of Baccio was so highly esteemed by that Pontiff, that he would never have done anything in the way of building without his counsel; wherefore, in the year 1480, hearing that the Church and Convent of S. Francesco at Assisi were threatening to fall, he sent Baccio thither; and he, making a very stout counterfort on the side of the plain, rendered that marvellous fabric perfectly secure. On one buttress he placed a statue of that Pontiff, who, not many years before, had caused to be made in that same convent many apartments, in the form of chambers and halls, which are known not only by their magnificence but also by the arms of the said Pope that are seen in them. In the courtyard there is one coat of arms much larger than the others, with some Latin verses in praise of Pope Sixtus IV, who gave many proofs that he held that holy place in great veneration.

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ANDREA DAL CASTAGNO OF MUGELLO AND DOMENICO VINIZIANO

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LIVES OF ANDREA DAL CASTAGNO OF MUGELLO AND DOMENICO VINIZIANO

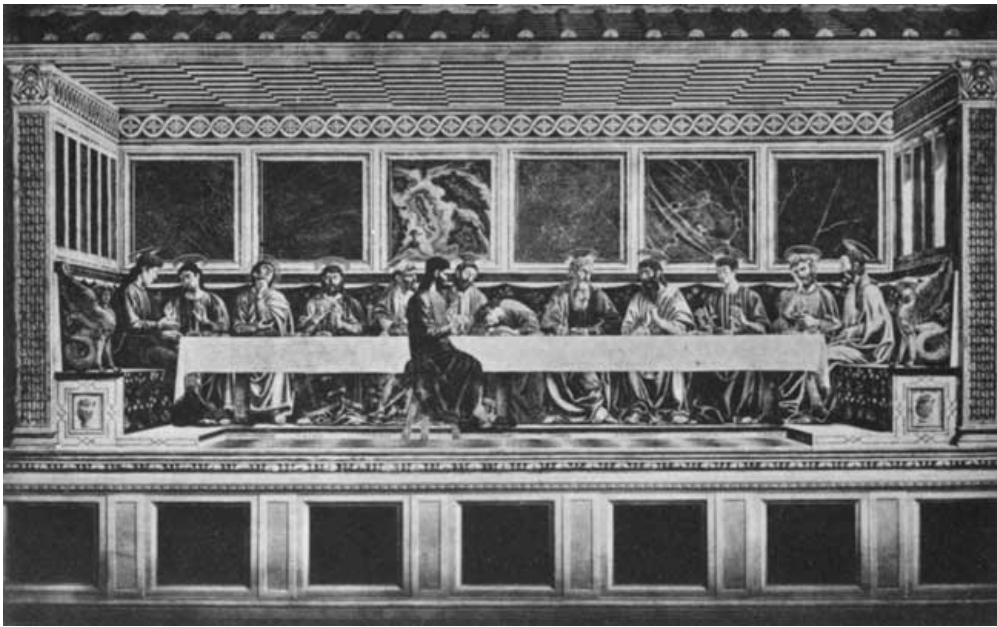
[ANDREA DEGL' IMPICCATI AND DOMENICO DA VENEZIA]

PAINTERS

How reprehensible is the vice of envy, which should never exist in anyone, when found in a man of excellence, and how wicked and horrible a thing it is to seek under the guise of a feigned friendship to extinguish not only the fame and glory of another but his very life, I truly believe it to be impossible to express with words, for the wickedness of the act overcomes all power and force of speech, however eloquent. For this reason, without enlarging further on this subject, I will only say that in such men there dwells a spirit not merely inhuman and savage but wholly cruel and devilish, and so far removed from any sort of virtue that they are no longer men or even animals, and do not deserve to live. For even as emulation and rivalry, when men seek by honest endeavour to vanquish and surpass those greater than themselves in order to acquire glory and honour, are things worthy to be praised and to be held in esteem as necessary and useful to the world, so, on the contrary, the wickedness of envy deserves a proportionately greater meed of blame and vituperation, when, being unable to endure the honour and esteem of others, it sets to work to deprive of life those whom it cannot despoil of glory; as did that miserable Andrea dal Castagno, who was truly great and excellent in painting and design, but even more notable for the rancour and envy that he bore towards other painters, insomuch that with the blackness of his crime he concealed and obscured the splendour of his talents.

This man, having been born at a small village called Castagno in Mugello, in the territory of Florence, took that name as his own surname when he came to live in Florence, which came about in the following manner. Having been left without a father in his earliest childhood, he was adopted by an uncle, who employed him for many years in watching his herds, since he saw him to be very ready and alert, and so masterful, that he could look after not only his cattle but the pastures and everything else that touched his own interest. Now, while he was following this calling, it came to pass one day that he chanced to seek shelter from the rain in a place wherein one of those local painters, who work for small prices, was painting a shrine for a peasant. Whereupon Andrea, who had never seen anything of the kind before, was seized by a sudden marvel and began to look most intently at the work and to study its manner; and there came to him on the spot a very great desire and so violent a love for that art, that without losing time he began to scratch drawings of animals and figures on walls and stones with pieces of charcoal or with the point of his knife, in so masterly a manner that it caused no small marvel to all who saw them. The fame of this new study of Andrea's then began to spread among the peasants; whereupon, as his good-fortune would have it, the matter coming to the ears of a Florentine gentleman named Bernardetto de' Medici, whose possessions were in that district, he expressed a wish to know the boy; and finally, having seen him and having heard him discourse with great readiness, he asked him whether he would like to learn the art of painting. Andrea answered that nothing could happen to him that would be more welcome or more pleasing than this, and Bernardetto took the boy with him to Florence, to the end that he might become perfect in that art, and set him to work with one of those masters who were then esteemed the best.

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THE LAST SUPPER

(After the fresco by Andrea dal Castagno. Florence: S. Apollonia)

Alinari

[View larger image](#)

Thereupon Andrea, following the art of painting and devoting himself heart and soul to its studies, displayed very great intelligence in the difficulties of that art, above all in draughtsmanship. But he was not so successful in the colouring of his works, which he made somewhat crude and harsh, thus impairing to a great extent their excellence and grace, and depriving them, above all, of a certain quality of loveliness, which is not found in his colouring. He showed very great boldness in the movements of his figures and much vehemence in the heads both of men and of women, making them grave in aspect and excellent in draughtsmanship. There are works coloured in fresco, painted by his hand in his early youth, in the cloister of S. Miniato al Monte as one descends from the church to go into the convent, including a story of S. Miniato and S. Cresci leaving their father and mother. In S. Benedetto, a most beautiful monastery without the Porta a Pinti, both in a cloister and in the church, there were many pictures by the hand of Andrea, of which there is no need to make mention, since they were thrown to the ground in the siege of Florence. Within the city, in the first cloister of the Monastery of the Monks of the Angeli, opposite to the principal door, he painted the Crucifix that is still there to-day, with the Madonna, S. John, S. Benedict, and S. Romualdo; and at the head of the cloister, which is above the garden, he made another like it, only varying the heads and a few other details. In S. Trinita, beside the Chapel of Maestro Luca, he painted a S. Andrew. In a hall at Legnaia he painted many illustrious men for Pandolfo Pandolfini; and a standard to be borne in processions, which is held very beautiful, for the Company of the Evangelist.

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In certain chapels of the Church of the Servi in the said city he wrought three flat niches in fresco. In one of these, that of S. Giuliano, there are scenes from the life of that Saint, with a good number of figures, and a dog in foreshortening that was much extolled. Above this, in the chapel dedicated to S. Girolamo, he painted that Saint shaven and wasted away, with good design and great diligence. Over this he painted a Trinity, with a Crucifix so well foreshortened that Andrea deserves to be greatly extolled for it, seeing that he executed the foreshortenings with a much better and more modern manner than the others before him had shown; but this picture, having been afterwards covered with a panel by the family of the Montaguti, can no longer be seen. In the third, which is beside the one below the organ, and which was erected by Messer Orlando de' Medici, he painted Lazarus, Martha, and the Magdalene. For the Nuns of S. Giuliano, over their door, he made a Crucifix in fresco, with a Madonna, a S. Dominic, a S. Julian, and a S. John; which picture, one of the best that Andrea ever made, is universally praised by all craftsmen.

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In the Chapel of the Cavalcanti in S. Croce he painted a S. John the Baptist and a S. Francis, which are held to be very good figures. But what caused all the craftsmen to marvel was a very beautiful picture in fresco that he made at the head of the new cloister of the said convent, opposite to the door, of Christ being scourged at the Column, wherein he painted a loggia with columns in perspective, and groined vaulting with diminishing lines, and walls inlaid in a pattern of mandorle, with so much art and so much diligence, that he showed that he had no less knowledge of the difficulties of perspective than he had of design in painting. In the same scene there are beautiful and most animated attitudes in those who are scourging Christ, showing hatred and rage in their faces as clearly as Jesus Christ is showing patience and humility. In the body of Christ, which is bound tightly with ropes to the Column, it appears that Andrea tried to demonstrate the suffering of the flesh, while the Divinity concealed in that body maintains a certain noble splendour, which seems to be moving Pilate, who is seated among his councillors, to seek to find some means of liberating Him. In short, this picture is such that, if the little care that has been taken of it had not allowed it to be scratched and spoilt by children and simpletons, who have scratched all the heads and the arms and almost the entire persons of the Jews, as

though they would thus take vengeance on them for the wrongs of Our Lord, it would certainly be the most beautiful of all the works of Andrea. And if Nature had given grace of colouring to this craftsman, even as she gave him invention and design, he would have been held truly marvellous.

In S. Maria del Fiore he painted the image of Niccolò da Tolentino on horseback; and while he was working at this a boy who was passing shook his ladder, whereupon he flew into such a rage, like the brutal man that he was, that he jumped down and ran after him as far as the Canto de' Pazzi. In the cemetery of S. Maria Nuova, also, below the Ossa, he painted a S. Andrew, which gave so much satisfaction that he was afterwards commissioned to paint the Last Supper of Christ with His Apostles in the refectory, where the nurses and other attendants have their meals. Having acquired favour through this work with the house of Portinari and with the Director of the hospital, he was appointed to paint a part of the principal chapel, of which another part was allotted to Alesso Baldovinetti, and the third to the then greatly celebrated painter Domenico da Venezia, who had been summoned to Florence by reason of the new method that he knew of painting in oil. Now, while each of them applied himself to his part of the work, Andrea was very envious of Domenico, because, while knowing himself to be superior to the other in design, he was much displeased that the Venetian, although a foreigner, should be welcomed and entertained by the citizens; wherefore anger and disdain moved him so strongly, that he began to think whether he could not in one way or another remove him from his path. Andrea was no less crafty in dissimulation than he was excellent in painting, being cheerful of countenance at his pleasure, ready of speech, fiery in spirit, and as resolute in every bodily action as he was in mind; he felt towards others as he did towards Domenico, and, if he saw some error in the works of other craftsmen, he was wont to mark it secretly with his nail. And in his youth, when his works were criticized in any respect, he would give the critics to know by means of blows and insults that he was ever able and willing to take revenge in one way or another for any affront.

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But let us say something of Domenico, before we come to the work of the said chapel. Before coming to Florence, Domenico had painted some pictures with much grace in the Sacristy of S. Maria at Loreto, in company with Piero della Francesca; which pictures, besides what he had wrought in other places (such as an apartment in the house of the Baglioni in Perugia, which is now in ruins), had made his fame known in Florence. Being summoned to that city, before doing anything else, he painted a Madonna in the midst of some saints, in fresco, in a shrine on the Canto de' Carnesecchi, at the corner of two streets, of which one leads to the new Piazza di S. Maria Novella and the other to the old. This work, being approved and greatly extolled by the citizens and by the craftsmen of those times, caused even greater disdain and envy to blaze up in the accursed mind of Andrea against poor Domenico; wherefore Andrea, having determined to effect by deceit and treachery what he could not carry out openly without manifest peril to himself, pretended to be very much the friend of Domenico, who, being a good and affectionate fellow, fond of singing and devoted to playing on the lute, received him as a friend very willingly, thinking Andrea to be a clever and amusing person. And so, continuing this friendship, so true on one side and so false on the other, they would come together every night to make merry and to serenade their mistresses; and this gave great delight to Domenico, who, loving Andrea sincerely, taught him the method of colouring in oil, which as yet was not known in Tuscany.

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Andrea, then (to take events in their due order), working on his wall in the Chapel of S. Maria Nuova, painted an Annunciation, which is held very beautiful, for in that work he painted the Angel in the air, which had never been done up to that time. But a much more beautiful work is held to be that wherein he made the Madonna ascending the steps of the Temple, on which he depicted many beggars, and one among them hitting another on the head with a pitcher; and not only that figure but all the others are wondrously beautiful, for he wrought them with much care and love, out of rivalry with Domenico. There is seen, also, in the middle of a square, an octagonal temple drawn in perspective, standing by itself and full of pilasters and niches, with the façade very richly adorned with figures painted to look like marble. Round the square are various very beautiful buildings; and on one side of these there falls the shadow of the temple, caused by the light of the sun—a beautiful conception, carried out with great ingenuity and art.

Maestro Domenico, on his part, painting in oil, represented Joachim visiting his consort S. Anna, and below this the Birth of Our Lady, wherein he depicted a very ornate chamber, and a boy beating very gracefully with a hammer on the door of the said chamber. Beneath this he painted the Marriage of the Virgin, with a good number of portraits from the life, among which are those of Messer Bernardetto de' Medici, Constable of the Florentines, wearing a large red barret-cap; Bernardo Guadagni, who was Gonfalonier; Folco Portinari, and others of that family. He also painted a dwarf breaking a staff, very life-like, and some women wearing garments customary in those times, lovely and graceful beyond belief. But this work remained unfinished, for reasons that will be told below.

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ANDREA DAL CASTAGNO: DANTE
(Florence: S. Apollonia. Fresco)
[View larger image](#)

Meanwhile Andrea had painted in oil on his wall the Death of Our Lady, in which, both by reason of his rivalry with Domenico and in order to make himself known for the able master that he truly was, he wrought in foreshortening, with incredible diligence, a bier containing the dead Virgin, which appears to be three braccia in length, although it is not more than one and a half. Round her are the Apostles, wrought in such a manner, that, although there is seen in their faces their joy at seeing their Madonna borne to Heaven by Jesus Christ, there is also seen in them their bitter sorrow at being left on earth without her. Among the Apostles are some angels holding burning lights, with beautiful expressions in their faces, and so well executed that it is seen that he was as well able to manage oil-colours as his rival Domenico. In these pictures Andrea made portraits from life of Messer Rinaldo degli Albizzi, Puccio Pucci, and Falganaccio, who brought about the liberation of Cosimo de' Medici, together with Federigo Malevolti, who held the keys of the Alberghetto. In like manner he portrayed Messer Bernardo di Domenico della Volta, Director of that hospital, who is kneeling and appears to be alive; and in a medallion at the beginning of the work he painted himself with the face of Judas Iscariot, whom he resembled both in appearance and in deed.

Now Andrea, having carried this work very nearly to completion, being blinded by envy of the praises that he heard given to the talent of Domenico, determined to remove him from his path; and after having thought of many expedients, he put one of them into execution in the following manner. One summer evening, according to his custom, Domenico took his lute and went forth from S. Maria Nuova, leaving Andrea in his room drawing, for he had refused to accept the invitation to take his recreation with Domenico, under the pretext of having to do certain drawings of importance. Domenico therefore went to take his pleasure by himself, and Andrea set himself to wait for him in hiding behind a street corner; and when Domenico, on his way home, came up to him, he crushed his lute and his stomach at one and the same time with certain pieces of lead, and then, thinking that he had not yet finished him off, beat him grievously on the head with the same weapons; and finally, leaving him on the ground, he returned to his room in S. Maria Nuova, where he put the door ajar and sat down to his drawing in the manner that he had been left by Domenico. Meanwhile an uproar had arisen, and the servants, hearing of the matter, ran to call Andrea and to give the bad news to the murderer and traitor himself, who, running to where the others were standing round Domenico, was not to be consoled, and kept crying out: "Alas, my brother! Alas, my brother!" Finally Domenico expired in his arms; nor could it be discovered, for all the diligence that was used, who had murdered him; and if Andrea had not revealed the truth in confession on his death-bed, it would not be known now.

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In S. Miniato fra le Torri in Florence Andrea painted a panel containing the Assumption of Our Lady, with two figures; and in a shrine in the Nave a Lanchetta, without the Porta alla Croce, he painted a Madonna. In the house of the Carducci, now belonging to the Pandolfini, the same man depicted certain famous men, some from imagination and some portrayed from life, among whom are Filippo Spano degli Scolari, Dante, Petrarca, Boccaccio, and others. At Scarperia in Mugello,

over the door of the Vicar's Palace, he painted a very beautiful nude figure of Charity, which has since been ruined. In the year 1478, when Giuliano de' Medici was killed and his brother Lorenzo wounded in S. Maria del Fiore by the family of the Pazzi and their adherents and fellow-conspirators, it was ordained by the Signoria that all those who had shared in the plot should be painted as traitors on the wall of the Palace of the Podestà. This work was offered to Andrea, and he, as a servant and debtor of the house of Medici, accepted it very willingly, and, taking it in hand, executed it so beautifully that it was a miracle. It would not be possible to express how much art and judgment were to be seen in those figures, which were for the most part portraits from life, and which were hung up by the feet in strange attitudes, all varied and very beautiful. This work, which pleased the whole city and particularly all who had understanding in the art of painting, brought it about that from that time onwards he was called no longer Andrea dal Castagno but Andrea degl' Impiccati.^[13]

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MADONNA AND CHILD
(After the fresco by Domenico
Viniziano. London: National
Gallery, 1215)
Mansell

[View larger image](#)

Andrea lived in honourable style, and since he spent his money freely, particularly on dress and on maintaining a fine household, he left little property when he passed to the other life at the age of seventy-one. But since the crime that he had committed against Domenico, who loved him so, became known a short time after his death, it was with shameful obsequies that he was buried in S. Maria Nuova, where, at the age of fifty-six, the unhappy Domenico had also been buried. The work begun by the latter in S. Maria Nuova remained unfinished, nor did he ever complete it, as he had done the panel of the high-altar in S. Lucia de' Bardi, wherein he executed with much diligence a Madonna with the Child in her arms, S. John the Baptist, S. Nicholas, S. Francis, and S. Lucia; which panel he had brought to perfect completion a little before he was murdered.

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Disciples of Andrea were Jacopo del Corso, who was a passing good master, Pisanello, Marchino, Piero del Pollaiuolo, and Giovanni da Rovizzano.

GENTILE DA FABRIANO AND VITTORE PISANELLO OF
VERONA

LIVES OF GENTILE DA FABRIANO AND VITTORE PISANELLO OF VERONA^[14]

PAINTERS

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Very great is the advantage enjoyed by one who follows in the steps of a predecessor who has gained honour and fame by means of some rare talent, for the reason that, if only he follows to some extent the path prepared by his master, he seldom fails to arrive without much fatigue at an honourable goal; whereas, if he had to reach it by himself, he would have need of a much longer time and far greater labours. The truth of this could be seen, ready for the finger to point to, as the saying is, among many other examples, in that of Pisano, or rather, Pisanello, a painter of Verona, who, having spent many years in Florence with Andrea dal Castagno, and having finished his works after his death, acquired so much credit by means of Andrea's name, that Pope Martin V, coming to Florence, took him in his train to Rome, where he caused him to paint some scenes in fresco in S. Giovanni Laterano, which are very lovely and beautiful beyond belief, because he used therein a great abundance of a sort of ultramarine blue given to him by the said Pope, which was so beautiful in colour that it has never yet been equalled.

In competition with Pisanello, below the aforesaid scenes, certain others were painted by Gentile da Fabriano; of which Platina makes mention in his Life of Pope Martin, saying that when that Pontiff had caused the pavement, the ceiling, and the roof of S. Giovanni Laterano to be reconstructed, Gentile da Fabriano painted many pictures there, and, among other figures between the windows, in *terretta* and in *chiaroscuro*, certain prophets, which are held to be the best paintings in the whole of that work. The same Gentile executed an infinite number of works in the March, particularly in Agobbio, where some of them are still to be seen, and likewise throughout the whole state of Urbino. He worked in S. Giovanni at Siena; and in the Sacristy of S. Trinita in Florence he painted the Story of the Magi on a panel, wherein he portrayed himself from the life. In S. Niccolò, near the Porta a S. Miniato, for the family of the Quaratesi, he painted the panel of the high-altar, which appears to me without a doubt the best of all the works that I have seen by his hand, for, not to mention the Madonna surrounded by many saints, all well wrought, the *predella* of the said panel, full of scenes with little figures from the life of S. Nicholas, could not be more beautiful or executed better than it is. In S. Maria Nuova in Rome, in a little arch over the tomb of the Florentine Cardinal Adimari, Archbishop of Pisa, which is beside that of Pope Gregory IX, he painted the Madonna with the Child in her arms, between S. Benedict and S. Joseph. This work was held in esteem by the divine Michelagnolo, who was wont to say, speaking of Gentile, that his hand in painting was similar to his name. The same master executed a very beautiful panel in S. Domenico in Perugia; and in S. Agostino at Bari he painted a Crucifix outlined in the wood, with three very beautiful half-length figures, which are over the door of the choir.

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But to return to Vittore Pisano; the account that has been given of him above was written by us, with nothing more, when this our book was printed for the first time, because we had not then received that information and knowledge of the works of this excellent craftsman which we have since gained from notices supplied by that very reverend and most learned Father, Fra Marco de' Medici of Verona, of the Order of Preaching Friars, and from the narrative of Biondo da Forlì, where he speaks of Verona in his "Italia Illustrata." Vittore was equal in excellence to any painter of his age; and to this, not to speak of the works enumerated above, most ample testimony is borne by many others that are seen in his most noble native city of Verona, although many are almost eaten away by time. And because he took particular delight in depicting animals, he painted in the Chapel of the Pellegrini family, in the Church of S. Anastasia at Verona, a S. Eustace caressing a dog spotted with white and tan, which, with its feet raised and leaning against the leg of the said Saint, is turning its head backwards as though it had heard some noise; and it is making this movement with so great vivacity, that a live dog could not do it better. Beneath this figure there is seen painted the name of Pisano, who used to call himself sometimes Pisano, and sometimes Pisanello, as may be seen from the pictures and the medals by his hand. After the said figure of S. Eustace, which is truly very beautiful and one of the best that this craftsman ever wrought, he painted the whole outer wall of the same chapel; and on the other side he made a S. George clad in white armour made of silver, as was the custom in that age not only with him but with all the other painters. This S. George, wishing to replace his sword in the scabbard after slaying the Dragon, is raising his right hand, which holds the sword, the point of which is already in the scabbard, and is lowering the left hand, to the end that the increased distance may make it easier for him to sheathe the sword, which is long; and this he is doing with so much grace and with so beautiful a manner, that nothing better could be seen. Michele San Michele of Verona, architect to the most illustrious Signoria of Venice, and a man with a very wide knowledge of these fine arts, was often seen during his life contemplating these works of Vittore in a marvel, and then heard to say that there was little to be seen that was better than the S. Eustace, the dog, and the S. George described above. Over the arch of the said chapel is

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painted the scene when S. George, having slain the Dragon, is liberating the King's daughter, who is seen near the Saint, clad in a long dress after the custom of those times. Marvellous, likewise, in this part of the work, is the figure of the same S. George, who, armed as above, and about to remount his horse, is standing with his face and person turned towards the spectator, and is seen, with one foot in the stirrup and his left hand on the saddle, almost in the act of leaping on to the horse, which has its hindquarters towards the spectator, so that the whole animal, being foreshortened, is seen very well, although in a small space. In a word, it is impossible to contemplate without infinite marvel—nay, amazement—a work executed with such extraordinary design, grace, and judgment.

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GENTILE DA FABRIANO: MADONNA AND CHILD, WITH THREE KINGS

(DETAIL FROM THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI)

(Florence: Accademia, 165. Panel)

[View larger image](#)

The same Pisano painted a picture in S. Fermo Maggiore at Verona (a church of the Conventual Friars of S. Francis), in the Chapel of the Brenzoni, on the left as one enters by the principal door of the said church, over the tomb of the Resurrection of Our Lord, wrought in sculpture and very beautiful for those times; he painted, I say, as an ornament for that work, the Virgin receiving the Annunciation from the Angel, which two figures, picked out with gold according to the use of those times, are very beautiful, as are certain very well drawn buildings, as well as some little animals and birds scattered throughout the work, which are as natural and lifelike as it is possible to imagine.

The same Vittore cast in medallions innumerable portraits of Princes and other persons of his time, from which there have since been made many portraits in painting. And Monsignor Giovio, speaking of Vittore Pisano in an Italian letter written to the Lord Duke Cosimo, which may be read in print together with many others, says the following words:

"This man was also very excellent in the work of low-relief, which is esteemed very difficult among craftsmen, because it is the mean between the flat surface of painting and the roundness of statuary. For this reason there are seen many highly esteemed medals of great Princes by his hand, made in a large form, and in the same proportions as that reverse of the horse clad in armour that Guidi has sent me. Of these I have that of the great King Alfonso with his hair long, with a captain's helmet on the reverse; that of Pope Martin, with the arms of the house of Colonna as the reverse; that of the Sultan Mahomet (who took Constantinople), showing him on horseback in Turkish dress, with a scourge in his hand; Sigismondo Malatesta, with Madonna Isotta of Rimini on the reverse; and that of Niccolò Piccinino, wearing a large oblong cap on his head, with the said reverse sent to me by Guidi, which I am returning. Besides these, I have also a very beautiful medal of John Palæologus, Emperor of Constantinople, with that bizarre Greek cap which the Emperors used to wear. This was made by Pisano in Florence, at the time of the Council of Eugenius, at which the aforesaid Emperor was present; and it has on the reverse the Cross of Christ, sustained by two hands—namely, the Latin and the Greek."

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VITTORE PISANELLO: THE VISION OF S. EUSTACE
(London: National Gallery, 1436. Panel)

[View larger image](#)

So far Giovio, and still further, Vittore also made medals with portraits of Filippo de' Medici, Archbishop of Pisa, Braccio da Montone, Giovan Galeazzo Visconti, Carlo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, Giovan Caracciolo, Grand Seneschal of Naples, Borso and Ercole D'Este, and many other nobles and men distinguished in arms and in letters.

By reason of his fame and reputation in that art, this master gained the honour of being celebrated by very great men and rare writers; for, besides what Biondo wrote of him, as has been said, he was much extolled in a Latin poem by the elder Guerino, his compatriot and a very great scholar and writer of those times; of which poem, called, from the surname of its subject, "Il Pisano del Guerino," honourable mention is made by Biondo. He was also celebrated by the elder Strozzi, Tito Vespasiano, father of the other Strozzi, both of whom were very rare poets in the Latin tongue. The father honoured the memory of Vittore Pisano with a very beautiful epigram, which is in print with the others. Such are the fruits that are borne by a worthy life.

Some say that when he was learning art in Florence in his youth, he painted in the old Church of the Temple, which stood where the old Citadel now is, the stories of that pilgrim who was going to S. Jacopo di Galizia, when the daughter of his host put a silver cup into his wallet, to the end that he might be punished as a robber; but he was rescued by S. Jacopo, who brought him back home in safety. In this Pisano gave promise of becoming, as he did, an excellent painter. Finally, having come to a good old age, he passed to a better life. And Gentile, after making many works in Città di Castello, became palsied, and was reduced to such a state that he could no longer do anything good; and at length, wasted away by old age, and having lived eighty years, he died. The portrait of Pisano I have not been able to find in any place whatsoever. Both these painters drew very well, as may be seen in our book.



**MEDALS OF SIGISMONDO PANDOLFO MALATESTA
AND NICCOLÒ PICCININO**

(After Vittore Pisanello. London: British Museum)

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PESELLO AND FRANCESCO PESELLI

LIVES OF PESELLO AND FRANCESCO PESELLI

[PESELLINO, OR FRANCESCO DI PESELLO]

PAINTERS OF FLORENCE

It is rarely wont to happen that the disciples of the best masters, if they observe their precepts, fail to become very excellent, or, if they do not actually surpass them, at least to equal them and to make themselves in every way like them. For the burning zeal of imitation, with assiduity in studying, has power to make them equal the talent of those who show them the true method of working; wherefore the disciples become such that they afterwards compete with their masters, and even find it easy to outstrip them, because it is always but little labour to add to what has been discovered by others. That this is true is proved by Francesco di Pesello, who imitated the manner of Fra Filippo so well that he would have surpassed him by a long way, if death had not cut him off so prematurely. It is also known that Pesello imitated the manner of Andrea dal Castagno; and he took so much pleasure in counterfeiting animals, of which he kept some of all sorts alive in his house, and made them so lifelike and vivacious, that there was no one in his time who equalled him in this branch of his profession. He worked up to the age of thirty under the discipline of Andrea, learning from him, and became a very good master. Wherefore, having given good proof of his knowledge, he was commissioned by the Signoria of Florence to paint a panel in distemper of the Magi bringing offerings to Christ, which was placed half-way up the staircase of their Palace, and acquired great fame for Pesello, above all because he had made certain portraits therein, including that of Donato Acciaiuoli. In S. Croce, also, in the Chapel of the Cavalcanti, below the Annunciation of Donato, he painted a predella with little figures, containing stories of S. Nicholas. In the house of the Medici he adorned some panelling very beautifully with animals, and certain coffers with little scenes of jousts on horseback. And in the

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same house there are seen to this day certain canvases by his hand, representing lions pressing against a grating, which appear absolutely alive; and he made others on the outside, together with one fighting with a serpent; and on another canvas he painted an ox, a fox, and other animals, very animated and vivacious. In the Chapel of the Alessandri, in S. Piero Maggiore, he made four little scenes with little figures of S. Peter, of S. Paul, of S. Zanobi restoring to life the son of the widow, and of S. Benedict. In S. Maria Maggiore in the same city of Florence, in the Chapel of the Orlandini, he made a Madonna and two other very beautiful figures. For the children of the Company of S. Giorgio he painted a Crucifix, S. Jerome, and S. Francis; and he made an Annunciation on a panel in the Church of S. Giorgio. In the Church of S. Jacopo at Pistoia he painted a Trinity, S. Zeno, and S. James; and throughout the houses of citizens in Florence there are many pictures, both round and square, by the hand of the same man.

Pesello was a temperate and gentle person; and whenever it was in his power to assist his friends, he would do it very lovingly and willingly. He married young, and had a son named Francesco, known as Pesellino, who became a painter, following very closely in the steps of Fra Filippo. From what is known of this man, it is clear that if he had lived longer he would have done much more than he did, for he was a zealous student of his art, and would draw all day and night without ceasing. In the Chapel of the Noviciate in S. Croce, below the panel by Fra Filippo, there is still seen a most marvellous predella with little figures, which appear to be by the hand of Fra Filippo. He made many little pictures with small figures throughout Florence, where, having acquired a great name, he died at the age of thirty-one; to the great grief of Pesello, who followed him after no long time, at the age of seventy-seven.



**PESELLINO: MADONNA ENTHRONED WITH
SAINTS AND ANGELS**
(*Empoli: Gallery. Panel*)
[View larger image](#)

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BENOZZO GOZZOLI



THE PROCESSION OF THE MAGI
*(Detail, after the fresco by Benozzo Gozzoli. Florence: Palazzo
Riccardi)*
Anderson
[View larger image](#)

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LIFE OF BENOZZO GOZZOLI^[15]

PAINTER OF FLORENCE

He who pursues the path of excellence in his labours, although it is, as men say, both stony and full of thorns, finds himself finally at the end of the ascent on a broad plain, with all the blessings that he has desired. And as he looks downwards and sees the difficult and perilous way that he has come, he thanks God for having brought him out safely, and with the greatest contentment he blesses those labours that he has just been finding so burdensome. And so, recompensed for his past sufferings by the gladness of the happy present, he labours without fatigue, in order to demonstrate to all who see him how heat, cold, sweat, hunger, thirst, and all the other discomforts that are endured in the acquiring of excellence, deliver men from poverty, and bring them to that secure and tranquil state in which, with so much contentment, Benozzo Gozzoli enjoyed repose from his labours.

This man was a disciple of Fra Giovanni Angelico, by whom he was loved with good reason; and by all who knew him he was held to be a practised master, very rich in invention, and very productive in the painting of animals, perspectives, landscapes, and ornaments. He wrought so many works in his day that he showed that he cared little for other delights; and although, in comparison with many who surpassed him in design, he was not very excellent, yet in this great mass of work he surpassed all the painters of his age, for in such a multitude of pictures he succeeded in making some that were good. In his youth he painted a panel for the altar of the Company of S. Marco in Florence, and, in S. Friano, a picture of the passing of S. Jerome, which has been spoilt in restoring the façade of the church along the street. In the Chapel of the Palace of the Medici he painted the Story of the Magi in fresco.

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In the Araceli at Rome, in the Chapel of the Cesarini, he painted the stories of S. Anthony of Padua, wherein he made portraits from life of Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini and Antonio Colonna. In the Conti Tower, likewise, over a door under which one passes, he made in fresco a Madonna with many saints; and in a chapel in S. Maria Maggiore, on the right hand as one enters the church by the principal door, he painted many figures in fresco, which are passing good.

After returning from Rome to Florence, Benozzo went to Pisa, where he worked in the cemetery called the Campo Santo, which is beside the Duomo, covering the surface of a wall that runs the whole length of the building with stories from the Old Testament, wherein he showed very great invention. And this may be said to be a truly tremendous work, seeing that it contains all the stories of the Creation of the world from one day to another. After this come Noah's Ark and the inundation of the Flood, represented with very beautiful composition and an abundance of figures. Then there follow the building of the proud Tower of Nimrod, the burning of Sodom and the other neighbouring cities, and the stories of Abraham, wherein there are some very beautiful effects to be observed, for the reason that, although Benozzo was not remarkable for the drawing

of figures, yet he showed his art effectually in the Sacrifice of Isaac, for there he painted an ass foreshortened in such a manner that it seems to turn to either side, which is held something very beautiful. After this comes the Birth of Moses, together with all those signs and prodigies that were seen, up to the time when he led his people out of Egypt and fed them for so many years in the desert. To these he added all the stories of the Hebrews up to the time of David and his son Solomon; and in this work Benozzo displayed a spirit truly more than bold, for, whereas so great an enterprise might very well have daunted a legion of painters, he alone wrought the whole and brought it to perfection. Wherefore, having thus acquired very great fame, he won the honour of having the following epigram placed in the middle of the work:



BENOZZO BOZZOLI: MADONNA AND CHILD
(Berlin: Kaiser Friedrich Museum, 60B. Panel)

[View larger image](#)

QUID SPECTAS VOLUCRES, PISCES, ET MONSTRA FERARUM,
 ET VIRIDES SILVAS ÆTHEREASQUE DOMOS,
 ET PUEROS, JUVENES, MATRES, CANOSQUE PARENTES,
 QUEIS SEMPER VIVUM SPIRAT IN ORE DECUS?
 NON HÆC TAM VARIIS FINXIT SIMULACRA FIGURIS
 NATURA, INGENIO FÆTIBUS APTA SUO:
 EST OPUS ARTIFICIS: PINXIT VIVA ORA BENOZZUS;
 O SUPERI, VIVOS FUNDITE IN ORA SONOS.

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Throughout this whole work there are scattered innumerable portraits from the life; but, since we have not knowledge of them all, I will mention only those that I have recognized as important, and those that I know by means of some record. In the scene of the Queen of Sheba going to visit Solomon there is the portrait of Marsilio Ficino among certain prelates, with those of Argiropolo, a very learned Greek, and of Batista Platina, whom he had previously portrayed in Rome; while he himself is on horseback, in the form of an old man shaven and wearing a black cap, in the fold of which there is a white paper, perchance as a sign, or because he intended to write his own name thereon.

In the same city of Pisa, for the Nuns of S. Benedetto a Ripa d'Arno, he painted all the stories of the life of that Saint; and in the building of the Company of the Florentines, which then stood where the Monastery of S. Vito now is, he wrought the panel and many other pictures. In the Duomo, behind the chair of the Archbishop, he painted a S. Thomas Aquinas on a little panel in distemper, with an infinite number of learned men disputing over his works, among whom there is a portrait of Pope Sixtus IV, together with a number of Cardinals and many Chiefs and Generals of various Orders. This is the best and most highly finished work that Benozzo ever made. In S. Caterina, a seat of the Preaching Friars in the same city, he executed two panels in

distemper, which are known very well by the manner; and he also painted another in the Church of S. Niccola, with two in S. Croce without Pisa.

In his youth, Benozzo also painted the altar of S. Bastiano in the Pieve of San Gimignano, opposite to the principal chapel; and in the Hall of the Council there are some figures, partly by his hand, and partly old works restored by him. For the Monks of Monte Oliveto, in the same territory, he painted a Crucifix and other pictures; but the best work that he made in that place was in the principal chapel of S. Agostino, where he painted stories of S. Augustine in fresco, from his conversion to his death; of the whole of which work I have the design by his hand in my book, together with many drawings of the aforesaid scenes in the Campo Santo of Pisa. In Volterra, likewise, he executed certain works, of which there is no need to make mention.

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Now, while Benozzo was working in Rome, there was another painter there called Melozzo, who came from Forlì; and many who know no more than this, having found the name of Melozzo written and having compared the dates, have believed that Melozzo stands for Benozzo; but they are mistaken, for the said painter was one who lived at the same time and was a very zealous student of the problems of art, devoting particular diligence and study to the making of foreshortenings, as may be seen in S. Apostolo at Rome, in the tribune of the high-altar, where, in a frieze drawn in perspective, as an ornament for that work, there are some figures picking grapes, with a cask, which show no little of the good. But this is seen more clearly in the Ascension of Jesus Christ, in the midst of a choir of angels who are leading him up to Heaven, wherein the figure of Christ is so well foreshortened that it seems to be piercing the ceiling, and the same is true of the angels, who are circling with various movements through the spacious sky. The Apostles, likewise, who are on the earth below, are so well foreshortened in their various attitudes that the work brought him much praise, as it still does, from the craftsmen, who have learnt much from his labours. He was also a great master of perspective, as is demonstrated by the buildings painted in this work, which he executed at the commission of Cardinal Riario, nephew of Pope Sixtus IV, by whom he was richly rewarded.



THE DEATH OF S. AUGUSTINE
(After the fresco by Benozzo Gozzoli. San Gimignano: S. Agostino)

Brogi

[View larger image](#)

But to return to Benozzo; wasted away at last by length of years and by his labours, he went to his true rest, in the city of Pisa, at the age of seventy-eight, while dwelling in a little house that he had bought in Carraia di San Francesco during his long sojourn there. This house he left at his death to his daughter; and, mourned by the whole city, he was honourably buried in the Campo Santo, with the following epitaph, which is still to be read there:

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HIC TUMULUS EST BENOTII FLORENTINI, QUI PROXIME HAS PINXIT
HISTORIAS. HUNC SIBI PISANOR. DONAVIT HUMANITAS, MCCCCLXXVIII.

Benozzo ever lived the well-ordered life of a true Christian, spending all his years in honourable labour. For this and for his good manner and qualities he was long looked upon with favour in that city. The disciples whom he left behind him were Zanobi Macchiavelli, a Florentine, and others of whom there is no need to make further record.

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FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO AND LORENZO VECCHIETTO



FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO: S. DOROTHY
(*London: National Gallery, 1682. Panel*)

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LIVES OF FRANCESCO DI GIORGIO

SCULPTOR AND ARCHITECT OF SIENA

AND LORENZO VECCHIETTO

SCULPTOR AND PAINTER OF SIENA

Francesco di Giorgio of Siena, who was an excellent sculptor and architect, made the two bronze angels that are on the high-altar of the Duomo in that city. These were truly very beautiful pieces of casting, and he finished them afterwards by himself with the greatest diligence that it is possible to imagine. This he could do very conveniently, for he was endowed with good means as well as with a rare intelligence; wherefore he would work when he felt inclined, not through greed of gain, but for his own pleasure and in order to leave some honourable memorial behind him. He also gave attention to painting and executed some pictures, but these did not equal his sculptures. He had very good judgment in architecture, and proved that he had a very good knowledge of that profession; and to this ample testimony is borne by the palace that he built for Duke Federigo Feltro at Urbino, which is commodiously arranged and beautifully planned, while the bizarre staircases are well conceived and more pleasing than any others that had been made up to his time. The halls are large and magnificent, and the apartments are conveniently distributed and handsome beyond belief. In a word, the whole of that palace is as beautiful and as well built as any other that has been erected down to our own day.

Francesco was a very able engineer, particularly in connection with military engines, as he showed in a frieze that he painted with his own hand in the said palace at Urbino, which is all full of rare things of that kind for the purposes of war. He also filled some books with designs of such instruments; and the Lord Duke Cosimo de' Medici has the best of these among his greatest treasures. The same man was so zealous a student of the warlike machines and instruments of

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the ancients, and spent so much time in investigating the plans of the ancient amphitheatres and other things of that kind, that he was thereby prevented from giving equal attention to sculpture; but these studies brought him and still bring him no less honour than sculpture could have gained for him. For all these reasons he was so dear to the said Duke Federigo, whose portrait he made both on medals and in painting, that when he returned to his native city of Siena he found his honours were equal to his profits.

For Pope Pius II he made all the designs and models of the Palace and Vescovado of Pienza, the native place of the said Pope, which was raised by him to the position of a city, and called Pienza after himself, in place of its former name of Corsignano. These buildings were as magnificent and handsome as they could be for that place; and he did the same for the general form and the fortifications of the said city, together with the palace and loggia built for the same Pontiff. Wherefore he ever lived in honour, and was rewarded with the supreme magistracy of the Signoria in his native city; but finally, having reached the age of forty-seven, he died. His works date about 1480. He left behind him his companion and very dear friend, Jacopo Cozzerello, who devoted himself to sculpture and architecture, making some figures of wood in Siena, and a work of architecture without the Porta a Tufi—namely, S. Maria Maddalena, which remained unfinished by reason of his death. To him we are also indebted for the portrait of the aforesaid Francesco, which he made with his own hand; to which Francesco much gratitude is due for his having facilitated the art of architecture, and for his having rendered to it greater services than any other man had done from the time of Filippo di Ser Brunellesco to his own.



THE RISEN CHRIST
(After the bronze by Lorenzo
Vecchietto. Siena: S. Maria della
Scala)
Alinari

[View larger image](#)

A Sieneſe and alſo a much extolled ſculptor was Lorenzo, the ſon of Piero Vecchietti who, having firſt been a highly eſteemed goldſmith, finally devoted himſelf to ſculpture and to caſting in bronze; which arts he ſtudied ſo zealouſly that he became excellent in them, and was commiſſioned to make a tabernacle in bronze for the high-altar of the Duomo in his native city of Siena, together with the marble ornaments that are ſtill ſeen therein. This caſting, which is admirable, acquired very great fame and repute for him by reaſon of the proportion and grace that it ſhows in all its parts; and whoſoever obſerves this work well can ſee that the deſign is good, and that the craftsman was a man of judgment and of practiſed ability. For the Chapel of the Painters of Siena, in the great Hoſpital of the Scala, the ſame man made a beautiful metal caſting of a nude Chriſt, of the ſize of life and holding the Croſs in His hand; which work was finiſhed with a love and diligence worthy of the beautiful ſucceſs of the caſting. In the pilgrim's hall in the ſame place there is a ſcene painted in colours by Lorenzo. Over the door of S. Giovanni he painted an arch with figures wrought in freſco; and in like manner, ſince the

baptismal font was not finished, he wrought for it certain little figures in bronze, besides finishing, also in bronze, a scene formerly begun by Donatello. In this place two scenes in bronze had been already wrought by Jacopo della Fonte, whose manner Lorenzo ever imitated as closely as he was able. This Lorenzo brought the said baptismal font to perfect completion, adding to it some bronze figures, formerly cast by Donato but entirely finished by himself, which are held to be very beautiful.

For the Loggia of the Ufficiali^[16] in Banchi Lorenzo made two life-size figures in marble of S. Peter and S. Paul, wrought with consummate grace and executed with fine mastery. He disposed the works that he made in such a manner that he deserves as much praise for them after death as he did when alive. He was a melancholic and solitary person, ever lost in contemplation; which was perchance the reason that he did not live longer, for he passed to the other life at the age of fifty-eight. His works date about the year 1482.

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GALASSO FERRARESE

LIFE OF GALASSO FERRARESE^[17]

[*GALASSO GALASSI*]

PAINTER

When strangers come to do work in a city in which there are no craftsmen of excellence, there is always some man whose intelligence is afterwards stirred to strive to learn that same art, and to bring it about that from that time onwards there should be no need for strangers to come and embellish his city and carry away her wealth, which he now labours to deserve by his own ability, seeking to acquire for himself those riches that seemed to him too splendid to be given to foreigners. This was made clearly manifest by Galasso Ferrarese, who, seeing Piero dal Borgo a San Sepolcro rewarded by the Duke of Ferrara for the works that he executed, and also honourably received in Ferrara, was incited so strongly by such an example, after Piero's departure, to devote himself to painting, that he acquired the name of a good and excellent master in Ferrara. Besides this, he was held in all the greater favour in that place for having gone to Venice and there learnt the method of painting in oil, which he brought to his native place, for he afterwards made an infinity of figures in that manner, which are scattered about in many churches throughout Ferrara.

Next, having gone to Bologna, whither he was summoned by certain Dominican friars, he painted in oil a chapel in S. Domenico; and so his fame increased, together with his credit. After this he painted many pictures in fresco in S. Maria del Monte, a seat of the Black Friars without Bologna, beyond the Porta di S. Mammolo; and the whole church of the Casa di Mezzo, on the same road, was likewise painted by his hand with works in fresco, in which he depicted the stories of the Old Testament.

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His life was ever most praiseworthy, and he showed himself very courteous and agreeable; which arose from his being used to live and dwell more out of his native place than in it. It is true, indeed, that through his being somewhat irregular in his way of living, his life did not last long; for he left it at the age of about fifty, to go to that life which has no end. After his death he was honoured by a friend with the following epitaph:

GALASSUS FERRARIENSIS.

SUM TANTO STUDIO NATURAM IMITATUS ET ARTE
DUM PINGO RERUM QUÆ CREAT ILLA PARENS;
HÆC UT SÆPE QUIDEM NON PICTA PUTAVERIT A ME,
A SE CREDIDERIT SED GENERATA MAGIS.

In these same times lived Cosmè, also of Ferrara. Works by his hand that are to be seen are a chapel in S. Domenico in the said city, and two folding-doors that close the organ in the Duomo. This man was better as a draughtsman than as a painter; indeed, from what I have been able to gather, he does not seem to have painted much.



THE MADONNA ENTHRONED
(After the tempera panel by Cosmè [Cosimo Tura].
Berlin: Kaiser Friedrich Museum, 86)
Hanfstaengl
[View larger image](#)

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ANTONIO AND BERNARDO ROSSELLINO

LIVES OF ANTONIO ROSSELLINO, SCULPTOR OF FLORENCE

[ROSSELLINO DAL PROCONSOLO]

AND BERNARDO, HIS BROTHER

It has ever been a truly laudable and virtuous thing to be modest and to be adorned with that gentleness and those rare qualities that are easily recognized in the honourable actions of the sculptor Antonio Rossellino, who put so much grace into his art that he was esteemed by all who knew him as something much more than man, and adored almost as a saint, for those supreme virtues that were united to his talent. Antonio was called Rossellino dal Proconsolo, because he ever had his shop in a part of Florence called by that name. He showed such sweetness and delicacy in his works, with a finish and a refinement so perfect, that his manner may be rightly called the true one and truly modern.

For the Palace of the Medici he made the marble fountain that is in the second court; in which fountain are certain children opening the mouths of dolphins that pour out water; and the whole is finished with consummate grace and with a most diligent manner. In the Church of S. Croce, near the holy-water basin, he made a tomb for Francesco Nori, with a Madonna in low-relief above it; and another Madonna in the house of the Tornabuoni, together with many other things

sent to various foreign parts, such as a tomb of marble for Lyons in France. At S. Miniato al Monte, a monastery of White Friars without the walls of Florence, he was commissioned to make the tomb of the Cardinal of Portugal, which was executed by him so marvellously and with such great diligence and art, that no craftsman can ever expect to be able to see any work likely to surpass it in any respect whatsoever with regard to finish or grace. And in truth, if one examines it, it appears not merely difficult but impossible for it to have been executed so well; for certain angels in the work reveal such grace, beauty, and art in their expressions and their draperies, that they appear not merely made of marble but absolutely alive. One of these is holding the crown of chastity of that Cardinal, who is said to have died celibate; the other bears the palm of victory, which he had won from the world. Among the many most masterly things that are there, one is an arch of grey-stone supporting a looped-back curtain of marble, which is so highly-finished that, what with the white of the marble and the grey of the stone, it appears more like real cloth than like marble. On the sarcophagus are some truly very beautiful boys and the dead man himself, with a Madonna, very well wrought, in a medallion. The sarcophagus has the shape of that one made of porphyry which is in the Piazza della Ritonda in Rome. This tomb of the Cardinal was erected in 1459; and its form, with the architecture of the chapel, gave so much satisfaction to the Duke of Malfi, nephew of Pope Pius II, that he had another made in Naples by the hand of the same master for his wife, similar to the other in every respect save in the figure of the dead. For this, moreover, Antonio made a panel containing the Nativity of Christ and the Manger, with a choir of angels over the hut, dancing and singing with open mouths, in such a manner, that he truly seems to have given them all possible movement and expression short of breath itself, and that with so much grace and so high a finish, that iron tools and man's intelligence could effect nothing more in marble. Wherefore his works have been much esteemed by Michelagnolo and by all the rest of the supremely excellent craftsmen. In the Pieve of Empoli he made a S. Sebastian of marble, which is held to be a very beautiful work; and of this we have a drawing by his hand in our book, together with others of all the architecture and the figures in the said chapel in S. Miniato al Monte, and likewise his own portrait.

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Antonio finally died in Florence at the age of forty-six, leaving a brother called Bernardo, an architect and sculptor, who made a marble tomb in S. Croce for Messer Lionardo Bruni of Arezzo, who wrote the History of Florence and was a very learned man as all the world knows. This Bernardo was much esteemed for his knowledge of architecture by Pope Nicholas V, who loved him dearly and made use of him in very many works that he carried out in his pontificate, of which he would have executed even more if death had not intervened to hinder the works that he had in mind. He caused him, therefore, according to the account of Giannozzo Manetti, to reconstruct the Piazza of Fabriano, in the year when he spent some months there by reason of the plague; and whereas it was narrow and badly designed, he enlarged it and brought it to a good shape, surrounding it with a row of shops, which were useful, very commodious, and very beautiful. After this he restored and founded anew the Church of S. Francesco in the same district, which was going to ruin. At Gualdo he rebuilt the Church of S. Benedetto; almost anew, it may be said, for he added to it good and beautiful buildings. At Assisi he made new and stout foundations and a new roof for the Church of S. Francesco, which was ruined in certain parts and threatened to go to ruin in certain others. At Civitavecchia he built many beautiful and magnificent edifices. At Civit  Castellana he rebuilt more than a third part of the walls in a good form. At Narni he rebuilt the fortress, enlarging it with good and beautiful walls. At Orvieto he made a great fortress with a most beautiful palace—a work of great cost and no less magnificence. At Spoleto, likewise, he enlarged and strengthened the fortress, making within it dwellings so beautiful, so commodious, and so well conceived, that nothing better could be seen. He restored the baths of Viterbo at great expense and in a truly royal spirit, making certain dwellings there that would have been worthy not merely of the invalids who went to bathe there every day, but of the greatest of Princes. All these works were executed by the said Pontiff without the city of Rome, from the designs of Bernardo.

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In Rome he restored, and in many places renewed, the walls of the city, which were for the greater part in ruins; adding to them certain towers, and enclosing within these some new fortifications that he built without the Castle of S. Angelo, with many apartments and decorations that he made within. The said Pontiff also had a project in his mind, of which he brought the greater part nearly to completion, of restoring or rebuilding, according as it might be necessary, the forty Churches of the Stations formerly instituted by the Saint, Pope Gregory I, who received the surname of Great. Thus he restored S. Maria Trastevere, S. Prassedia, S. Teodoro, S. Pietro in Vincula, and many other minor churches. But it was with much greater zeal, adornment, and diligence that he did this for six of the seven greater and principal churches—namely, S. Giovanni Laterano, S. Maria Maggiore, S. Stefano in Celio Monte, S. Apostolo, S. Paolo, and S. Lorenzo extra muros. I say nothing of S. Pietro, for of this he made an undertaking by itself.

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The same Pope was minded to make the whole of the Vatican into a separate city, in the form of a fortress; and for this he was designing three roads that should lead to S. Pietro, situated, I believe, where the Borgo Vecchio and the Borgo Nuovo now are; and on both sides of these roads he meant to build loggie, with very commodious shops, keeping the nobler and richer trades separate from the humbler, and grouping each in a street by itself. He had already built the Great Round Tower, which is still called the Torrione di Niccola. Over these shops and loggie were to be erected magnificent and commodious houses, built in a very beautiful and very practical style of architecture, and designed in such a manner as to be sheltered and protected from all the pestiferous winds of Rome, and freed from all the inconveniences of water and garbage likely to generate unhealthy exhalations. All this the said Pontiff would have finished if he had been granted a little longer life, for he had a great and resolute spirit, and an understanding so

profound, that he gave as much guidance and direction to the craftsmen as they gave to him. When this is so, and when the patron has knowledge of his own and capacity enough to take an immediate resolution, great enterprises can be easily brought to completion; whereas an irresolute and incapable man, wavering between yes and no in a sea of conflicting designs and opinions, very often lets time slip past unprofitably without doing anything. But of this design of Nicholas there is no need to say any more, since it was not carried into effect.



TOMB OF CARDINAL JACOPO OF PORTUGAL
(After Antonio Rossellino. Florence: S. Miniato)
Brogi

[View larger image](#)

Besides this, he wished to build the Papal Palace with so much magnificence and grandeur, and with so many conveniences and such loveliness, that it might be in all respects the greatest and most beautiful edifice in Christendom; and he intended that it should not only serve for the person of the Supreme Pontiff, the Chief of all Christians, and for the sacred college of Cardinals, who, being his counsellors and assistants, had always to be about him, but also that it should provide accommodation for the transaction of all the business, resolutions, and judicial affairs of the Court; so that the grouping together of all the offices and courts would have produced great magnificence, and, if such a word may be used in such a context, an effect of incredible pomp. What is infinitely more, it was meant for the reception of all Emperors, Kings, Dukes, and other Christian Princes who might, either on affairs of their own or out of devotion, visit that most holy apostolic seat. It is incredible, but he proposed to make there a theatre for the crowning of the Pontiffs, with gardens, loggie, aqueducts, fountains, chapels, libraries, and a most beautiful building set apart for the Conclave. In short, this edifice—I know not whether I should call it palace, or castle, or city—would have been the most superb work that had ever been made, so far as is known, from the Creation of the world to our own day. What great glory it would have been for the Holy Roman Church to see the Supreme Pontiff, her Chief, gather together, as into the most famous and most holy of monasteries, all those ministers of God who dwell in the city of Rome, to live there, as it were in a new earthly Paradise, a celestial, angelic, and most holy life, giving an example to all Christendom, and awakening the minds of the infidels to the true worship of God and of the Blessed Jesus Christ! But this great work remained unfinished—nay, scarcely begun—by reason of the death of that Pontiff; and the little that was carried out is known by his arms, or the device that he used as his arms, namely, two keys crossed on a field of red. The fifth of the five works that the same Pope intended to execute was the Church of S. Pietro, which he had proposed to make so vast, so rich, and so ornate, that it is better to be silent than to attempt to speak of it, because I could not describe even the least part of it, and the rather as the model was afterwards destroyed, and others have been made by other architects. If any man wishes to gain a full knowledge of the grand conception of Pope Nicholas V in this matter, let him read what Giannozzo Manetti, a noble and learned citizen of Florence, has written with the most minute detail in the Life of the said Pontiff, who availed himself in all the aforesaid

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designs, as has been said, as well as in his others, of the intelligence and great industry of Bernardo Rossellino.

Antonio, brother of Bernardo (to return at length to the point whence, with so fair an occasion, I digressed), wrought his sculptures about the year 1490; and since the more men's works display diligence and difficulties the more they are admired, and these two characteristics are particularly noticeable in Antonio's works, he deserves fame and honour as a most illustrious example from which modern sculptors have been able to learn how those statues should be made that are to secure the greatest praise and fame by reason of their difficulties. For after Donatello he did most towards adding a certain finish and refinement to the art of sculpture, seeking to give such depth and roundness to his figures that they appear wholly round and finished, a quality which had not been seen to such perfection in sculpture up to that time; and since he first introduced it, in the ages after his and in our own it appears a marvel.



TOMB OF LEONARDO BRUNI
*(After Bernardo Rossellino. Florence:
S. Croce
Brogi*

[View larger image](#)

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DESIDERIO DA SETTIGNANO

LIFE OF DESIDERIO DA SETTIGNANO

SCULPTOR

Very great is the obligation that is owed to Heaven and to Nature by those who bring their works to birth without effort and with a certain grace which others cannot give to their creations, either by study or by imitation. It is a truly celestial gift, which pours down on these works in such a

manner, that they ever have about them a loveliness and a charm which attract not only those who are versed in that calling, but also many others who do not belong to the profession. And this springs from facility in the production of the good, which presents no crudeness or harshness to the eye, such as is often shown by works wrought with labour and difficulty; and this grace and simplicity, which give universal pleasure and are recognized by all, are seen in all the works made by Desiderio.

Of this man, some say that he came from Settignano, a place two miles distant from Florence, while certain others hold him to be a Florentine; but this matters nothing, the distance between the one place and the other being so small. He was an imitator of the manner of Donato, although he had a natural gift of imparting very great grace and loveliness to his heads; and in the expressions of his women and children there is seen a delicate, sweet, and charming manner, produced as much by nature, which had inclined him to this, as by the zeal with which he had practised his intelligence in the art. In his youth he wrought the base of Donato's David, which is in the Duke's Palace in Florence, making on it in marble certain very beautiful harpies, and some vine-tendrils in bronze, very graceful and well conceived. On the façade of the house of the Gianfigliuzzi he made a large and very beautiful coat of arms, with a lion; besides other works in stone, which are in the same city. For the Chapel of the Brancacci in the Carmine he made an angel of wood; and he finished with marble the Chapel of the Sacrament in S. Lorenzo, carrying it to complete perfection with much diligence. There was in it a child of marble in the round, which was removed and is now set up on the altar at the festivals of the Nativity of Christ, as an admirable work; and in place of this Baccio da Montelupo made another, also of marble, which stands permanently over the Tabernacle of the Sacrament. In S. Maria Novella he made a marble tomb for the Blessed Villana, with certain graceful little angels, and portrayed her there from nature in such a manner that she appears not dead but asleep; and for the Nuns of the Murate he wrought a little Madonna with a lovely and graceful manner, in a tabernacle standing on a column; insomuch that both these works are very highly esteemed and very greatly prized. In S. Pietro Maggiore, also, he made the Tabernacle of the Sacrament in marble with his usual diligence; and although there are no figures in this work, yet it shows a beautiful manner and infinite grace, like his other works. And he portrayed from the life, likewise in marble, the head of Marietta degli Strozzi, who was so beautiful that the work turned out very excellent.

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In S. Croce he made a tomb for Messer Carlo Marsuppini of Arezzo, which not only amazed the craftsmen and the people of understanding who saw it at that time, but still fills with marvel all who see it at the present day; for on the sarcophagus he wrought some foliage, which, although somewhat stiff and dry, was held—since but few antiquities had been discovered up to that time—to be something very beautiful. Among other parts of the said work are seen certain wings, acting as ornaments for a shell at the foot of the sarcophagus, which seem to be made not of marble but of feathers—difficult things to imitate in marble, seeing that the chisel is not able to counterfeit hair and feathers. There is a large shell of marble, more real than if it were an actual shell. There are also some children and some angels, executed with a beautiful and lively manner; and consummate excellence and art are likewise seen in the figure of the dead, portrayed from nature on the sarcophagus, and in a Madonna in low-relief on a medallion, wrought after the manner of Donato with judgment and most admirable grace; as are many other works that he made in low-relief on marble, some of which are in the guardaroba of the Lord Duke Cosimo, and in particular a medallion with the head of Our Lord Jesus Christ and with that of John the Baptist as a boy. At the foot of the tomb of the said Messer Carlo he laid a large stone in memory of Messer Giorgio, a famous Doctor, and Secretary to the Signoria of Florence, with a very beautiful portrait in low-relief of Messer Giorgio, clad in his Doctor's robes according to the use of those times.

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TOMB OF CARLO MARSUPPINI
(After Desiderio da Settignano.

Florence: S. Croce)

Alinari

[View larger image](#)

If death had not snatched so prematurely from the world a spirit which worked so nobly, he would have done so much later on by means of experience and study, that he would have outstripped in art all those whom he had surpassed in grace. Death cut the thread of his life at the age of twenty-eight, which caused great grief to those who were looking forward to seeing so great an intellect attain to perfection in old age; and they were left in the deepest dismay at such a loss. He was followed by his relatives and by many friends to the Church of the Servi; and a vast number of epigrams and sonnets continued for a long time to be placed on his tomb, of which I have contented myself with including only the following:

COME VIDE NATURA
 DAR DESIDERIO AI FREDDI MARMI VITA,
 E POTER LA SCULTURA
 AGGUAGLIAR SUA BELLEZZA ALMA E INFINITA,
 SI FERMÒ SBIGOTTITA
 E DISSE; OMAI SARÀ MIA GLORIA OSCURA.
 E PIENA D'ALTO SDEGNO
 TRONCÒ LA VITA A COSÌ BELL' INGEGNO.
 MA IN VAN; CHE SE COSTUI
 DIÈ VITA ETERNA AI MARMI, E I MARMI A LUI.

The sculptures of Desiderio date about 1485. He left unfinished a figure of S. Mary Magdalene in Penitence, which was afterwards completed by Benedetto da Maiano, and is now in S. Trinita in Florence, on the right hand as one enters the church; and the beauty of this figure is beyond the power of words to express. In our book are certain very beautiful pen-drawings by Desiderio; and his portrait was obtained from some of his relatives in Settignano.

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LIFE OF MINO DA FIESOLE

[*MINO DI GIOVANNI*]

SCULPTOR

When our craftsmen seek to do no more in the works that they execute than to imitate the manner of their masters, or that of some other man of excellence whose method of working pleases them, either in the attitudes of the figures, or in the expressions of the heads, or in the folds of the draperies, and when they study these things only, they may with time and diligence come to make them exactly the same, but they cannot by these means alone attain to perfection in their art, seeing that it is clearly evident that one who ever walks behind rarely comes to the front, since the imitation of nature becomes fixed in the manner of a craftsman who has developed that manner out of long practice. For imitation is a definite art of copying what you represent exactly after the model of the most beautiful things of nature, which you must take pure and free from the manner of your master or that of others, who also reduce to a manner the things that they take from nature. And although it may appear that the imitations made by excellent craftsmen are natural objects, or absolutely similar, it is not possible with all the diligence in the world to make them so similar that they shall be like nature herself, or even, by selecting the best, to compose a body so perfect as to make art excel nature. Now, if this is so, it follows that only objects taken from nature can make pictures and sculptures perfect, and that if a man studies closely only the manner of other craftsmen, and not bodies and objects of nature, it is inevitable that he should make works inferior both to nature and to those of the man whose manner he adopts. Wherefore it has been seen in the case of many of our craftsmen, who have refused to study anything save the works of their masters, leaving nature on one side, that they have failed to gain any real knowledge of them or to surpass their masters, but have done very great injury to their own powers; whereas, if they had studied the manner of their masters and the objects of nature together, they would have produced much greater fruits in their works than they did. This is seen in the works of the sculptor Mino da Fiesole, who, having an intelligence capable of achieving whatsoever he wished, was so captivated by the manner of his master Desiderio da Settignano, by reason of the beautiful grace that he gave to the heads of women, children, and every other kind of figure, which appeared to Mino's judgment to be superior to nature, that he practised and studied it alone, abandoning natural objects and thinking them useless; wherefore he had more grace than solid grounding in his art.

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It was on the hill of Fiesole, a very ancient city near Florence, that there was born the sculptor Mino di Giovanni, who, having been apprenticed to the craft of stone-cutting under Desiderio da Settignano, a young man excellent in sculpture, showed so much inclination to his master's art, that, while he was labouring at the hewing of stones, he learnt to copy in clay the works that Desiderio had made in marble; and this he did so well that his master, seeing that he was likely to make progress in that art, brought him forward and set him to work on his own figures in marble, in which he sought with very great attention to reproduce the model before him. Nor did he continue long at this before he became passing skilful in that calling; at which Desiderio was greatly pleased, and still more pleased was Mino by the loving-kindness of his master, seeing that Desiderio was ever ready to teach him how to avoid the errors that can be committed in that art. Now, while he was on the way to becoming excellent in his profession, his ill luck would have it that Desiderio should pass to a better life, and this loss was a very great blow to Mino, who departed from Florence, almost in despair, and went to Rome. There, assisting masters who were then executing works in marble, such as tombs of Cardinals, which were placed in S. Pietro, although they have since been thrown to the ground in the building of the new church, he became known as a very experienced and capable master; and he was commissioned by Cardinal Guglielmo Destovilla, who was pleased with his manner, to make the marble altar where lies the body of S. Jerome, in the Church of S. Maria Maggiore, together with scenes in low-relief from his life, which he executed to perfection, with a portrait of that Cardinal.

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TOMB OF MARGRAVE HUGO
(After Mino da Fiesole. Florence:
Badia
Alinari
[View larger image](#)

Afterwards, when Pope Paul II, the Venetian, was erecting his Palace of S. Marco, Mino was employed thereon in making certain coats of arms. After the death of that Pope, Mino was commissioned to make his tomb, which he delivered finished and erected in S. Pietro in the space of two years. This tomb was then held to be the richest, both in ornaments and in figures, that had ever been made for any Pontiff; but it was thrown to the ground by Bramante in the demolition of S. Pietro, and remained there buried among the rubbish for some years, until 1547, when certain Venetians had it rebuilt in the old S. Pietro, against a wall near the Chapel of Pope Innocent. And although some believe that this tomb is by the hand of Mino del Reame, yet, notwithstanding that these two masters lived almost at the same time, it is without doubt by the hand of Mino da Fiesole. It is true, indeed, that the said Mino del Reame made some little figures on the base, which can be recognized; if in truth his name was Mino, and not, as some maintain, Dino.

But to return to our craftsman; having acquired a good name in Rome by the said tomb, by the sarcophagus that he made for the Minerva, on which he placed a marble statue of Francesco Tornabuoni from nature, which is held very beautiful, and by other works, it was not long before he returned to Fiesole with a good sum of money saved, and took a wife. And no long time after this, working for the Nuns of the Murate, he made a marble tabernacle in half-relief to contain the Sacrament, which was brought to perfection by him with all the diligence in his power. This he had not yet fixed into its place, when the Nuns of S. Ambrogio—who desired to have an ornament made, similar in design but richer in adornment, to contain that most holy relic, the Miracle of the Sacrament—hearing of the ability of Mino, commissioned him to execute that work, which he finished with so great diligence that those nuns, being satisfied with him, gave him all that he asked as the price of the work. And a little after this he undertook, at the instance of Messer Dietisalvi Neroni, to make a little panel with figures of Our Lady with the Child in her arms, and S. Laurence on one side and S. Leonard on the other, in half-relief, which was intended for the priests or chapter of S. Lorenzo; but it has remained in the Sacristy of the Badia of Florence. For those monks he made a marble medallion containing a Madonna in relief with the Child in her arms, which they placed over the principal door of entrance into the church; and since it gave great satisfaction to all, he received a commission for a tomb for the Magnificent Chevalier, Messer Bernardo de' Giugni, who, having been an honourable man of high repute, rightly received this memorial from his brothers. On this tomb, besides the sarcophagus and the portrait from nature of the dead man, Mino executed a figure of Justice, which resembles the manner of Desiderio closely, save only that its draperies are a little too full of detail in the carving. This work induced the Abbot and Monks of the Badia of Florence, in which place the said tomb was erected, to entrust Mino with the making of one for Count Ugo, son of the Marquis Uberto of Magdeburg, who bequeathed great wealth and many privileges to that abbey. And so,

desiring to honour him as much as they could, they caused Mino to make a tomb of Carrara marble, which was the most beautiful work that Mino ever made; for in it there are some boys, upholding the arms of that Count, who are standing in very spirited attitudes, with a childish grace; and besides the figure of the dead Count, with his likeness, which he made on the sarcophagus, in the middle of the wall above the bier there is a figure of Charity, with certain children, wrought with much diligence and very well in harmony with the whole. The same is seen in a Madonna with the Child in her arms, in a lunette, which Mino made as much like the manner of Desiderio as he could; and if he had assisted his methods of work by studying from the life, there is no doubt that he would have made very great progress in his art. This tomb, with all its expenses, cost 1,600 lire, and he finished it in 1481, thereby acquiring much honour, and obtaining a commission to make a tomb for Lionardo Salutati, Bishop of Fiesole, in the Vescovado of that place, in a chapel near the principal chapel, on the right hand as one goes up; on which tomb he portrayed him in his episcopal robes, as lifelike as possible. For the same Bishop he made a head of Christ in marble, life-size and very well wrought, which was left among other bequests to the Hospital of the Innocenti; and at the present day the Very Reverend Don Vincenzo Borghini, Prior of that hospital, holds it among his most precious examples of these arts, in which he takes a delight beyond my power to express in words.

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In the Pieve of Prato Mino made a pulpit entirely of marble, in which there are stories of Our Lady, executed with much diligence and put together so well, that the work appears all of one piece. This pulpit stands over one corner of the choir, almost in the middle of the church, above certain ornaments made under the direction of the same Mino. He also made portraits of Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici and his wife, marvellously lifelike and true to nature. These two heads stood for many years over two doors in Piero's apartment in the house of the Medici, each in a lunette; afterwards they were removed, with the portraits of many other illustrious men of that house, to the guardaroba of the Lord Duke Cosimo. Mino also made a Madonna in marble, which is now in the Audience Chamber of the Guild of the Masters in Wood and Stone; and to Perugia, for Messer Baglione Ribbi, he sent a marble panel, which was placed in the Chapel of the Sacrament in S. Pietro, the work being in the form of a tabernacle, with S. John on one side and S. Jerome on the other—good figures in half-relief. The Tabernacle of the Sacrament in the Duomo of Volterra is likewise by his hand, with the two angels standing one on either side of it, so well and so diligently executed that this work is deservedly praised by all craftsmen.

Finally, attempting one day to move certain stones, and not having the needful assistance at hand, Mino fatigued himself so greatly that he was seized by pleurisy and died of it; and he was honourably buried by his friends and relatives in the Canon's house at Fiesole in the year 1486. The portrait of Mino is in our book of drawings, but I do not know by whose hand; it was given to me together with some drawings made with blacklead by Mino himself, which have no little beauty.

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LORENZO COSTA

LIFE OF LORENZO COSTA

PAINTER OF FERRARA

Although men have ever practised the arts of design more in Tuscany than in any other province of Italy, and perhaps of Europe, yet it is none the less true that in every age there has arisen in the other provinces some genius who has proved himself rare and excellent in the same professions, as has been shown up to the present in many of the Lives, and will be demonstrated even more in those that are to follow. It is true, indeed, that where there are no studies, and where men are not disposed by custom to learn, they are not able to advance so rapidly or to become so excellent as they do in those places where craftsmen are for ever practising and studying in competition. But as soon as one or two make a beginning, it seems always to come to pass that many others—such is the force of excellence—strive to follow them, with honour both for themselves and for their countries.

Lorenzo Costa of Ferrara, being inclined by nature to the art of painting, and hearing that Fra Filippo, Benozzo, and others were celebrated and highly esteemed in Tuscany, betook himself to Florence in order to see their works; and on his arrival, finding that their manner pleased him greatly, he stayed there many months, striving to imitate them to the best of his power,

particularly in drawing from nature. In this he succeeded so happily, that, after returning to his own country, although his manner was a little dry and hard, he made many praiseworthy works there; as may be seen from the choir of the Church of S. Domenico in Ferrara, wrought entirely by his hand, from which it is evident that he used great diligence in his art and put much labour into his works. In the guardaroba of the Lord Duke of Ferrara there are seen portraits from life in many pictures by his hand, which are very well wrought and very lifelike. In the houses of noblemen, likewise, there are works by his hand which are held in great veneration.

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In the Church of S. Domenico at Ravenna, in the Chapel of S. Sebastiano, he painted the panel in oil and certain scenes in fresco, which were much extolled. Being next summoned to Bologna, he painted a panel in the Chapel of the Mariscotti in S. Petronio, representing S. Sebastian bound to the column and pierced with arrows, with many other figures, which was the best work in distemper that had been made up to that time in that city. By his hand, also, was the panel of S. Jerome in the Chapel of the Castelli, and likewise that of S. Vincent, wrought in like manner in distemper, which is in the Chapel of the Griffoni; the predella of this he caused to be painted by a pupil of his, who acquitted himself much better than the master did in the panel, as will be told in the proper place. In the same city, and in the same church, Lorenzo painted a panel for the Chapel of the Rossi, with Our Lady, S. James, S. George, S. Sebastian, and S. Jerome; which work is better and sweeter in manner than any other that he ever made.

Afterwards, having entered the service of Signor Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, Lorenzo painted many scenes for him, partly in gouache and partly in oil, in an apartment in the Palace of S. Sebastiano. In one is the Marchioness Isabella, portrayed from life, accompanied by many ladies who are singing various parts and making a sweet harmony. In another is the Goddess Latona, who is transforming certain peasants into frogs, according to the fable. In the third is the Marquis Francesco, led by Hercules along the path of virtue upon the summit of a mountain consecrated to Eternity. In another picture the same Marquis is seen triumphant on a pedestal, with a staff in his hand; and round him are many nobles and retainers with standards in their hands, all rejoicing and full of jubilation at his greatness, among whom there is an infinite number of portraits from the life. And in the great hall, where the triumphal processions by the hand of Mantegna now are, he painted two pictures, one at each end. In the first, which is in gouache, are many naked figures lighting fires and making sacrifices to Hercules; and in this is a portrait from life of the Marquis, with his three sons, Federigo, Ercole, and Ferrante, who afterwards became very great and very illustrious lords; and there are likewise some portraits of great ladies. In the other, which was painted in oil many years after the first, and which was one of the last works that Lorenzo executed, is the Marquis Federigo, grown to man's estate, with a staff in his hand, as General of Holy Church under Leo X; and round him are many lords portrayed by Costa from the life.

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THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN
(After the panel by Lorenzo Costa. Bologna: S. Giovanni in Monte)

In Bologna, in the Palace of Messer Giovanni Bentivogli, the same man painted certain rooms in competition with many other masters; but of these, since they were thrown to the ground in the destruction of that palace, no further mention will be made. But I will not forbear to say that, of the works that he executed for the Bentivogli, only one remained standing—namely, the chapel that he painted for Messer Giovanni in S. Jacopo, wherein he wrought two scenes of triumphal processions, which are held very beautiful, with many portraits. In the year 1497, also, for Jacopo Chedini, he painted a panel for a chapel in S. Giovanni in Monte, in which he wished to be buried after death; in this he made a Madonna, S. John the Evangelist, S. Augustine, and other saints. On a panel in S. Francesco he painted a Nativity, S. James, and S. Anthony of Padua. In S. Pietro he made a most beautiful beginning in a chapel for Domenico Garganelli, a gentleman of Bologna; but, whatever may have been the reason, after making some figures on the ceiling, he left it unfinished, nay, scarcely begun.

In Mantua, besides the works that he executed there for the Marquis, of which we have spoken above, he painted a Madonna on a panel for S. Silvestro; and on one side, S. Sylvester recommending the people of that city to her, and, on the other, S. Sebastian, S. Paul, S. Elizabeth, and S. Jerome. It is reported that the said panel was placed in that church after the death of Costa, who, having finished his life in Mantua, in which city his descendants have lived ever since, wished to have a burial-place in that church both for himself and for his successors.

The same man made many other pictures, of which nothing more will be said, for it is enough to have recorded the best. His portrait I received in Mantua from Fermo Ghisoni, an excellent painter, who assured me that it was by the hand of Costa, who was a passing good draughtsman, as may be seen from a pen-drawing on parchment in our book, wherein is the Judgment of Solomon, with a S. Jerome in chiaroscuro, which are both very well wrought.

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Disciples of Lorenzo were Ercole da Ferrara, his compatriot, whose Life will be written below, and Lodovico Malino, likewise of Ferrara, by whom there are many works in his native city and in other places; but the best that he made was a panel which is in the Church of S. Francesco in Bologna, in a chapel near the principal door, representing Jesus Christ at the age of twelve disputing with the Doctors in the Temple. The elder Dosso of Ferrara, of whose works mention will be made in the proper place, also learnt his first principles from Costa. And this is as much as I have been able to gather about the life and works of Lorenzo Costa of Ferrara.

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ERCOLE FERRARESE

LIFE OF ERCOLE FERRARESE

[*ERCOLE DA FERRARA*]

PAINTER

Although, long before Lorenzo Costa died, his disciple Ercole Ferrarese was in very good repute and was invited to work in many places, he would never abandon his master (a thing which is rarely wont to happen), and was content to work with him for meagre gains and praise, rather than labour by himself for greater profit and credit. For this gratitude, in view of its rarity among the men of to-day, all the more praise is due to Ercole, who, knowing himself to be indebted to Lorenzo, put aside all thought of his own interest in favour of his master's wishes, and was like a brother or a son to him up to the end of his life.

Ercole, then, who was a better draughtsman than Costa, painted, below the panel executed by Lorenzo in the Chapel of S. Vincenzo in S. Petronio, certain scenes in distemper with little figures, so well and with so beautiful and good a manner, that it is scarcely possible to see anything better, or to imagine the labour and diligence that Ercole put into the work: and thus the predella is a much better painting than the panel. Both were wrought at one and the same time during the life of Costa. After his master's death, Ercole was employed by Domenico Garganelli to finish that chapel in S. Petronio which Lorenzo, as has been said above, had begun, completing only a small part. Ercole, to whom the said Domenico was giving four ducats a month for this, with his own expenses and those of a boy, and all the colours that were to be used for the painting, set himself to work and finished the whole in such a manner, that he surpassed his

master by a long way both in drawing and colouring as well as in invention. In the first part, or rather, wall, is the Crucifixion of Christ, wrought with much judgment: for besides the Christ, who is seen there already dead, he represented very well the tumult of the Jews who have come to see the Messiah on the Cross, among whom there is a marvellous variety of heads, whereby it is seen that Ercole sought with very great pains to make them so different one from another that they should not resemble each other in any respect. There are also some figures bursting into tears of sorrow, which demonstrate clearly enough how much he sought to imitate reality. There is the swooning of the Madonna, which is most moving; but much more so are the Maries, who are facing her, for they are seen full of compassion and with an aspect so heavy with sorrow, that it is almost impossible to imagine it, at seeing that which mankind holds most dear dead before their eyes, and themselves in danger of losing the second. Among other notable things in this work is Longinus on horseback, riding a lean beast, which is foreshortened and in very strong relief; and in him we see the impiety that made him pierce the side of Christ, and the penitence and conversion that followed from his enlightenment. He gave strange attitudes, likewise, to the figures of certain soldiers who are playing for the raiment of Christ, with bizarre expressions of countenance and fanciful garments. Well wrought, too, with beautiful invention, are the Thieves on the Cross. And since Ercole took much delight in making foreshortenings, which, if well conceived, are very beautiful, he made in that work a soldier on a horse, which, rearing its fore-legs on high, stands out in such a manner that it appears to be in relief; and as the wind is bending a banner that the soldier holds in his hand, he is making a most beautiful effort to hold it up. He also made a S. John, flying away wrapped in a sheet. In like manner, the soldiers that are in this work are very well wrought, with more natural and appropriate movements than had been seen in any other figures up to that time; and all these attitudes and gestures, which could scarcely be better done, show that Ercole had a very great intelligence and took great pains with his art.

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On the wall opposite to this one the same man painted the Passing of Our Lady, who is surrounded by the Apostles in very beautiful attitudes, among whom are six figures portrayed so well from life, that those who knew them declare that these are most vivid likenesses. In the same work he also made his own portrait, and that of Domenico Garganelli, the owner of the chapel, who, when it was finished, moved by the love that he bore to Ercole and by the praises that he heard given to the work, bestowed upon him a thousand lire in Bolognese currency. It is said that Ercole spent twelve years in labouring at this work; seven in executing it in fresco, and five in retouching it on the dry. It is true, indeed, that during this time he painted some other works; and in particular, so far as is known, the predella of the high-altar of S. Giovanni in Monte, in which he wrought three scenes of the Passion of Christ.

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THE ISRAELITES GATHERING MANNA
(After the panel by Ercole Ferrarese. London: National Gallery, 1217)
Mansell
[View larger image](#)

Ercole was eccentric in character, particularly in his custom of refusing to let any man, whether painter or not, see him at work; wherefore he was greatly hated in Bologna by the painters of that city, who have ever borne an envious hatred to the strangers who have been summoned to work there; nay, they sometimes show the same among themselves out of rivalry with each other, although this may be said to be the particular vice of the professors of these our arts in every place. Certain Bolognese painters, then, having come to an agreement one day with a carpenter, shut themselves up by his help in the church, close to the chapel where Ercole was working; and when night came, breaking into it by force, they did not content themselves with seeing the work, which should have sufficed them, but carried off all his cartoons, sketches, and designs, and every other thing of value that was there. At this Ercole fell into such disdain that when the work was finished he departed from Bologna, without stopping another day there, taking with him Duca Tagliapietra, a sculptor of much renown, who carved the very beautiful foliage in marble which is in the parapet in front of the chapel wherein Ercole painted the said work, and who afterwards made all the stone windows of the Ducal Palace at Ferrara, which are most beautiful. Ercole, therefore, weary at length of living away from home, remained ever after in company with this man in Ferrara, and made many works in that city.

Ercole had an extraordinary love of wine, and his frequent drunkenness did much to shorten his life, which he had enjoyed without any accident up to the age of forty, when he was smitten one day by apoplexy, which made an end of him in a short time.

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He left a pupil, the painter Guido Bolognese, who, in 1491, as may be seen from the place where he put his name, under the portico of S. Pietro at Bologna, painted a Crucifixion in fresco, with the Maries, the Thieves, horses, and other passing good figures. And desiring very greatly to become esteemed in that city, as his master had been, he studied so zealously and subjected himself to so many hardships that he died at the age of thirty-five. If Guido had set himself to learn his art in his childhood, and not, as he did, at the age of eighteen, he would not only have equalled his master without difficulty, but would even have surpassed him by a great measure. In our book there are drawings by the hands of Ercole and Guido, very well wrought, and executed with grace and in a good manner.

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JACOPO, GIOVANNI, AND GENTILE BELLINI

LIVES OF JACOPO, GIOVANNI, AND GENTILE BELLINI

PAINTERS OF VENICE

Enterprises that are founded on excellence, although their beginnings often appear humble and mean, keep climbing higher step by step, nor do they ever halt or take rest until they have reached the supreme heights of glory: as could be clearly seen from the poor and humble beginning of the house of the Bellini, and from the rank to which it afterwards rose by means of painting.

Jacopo Bellini, a painter of Venice, having been a disciple of Gentile da Fabriano, worked in competition with that Domenico who taught the method of colouring in oil to Andrea dal Castagno; but, although he laboured greatly to become excellent in that art, he did not acquire fame therein until after the departure of Domenico from Venice. Then, finding himself in that city without any competitor to equal him, he kept growing in credit and fame, and became so excellent that he was the greatest and most renowned man in his profession. And to the end that the name which he had acquired in painting might not only be maintained in his house and for his descendants, but might grow greater, there were born to him two sons of good and beautiful intelligence, strongly inclined to the art: one was Giovanni, and the other Gentile, to whom he gave that name in tender memory of Gentile da Fabriano, who had been his master and like a loving father to him. Now, when the said two sons had grown to a certain age, Jacopo himself with all diligence taught them the rudiments of drawing; but no long time passed before both one and the other surpassed his father by a great measure, whereat he rejoiced greatly, ever encouraging them and showing them that he desired them to do as the Tuscans did, who gloried among themselves in making efforts to outstrip each other, according as one after another took up the art: even so should Giovanni vanquish himself, and Gentile should vanquish them both, and so on in succession.

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The first works that brought fame to Jacopo were the portraits of Giorgio Cornaro and of Caterina, Queen of Cyprus; a panel which he sent to Verona, containing the Passion of Christ, with many figures, among which he portrayed himself from the life; and a picture of the Story of the Cross, which is said to be in the Scuola of S. Giovanni Evangelista. All these works and many others were painted by Jacopo with the aid of his sons; and the last-named picture was painted on canvas, as it has been almost always the custom to do in that city, where they rarely paint, as is done elsewhere, on panels of the wood of that tree that is called by many oppio^[18] and by some gattice.^[19] This wood, which grows mostly beside rivers or other waters, is very soft, and admirable for painting on, for it holds very firmly when joined together with carpenters' glue. But in Venice they make no panels, and, if they do make a few, they use no other wood than that of the fir, of which that city has a great abundance by reason of the River Adige, which brings a very great quantity of it from Germany, not to mention that no small amount comes from Sclavonia. It is much the custom in Venice, then, to paint on canvas, either because it does not split and does not grow worm-eaten, or because it enables pictures to be made of any size that is desired, or because, as was said elsewhere, they can be sent easily and conveniently wherever they are wanted, with very little expense and labour. Be the reason what it may, Jacopo and Gentile, as was said above, made their first works on canvas.



JACOPO BELLINI: THE MADONNA AND CHILD
(Florence: Uffizi, 1562. Panel)

[View larger image](#)

To the last-named Story of the Cross Gentile afterwards added by himself seven other pictures, or rather, eight, in which he painted the miracle of the Cross of Christ, which the said Scuola preserves as a relic; which miracle was as follows. The said Cross was thrown, I know not by what chance, from the Ponte della Paglia into the Canal, and, by reason of the reverence that many bore to the piece of the Cross of Christ that it contained, they threw themselves into the water to recover it; but it was the will of God that no one should be worthy to succeed in grasping it save the Prior of that Scuola. Gentile, therefore, representing this story, drew in perspective, along the Grand Canal, many houses, the Ponte della Paglia, the Piazza di S. Marco, and a long procession of men and women walking behind the clergy; also many who have leapt into the water, others in the act of leaping, many half immersed, and others in other very beautiful actions and attitudes; and finally he painted the said Prior recovering the Cross. Truly great were the labour and diligence of Gentile in this work, considering the infinite number of people, the many portraits from life, the diminution of the figures in the distance, and particularly the portraits of almost all the men who then belonged to that Scuola, or rather, Confraternity. Last comes the picture of the replacing of the said Cross, wrought with many beautiful conceptions. All these scenes, painted on the aforesaid canvases, acquired a very great name for Gentile.



**GIOVANNI BELLINI: THE DOGE LEONARDO
LOREDANO**

(London: National Gallery, 189. Panel)

[View larger image](#)

Afterwards, Jacopo withdrew to work entirely by himself, as did his two sons, each of them devoting himself to his own studies in the art. Of Jacopo I will make no further mention, seeing that his works were nothing out of the ordinary in comparison with those of his sons, and because he died not long after his sons withdrew themselves from him; and I judge it much better to speak at some length only of Giovanni and Gentile. I will not, indeed, forbear to say that although these brothers retired to live each by himself, nevertheless they had so much respect for each other, and both had such reverence for their father, that each, extolling the other, ever held himself inferior in merit; and thus they sought modestly to surpass one another no less in goodness and courtesy than in the excellence of their art.

The first works of Giovanni were some portraits from the life, which gave much satisfaction, and particularly that of Doge Loredano—although some say that this was a portrait of Giovanni Mozenigo, brother of that Piero who was Doge many years before Loredano. Giovanni then painted a panel for the altar of S. Caterina da Siena in the Church of S. Giovanni, in which picture—a rather large one—he painted Our Lady seated, with the Child in her arms, and S. Dominic, S. Jerome, S. Catherine, S. Ursula, and two other Virgins; and at the feet of the Madonna he made three boys standing, who are singing from a book—a very beautiful group. Above this he made the inner part of a vault in a building, which is very beautiful. This work was one of the best that had been made in Venice up to that time. For the altar of S. Giobbe in the Church of that Saint, the same man painted a panel with good design and most beautiful colouring, in the middle of which he made the Madonna with the Child in her arms, seated on a throne slightly raised from the ground, with nude figures of S. Job and S. Sebastian, beside whom are S. Dominic, S. Francis, S. John, and S. Augustine; and below are three boys, sounding instruments with much grace. This picture was not only praised then, when it was seen as new, but it has likewise been extolled ever afterwards as a very beautiful work.

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Certain noblemen, moved by the great praises won by these works, began to suggest that it would be a fine thing, in view of the presence of such rare masters, to have the Hall of the Great Council adorned with stories, in which there should be depicted the glories and the magnificence of their marvellous city—her great deeds, her exploits in war, her enterprises, and other things of that kind, worthy to be perpetuated by painting in the memory of those who should come after—to the end that there might be added, to the profit and pleasure drawn from the reading of history, entertainment both for the eye and for the intellect, from seeing the images of so many illustrious lords wrought by the most skilful hands, and the glorious works of so many noblemen right worthy of eternal memory and fame. And so Giovanni and Gentile, who kept on making progress from day to day, received the commission for this work by order of those who governed the city, who commanded them to make a beginning as soon as possible. But it must be remarked that Antonio Viniziano had made a beginning long before with the painting of the same Hall, as was said in his Life, and had already finished a large scene, when he was forced by the envy of

certain malignant spirits to depart and to leave that most honourable enterprise without carrying it on further.



THE MIRACLE OF THE TRUE CROSS
(After the panel by Gentile Bellini. Venice: Accademia, 568)
Anderson
[View larger image](#)

Now Gentile, either because he had more experience and greater skill in painting on canvas than in fresco, or for some other reason, whatever it may have been, contrived without difficulty to obtain leave to execute that work not in fresco but on canvas. And thus, setting to work, in the first scene he made the Pope presenting a wax candle to the Doge, that he might bear it in the solemn processions which were to take place; in which picture Gentile painted the whole exterior of S. Marco, and made the said Pope standing in his pontifical robes, with many prelates behind him, and the Doge likewise standing, accompanied by many Senators. In another part he represented the Emperor Barbarossa; first, when he is receiving the Venetian envoys in friendly fashion, and then, when he is preparing for war, in great disdain; in which scene are very beautiful perspectives, with innumerable portraits from the life, executed with very good grace and amid a vast number of figures. In the following scene he painted the Pope exhorting the Doge and the Signori of Venice to equip thirty galleys at their common expense, to go out to battle against Frederick Barbarossa. This Pope is seated in his rochet on the pontifical chair, with the Doge beside him and many Senators at his feet. In this part, also, Gentile painted the Piazza and the façade of S. Marco, and the sea, but in another manner, with so great a multitude of men that it is truly a marvel. Then in another part the same Pope, standing in his pontifical robes, is giving his benediction to the Doge, who appears to be setting out for the fray, armed, and with many soldiers at his back; behind the Doge are seen innumerable noblemen in a long procession, and in the same part are the Palace and S. Marco, drawn in perspective. This is one of the best works that there are to be seen by the hand of Gentile, although there appears to be more invention in that other which represents a naval battle, because it contains an infinite number of galleys fighting together and an incredible multitude of men, and because, in short, he showed clearly therein that he had no less knowledge of naval warfare than of his own art of painting. And indeed, all that Gentile executed in this work—the crowd of galleys engaged in battle; the soldiers fighting; the boats duly diminishing in perspective; the finely ordered combat; the soldiers furiously striving, defending, and striking; the wounded dying in various manners; the cleaving of the water by the galleys; the confusion of the waves; and all the kinds of naval armament—all this vast diversity of subjects, I say, cannot but serve to prove the great spirit, art, invention, and judgment of Gentile, each detail being most excellently wrought in itself, as well as the composition of the whole. In another scene he made the Doge returning with the victory so much desired, and the Pope receiving him with open arms, and giving him a ring of gold wherewith to espouse the sea, as his successors have done and still do every year, as a sign of the true and perpetual dominion that they deservedly hold over it. In this part there is Otto, son of Frederick Barbarossa, portrayed from the life, and kneeling before the Pope; and as behind the Doge there are many armed soldiers, so behind the Pope there are many Cardinals and noblemen. In this scene only the poops of the galleys appear; and on the Admiral's galley is seated a Victory painted to look like gold, with a crown on her head and a sceptre in her hand.

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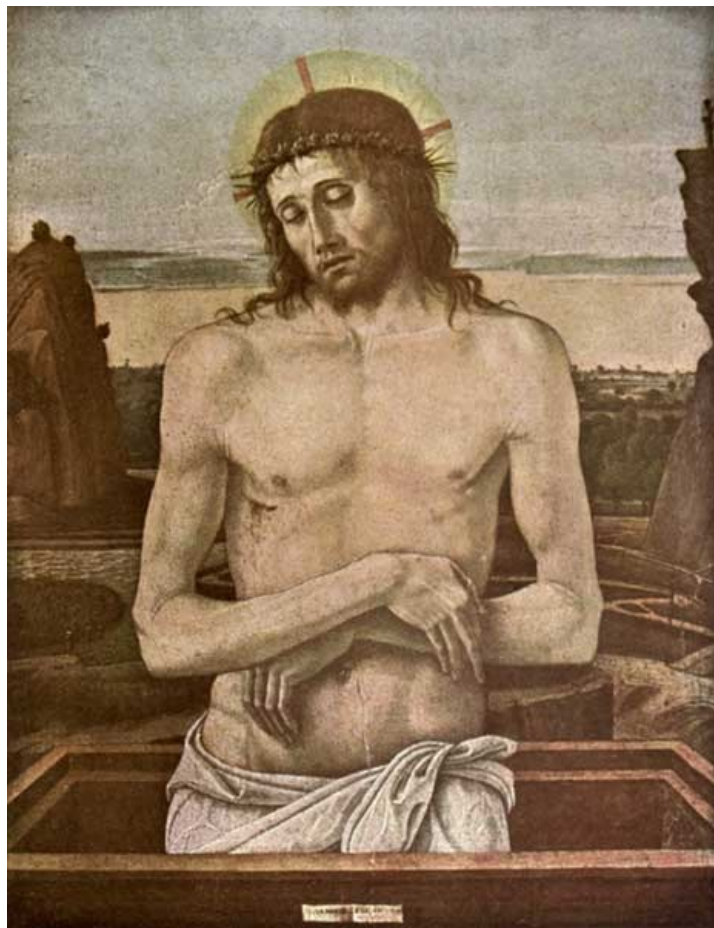
The scenes that were to occupy the other parts of the Hall were entrusted to Giovanni, the brother of Gentile; but since the order of the stories that he painted there is connected with those executed in great part, but not finished, by Vivarino, it is necessary to say something of the latter. That part of the Hall which was not done by Gentile was given partly to Giovanni and partly to

the said Vivarino, to the end that rivalry might induce each man to do his best. Vivarino, then, putting his hand to the part that belonged to him, painted, beside the last scene of Gentile, the aforesaid Otto offering to the Pope and to the Venetians to go to conclude peace between them and his father Frederick; and, having obtained this, he is dismissed on oath and goes his way. In this first part, besides other things, which are all worthy of consideration, Vivarino painted an open temple in beautiful perspective, with steps and many figures. Before the Pope, who is seated and surrounded by many Senators, is the said Otto on his knees, binding himself by an oath. Beside this scene, he painted the arrival of Otto before his father, who is receiving him gladly; with buildings wrought most beautifully in perspective, Barbarossa on his throne, and his son kneeling and taking his hand, accompanied by many Venetian noblemen, who are portrayed from the life so finely that it is clear that he imitated nature very well. Poor Vivarino would have completed the remainder of his part with great honour to himself, but, having died, as it pleased God, from exhaustion and through being of a weakly habit of body, he carried it no further—nay, even what he had done was not wholly finished, and it was necessary for Giovanni Bellini to retouch it in certain places.

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GIOVANNI BELLINI: LA FORTUNA
(Venice: Accademia, 1595. Panel)
[View larger image](#)



GIOVANNI BELLINI: THE DEAD CHRIST
(Milan: Poldi Pezzoli, 624. Panel)
[View larger image](#)

Meanwhile, Giovanni had also made a beginning with four scenes, which follow in due order those mentioned above. In the first he painted the said Pope in S. Marco—which church he portrayed exactly as it stood—presenting his foot to Frederick Barbarossa to kiss; but this first picture of Giovanni's, whatever may have been the reason, was rendered much more lifelike and incomparably better by the most excellent Tiziano. However, continuing his scenes, Giovanni made in the next the Pope saying Mass in S. Marco, and afterwards, between the said Emperor and the Doge, granting plenary and perpetual indulgence to all who should visit the said Church of S. Marco at certain times, particularly at that of the Ascension of Our Lord. There he depicted the interior of that church, with the said Pope in his pontifical robes at the head of the steps that issue from the choir, surrounded by many Cardinals and noblemen—a vast group, which makes this a crowded, rich, and beautiful scene. In the one below this the Pope is seen in his rochet, presenting a canopy to the Doge, after having given another to the Emperor and keeping two for himself. In the last that Giovanni painted are seen Pope Alexander, the Emperor, and the Doge arriving in Rome, without the gates of which the Pope is presented by the clergy and by the people of Rome with eight standards of various colours and eight silver trumpets, which he gives to the Doge, that he and his successors may have them for insignia. Here Giovanni painted Rome in somewhat distant perspective, a great number of horses, and an infinity of foot-soldiers, with many banners and other signs of rejoicing on the Castle of S. Angelo. And since these works of Giovanni, which are truly very beautiful, gave infinite satisfaction, arrangements were just being made to give him the commission to paint all the rest of that Hall, when, being now old, he died.

Up to the present we have spoken of nothing save the Hall, in order not to interrupt the sequence of the scenes; but now we must turn back a little and say that there are many other works to be seen by the hand of the same man. One is a panel which is now on the high-altar of S. Domenico in Pesaro. In the Church of S. Zaccheria in Venice, in the Chapel of S. Girolamo, there is a panel of Our Lady and many saints, executed with great diligence, with a building painted with much judgment; and in the same city, in the Sacristy of the Friars Minor, called the "Cà Grande," there is another by the same man's hand, wrought with beautiful design and a good manner. There is likewise one in S. Michele di Murano, a monastery of Monks of Camaldoli; and in the old Church of S. Francesco della Vigna, a seat of the Frati del Zoccolo, there was a picture of a Dead Christ, so beautiful that it was highly extolled before Louis XI, King of France, whereupon he demanded it from its owners with great insistence, so that they were forced, although very unwillingly, to gratify his wish. In its place there was put another with the name of the same Giovanni, but not so beautiful or so well executed as the first; and some believe that this substitute was wrought for the most part by Girolamo Moretto, a pupil of Giovanni. The Confraternity of S. Girolamo also possesses a work with little figures by the same Bellini, which is much extolled. And in the house of Messer Giorgio Cornaro there is a picture, likewise very beautiful, containing Christ, Cleophas, and Luke.

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In the aforesaid Hall he also painted, though not at the same time, a scene of the Venetians

summoning forth from the Monastery of the Carità a Pope—I know not which—who, having fled to Venice, had secretly served for a long time as cook to the monks of that monastery; in which scene there are many portraits from the life, and other very beautiful figures.



MADONNA AND SAINTS
(After the panel by Giovanni Bellini. Venice: S. Francesco della Vigna)
Anderson
[View larger image](#)

No long time after, certain portraits were taken to Turkey by an ambassador as presents for the Grand Turk, which caused such astonishment and marvel to that Emperor, that, although pictures are forbidden among that people by the Mahometan law, nevertheless he accepted them with great good-will, praising the art and the craftsman without ceasing; and what is more, he demanded that the master of the work should be sent to him. Whereupon the Senate, considering that Giovanni had reached an age when he could ill endure hardships, not to mention that they did not wish to deprive their own city of so great a man, particularly because he was then engaged on the aforesaid Hall of the Great Council, determined to send his brother Gentile, believing that he would do as well as Giovanni. Therefore, having caused Gentile to make his preparations, they brought him safely in their own galleys to Constantinople, where, after being presented by the Commissioner of the Signoria to Mahomet, he was received very willingly and treated with much favour as something new, above all after he had given that Prince a most lovely picture, which he greatly admired, being wellnigh unable to believe that a mortal man had within himself so much divinity, so to speak, as to be able to represent the objects of nature so vividly. Gentile had been there no long time when he portrayed the Emperor Mahomet from the life so well, that it was held a miracle. That Emperor, after having seen many specimens of his art, asked Gentile whether he had the courage to paint his own portrait; and Gentile, having answered "Yes," did not allow many days to pass before he had made his own portrait with a mirror, with such resemblance that it appeared alive. This he brought to the Sultan, who marvelled so greatly thereat, that he could not but think that he had some divine spirit within him; and if it had not been that the exercise of this art, as has been said, is forbidden by law among the Turks, that Emperor would never have allowed Gentile to go. But either in fear of murmurings, or for some other reason, one day he summoned him to his presence, and after first causing him to be thanked for the courtesy that he had shown, and then praising him in marvellous fashion as a man of the greatest excellence, he bade him demand whatever favour he wished, for it would be granted to him without fail. Gentile, like the modest and upright man that he was, asked for nothing save a letter of recommendation to the most Serene Senate and the most Illustrious Signoria of Venice, his native city. This was written in the warmest possible terms, and afterwards he was dismissed with honourable gifts and with the dignity of Chevalier. Among other things given to him at parting by that Sovereign, in addition to many privileges, there was placed round his neck a chain wrought in the Turkish manner, equal in weight to 250 gold crowns, which is still in the hands of his heirs in Venice.

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Departing from Constantinople, Gentile returned after a most prosperous voyage to Venice, where he was received with gladness by his brother Giovanni and by almost the whole city, all men rejoicing at the honours paid to his talent by Mahomet. Afterwards, on going to make his reverence to the Doge and the Signoria, he was received very warmly, and commended for having given great satisfaction to that Emperor according to their desire. And to the end that he might see in what great account they held the letters in which that Prince had recommended him, they decreed him a provision of 200 crowns a year, which was paid to him for the rest of his life. Gentile made but few works after his return; finally, having almost reached the age of eighty,

and having executed the aforesaid works and many others, he passed to the other life, and was given honourable burial by his brother Giovanni in S. Giovanni e Paolo, in the year 1501.

Giovanni, thus bereft of Gentile, whom he had ever loved most tenderly, went on doing a little work, although he was old, to pass the time. And having devoted himself to making portraits from the life, he introduced into Venice the fashion that everyone of a certain rank should have his portrait painted either by him or by some other master; wherefore in all the houses of Venice there are many portraits, and in many gentlemen's houses one may see their fathers and grandfathers, up to the fourth generation, and in some of the more noble they go still farther back—a fashion which has ever been truly worthy of the greatest praise, and existed even among the ancients. Who does not feel infinite pleasure and contentment, to say nothing of the honour and adornment that they confer, at seeing the images of his ancestors, particularly if they have been famous and illustrious for their part in governing their republics, for noble deeds performed in peace or in war, or for learning or any other notable and distinguished talent? And to what other end, as has been said in another place, did the ancients set up images of their great men in public places, with honourable inscriptions, than to kindle in the minds of their successors a love of excellence and of glory?

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GENTILE BELLINI: S. DOMINIC
(London: National Gallery, 1440. Canvas)
[View larger image](#)

For Messer Pietro Bembo, then, before he went to live with Pope Leo X, Giovanni made a portrait of the lady that he loved, so lifelike that, even as Simone Sanese had been celebrated in the past by the Florentine Petrarca, so was Giovanni deservedly celebrated in his verses by this Venetian, as in the following sonnet:

O imagine mia celeste e pura,

where, at the beginning of the second quatrain, he says,

Credo che'l mio Bellin con la figura,

with what follows. And what greater reward can our craftsmen desire for their labours than that of being celebrated by the pens of illustrious poets, as that most excellent Tiziano has been by the very learned Messer Giovanni della Casa, in that sonnet which begins—

Ben veggio, Tiziano, in forme nuove,

and in that other—

Son queste, Amor, le vaghe treccie bionde.

Was not the same Bellini numbered among the best painters of his age by the most famous Ariosto, at the beginning of the thirty-third canto of the "*Orlando Furioso*"?

But to return to the works of Giovanni—that is, to his principal works, for it would take too long to try to make mention of all the pictures and portraits that are in the houses of gentlemen in Venice and in other parts of that country. In Rimini, for Signor Sigismondo Malatesti, he made a large picture containing a Pietà, supported by two little boys, which is now in S. Francesco in that city. And among other portraits he made one of Bartolommeo da Liviano, Captain of the Venetians.

Giovanni had many disciples, for he was ever most willing to teach anyone. Among them, now sixty years ago, was Jacopo da Montagna, who imitated his manner closely, in so far as is shown by his works, which are to be seen in Padua and in Venice. But the man who imitated him most faithfully and did him the greatest honour was Rondinello da Ravenna, of whom Giovanni availed himself much in all his works. This master painted a panel in S. Domenico at Ravenna, and another in the Duomo, which is held a very beautiful example of that manner. But the work that surpassed all his others was that which he made in the Church of S. Giovanni Battista, a seat of the Carmelite Friars, in the same city; in which picture, besides Our Lady, he made a very beautiful head in a figure of S. Alberto, a friar of that Order, and the whole figure is much extolled. A pupil of Giovanni's, also, although he gained but little thereby, was Benedetto Coda of Ferrara, who dwelt in Rimini, where he made many pictures, leaving behind him a son named Bartolommeo, who did the same. It is said that Giorgione Castelfranco also pursued his first studies of art under Giovanni, and likewise many others, both from the territory of Treviso and from Lombardy, of whom there is no need to make record.

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Finally, having lived ninety years, Giovanni passed from this life, overcome by old age, leaving an eternal memorial of his name in the works that he had made both in his native city of Venice and abroad; and he was honourably buried in the same church and in the same tomb in which he had laid his brother Gentile to rest. Nor were there wanting in Venice men who sought to honour him when dead with sonnets and epigrams, even as he, when alive, had honoured both himself and his country. About the same time that these Bellini were alive, or a little before, many pictures were painted in Venice by Giacomo Marzone, who, among other things, painted one in the Chapel of the Assumption in S. Lena—namely, the Virgin with a palm, S. Benedict, S. Helen, and S. John; but in the old manner, with the figures on tip-toe, as was the custom of those painters who lived in the time of Bartolommeo da Bergamo.

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COSIMO ROSSELLI

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LIFE OF COSIMO ROSSELLI

PAINTER OF FLORENCE

Many men take an unholy delight in covering others with ridicule and scorn—a delight which generally turns to their own confusion, as it came to pass in the case of Cosimo Rosselli, who threw back on their own heads the ridicule of those who sought to vilify his labours. This Cosimo, although he was not one of the rarest or most excellent painters of his time, nevertheless made works that were passing good. In his youth he painted a panel in the Church of S. Ambrogio in Florence, which is on the right hand as one enters the church; and three figures over an arch for the Nuns of S. Jacopo delle Murate. In the Church of the Servi, also in Florence, he painted the panel of the Chapel of S. Barbara; and in the first court, before one enters into the church, he wrought in fresco the story of the Blessed Filippo taking the Habit of Our Lady. For the Monks of Cestello he painted the panel of their high-altar, with another in a chapel in the same church; and likewise that one which is in a little church above the Bernardino, beside the entrance to Cestello. He painted a standard for the children of the Company of the said Bernardino, and likewise that of the Company of S. Giorgio, on which there is an Annunciation. For the aforesaid Nuns of S. Ambrogio he painted the Chapel of the Miracle of the Sacrament, which is a passing good work, and is held the best of his in Florence; in this he counterfeited a procession on the piazza of that church, with the Bishop bearing the Tabernacle of the said Miracle, accompanied by the clergy and by an infinity of citizens and women in costumes of those times. Here, among many others, is a portrait from life of Pico della Mirandola, so excellently wrought that it appears not a portrait but a living man. In the Church of S. Martino in Lucca, by the entrance into the church through the lesser door of the principal façade, on the right hand, he painted a scene of Nicodemus making the statue of the Holy Cross, and then that statue being brought by sea in a boat and by land to Lucca. In this work are many portraits, and in particular that of Paolo Guinigi, which he copied from one done in clay by Jacopo della Fonte when the latter made the

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tomb of Paolo's wife. In S. Marco at Florence, in the Chapel of the Cloth Weavers, he painted a panel with the Holy Cross in the middle, and, at the sides, S. Mark, S. John the Evangelist, S. Antonino, Archbishop of Florence, and other figures.

Being afterwards summoned, with the other painters, to execute the work that Pope Sixtus IV had undertaken in the Chapel of the Palace, he laboured there in company with Sandro Botticelli, Domenico Ghirlandajo, the Abbot of S. Clemente, Luca da Cortona, and Pietro Perugino, and painted three scenes with his own hand, wherein he depicted the Submersion of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, the Preaching of Christ to the people on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, and the Last Supper of the Apostles with the Saviour. In this last scene he made an octagonal table drawn in perspective, with the ceiling above it likewise octagonal, the eight angles of which he foreshortened so well as to show that he had as good a knowledge of this art as any of the others. It is said that the Pope had offered a prize, which was to be given to the man who, in the judgment of the Pontiff himself, should turn out to have done the best work in these pictures. The scenes finished, therefore, His Holiness went to see them; and each of the painters had done his utmost to merit the said prize and honour. Cosimo, feeling himself weak in invention and draughtsmanship, had sought to conceal his shortcomings by covering his work with the finest ultramarine blues and other lively colours, and had illuminated his scenes with a plentiful amount of gold, so that there was no tree, or plant, or drapery, or cloud, that was not thus illuminated; for he was convinced that the Pope, like a man who knew little of that art, must therefore give him the prize of victory. When the day arrived on which the works of all were to be unveiled, that of Cosimo was seen with the rest, and was scorned and ridiculed with much laughter and jeering by all the other craftsmen, who all mocked him instead of having compassion on him. But the scorners turned out to be the scorned, for, as Cosimo had foreseen, those colours at the first glance so dazzled the eyes of the Pope, who had little knowledge of such things, although he took no little delight in them, that he judged the work of Cosimo to be much better than that of the others. And so, causing the prize to be given to him, he bade all the others cover their pictures with the best blues that could be found, and to pick them out with gold, to the end that they might be similar to those of Cosimo in colouring and in richness. Whereupon the poor painters, in despair at having to satisfy the small intelligence of the Holy Father, set themselves to spoil all the good work that they had done; and Cosimo laughed at the men who had just been laughing at his methods.

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Afterwards, returning to Florence with some money, he set himself to work as usual, living much at his ease, and having as his companion that Piero, his disciple, who was ever called Piero di Cosimo, and who assisted him in his labours in the Sistine Chapel at Rome, and painted there, besides other things, a landscape in the picture of the Preaching of Christ, which landscape is held to be the best thing there. Andrea di Cosimo also worked with him, occupying himself much with grotesques. Finally, having reached the age of sixty-eight, Cosimo died in the year 1484, wasted away by a long infirmity; and he was buried in S. Croce by the Company of Bernardino.

Cosimo took so much delight in alchemy that he wasted therein all that he possessed, as all do who meddle with it, insomuch that it swallowed up all his means and finally reduced him from easy circumstances to the greatest poverty. He was a very good draughtsman, as may be seen in our book, not only from the drawing of the aforesaid story of the Preaching which he painted in the Sistine Chapel, but also from many others made with the style and in chiaroscuro. And in the said book we have his portrait by the hand of Agnolo di Donnino, a painter who was much his friend. This Agnolo showed great diligence in his works, as may be seen, not to mention his drawings, in the loggia of the Hospital of Bonifazio, where, upon the corbel of a vault, there is a Trinity in fresco by his hand; and beside the door of the said hospital, where the foundlings now live, there are certain beggars painted by the same man, with the Director receiving them, all very well wrought, and likewise certain women. This man spent his life labouring and wasting all his time over drawings, without putting them into execution; and at length he died as poor as he could well be. But to return to Cosimo; he left only one son, who was a builder and a passing good architect.

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CHRIST HEALING THE LEPER
(Detail from the fresco by Cosimo Rosselli. Rome: Sistine Chapel)
Anderson
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CECCA

CECCA

ENGINEER OF FLORENCE

If necessity had not forced men to exercise their ingenuity for their own advantage and convenience, architecture would not have become so excellent and so marvellous in the minds and in the works of those who have practised it in order to acquire profit and fame, gaining that great honour which is paid to them every day by all who have knowledge of the good. It was necessity that first gave rise to buildings; necessity that created ornaments for them; necessity that led to the various Orders, the statues, the gardens, the baths, and all those other sumptuous adjuncts which all desire but few possess; and it was necessity that excited rivalry and competition in the minds of men with regard not only to buildings, but also to their accessories. For this reason craftsmen have been forced to display industry in inventing appliances for traction, and in making engines of war, waterworks, and all those devices and contrivances which, under the name of mechanical and architectural inventions, confer beauty and convenience on the world, discomfiting their enemies and assisting their friends. And whenever a man has been able to make such things better than his fellows, he has not only raised himself beyond all the anxieties of want, but has also been consummately extolled and prized by all other men.

This was the case in the time of our fathers with the Florentine Cecca, into whose hands there came many highly honourable works in his day; and in these he acquitted himself so well, toiling in the service of his country with economy and with great satisfaction to his fellow-citizens, that his ingenious and industrious labours have made him famous and illustrious among the number of distinguished and renowned craftsmen. It is said that in his youth Cecca was a very good carpenter, and that he had concentrated all his powers on seeking to solve the difficulties connected with engines, and how to make machines for assaulting walls in war—scaling-ladders for climbing into cities, battering-rams for breaching fortifications, defences for protecting soldiers in the attack, and everything that could injure his enemies and assist his friends—wherefore, being a person of the greatest utility to his country, he well deserved the permanent provision that the Signoria of Florence gave him. For this reason, when there was no war going

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on, he would go through the whole territory inspecting the fortresses and the walls of cities and townships, and, if any were weak, he would provide them with designs for ramparts and everything else that was wanting.

It is said that the Clouds which were borne in procession throughout Florence on the festival of S. John—things truly most ingenious and beautiful—were invented by Cecca, who was much employed in such matters at that time, when the city was greatly given to holding festivals. In truth, although such festivals and representations have now fallen almost entirely out of use, they were very beautiful spectacles, and they were celebrated not only by the Companies, or rather, Confraternities, but also in the private houses of gentlemen, who were wont to form certain associations and societies, and to meet together at certain times to make merry; and among them there were ever many courtly craftsmen, who, besides being fanciful and amusing, served to make the preparations for such festivals. Among others, four most solemn public spectacles took place almost every year, one for each quarter of the city, with the exception of that of S. Giovanni, for the festival of which a most solemn procession was held, as will be told. The quarter of S. Maria Novella kept the feast of S. Ignazio; S. Croce, that of S. Bartholomew, called S. Baccio; S. Spirito, that of the Holy Spirit; and the Carmine, those of the Ascension of Our Lord and of the Assumption of Our Lady. This festival of the Ascension—for of the others of importance an account has been or will be given—was very beautiful, seeing that Christ was uplifted on a cloud covered with angels from a Mount very well made of wood, and was borne upwards to a Heaven, leaving the Apostles on the Mount; and the whole was so well contrived that it was a marvel, above all because the said Heaven was somewhat larger than that of S. Felice in Piazza, although the machinery was almost the same. And since the said Church of the Carmine, where this representation used to take place, is no little broader and higher than that of S. Felice, in addition to the part that supported Christ another Heaven was sometimes erected, according as it was thought advisable, over the chief tribune, wherein were certain great wheels made in the shape of reels, which, from the centres to the edges, moved in most beautiful order ten circles standing for the ten Heavens, which were all full of little lights representing the stars, contained in little copper lamps hanging on pivots, so that when the wheels revolved they remained upright, in the manner of certain lanterns that are now universally used by all. From this Heaven, which was truly a very beautiful thing, there issued two stout ropes fastened to the staging or tramezzo^[20] which is in the said church, and over which the representation took place. To these ropes were attached, by each end of a so-called brace-fastening, two little bronze pulleys which supported an iron upright fixed into a level platform, on which stood two angels fastened by their girdles. These angels were kept upright by a counterpoise of lead which they had under their feet, and by another that was under the platform on which they stood; and this also served to make them balanced one with another. The whole was covered with a quantity of cotton-wool, very well arranged in the form of a cloud, which was full of cherubim and seraphim, and similar kinds of angels, varied in colour and very well contrived. These angels, when a little rope was unwound from the Heaven above, came down the two larger ropes on to the said tramezzo, where the representation took place, and announced to Christ that He was to ascend into Heaven, and performed their other functions. And since the iron to which they were bound by the girdle was fixed to the platform on which they stood, in such a way that they could turn round and round, they could make obeisance and turn about both when they had come forth and when they were returning, according as was necessary; wherefore in reascending they turned towards the Heaven, and were then drawn up again as they had come down.

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These machines and inventions are said to have been Cecca's, for, although Filippo Brunelleschi had made similar things long before, many additions were made to them with great judgment by Cecca; and it was from these that the thought came to the same man to make those Clouds which were borne in procession through the city every year on S. John's Eve, and the other beautiful things that were made. And this was his charge, because, as it has been said, he was a servant of the public.

Now with this occasion it will not be out of place to describe some of the features of the said festival and procession, to the end that some memory of them may descend to posterity, seeing that they have now for the most part fallen into disuse. First, then, the Piazza di S. Giovanni was all covered over with blue cloth, on which were sewn many large lilies of yellow cloth; and in the middle, on certain circles also of cloth, and ten braccia in diameter, were the arms of the People and Commune of Florence, with those of the Captain of the Guelph party and others; and all around, from the borders of the said canopy, which covered the whole piazza, vast as it is, there hung great banners also of cloth, painted with various devices, with the arms of magisterial bodies and guilds, and with many lions, which form one of the emblems of the city. This canopy, or rather, awning, made thus, was about twenty braccia off the ground, and was supported by very strong ropes fastened to a number of irons, which are still to be seen round the Church of S. Giovanni, on the façade of S. Maria del Fiore, and on the houses that surround the said piazza on every side. Between one rope and another ran cords that likewise supported the awning, which was so well strengthened throughout, particularly at the edges, with ropes, cords, linings, double widths of cloth, and hems of sacking, that it is impossible to imagine anything better. What is more, everything was arranged so well and with such great diligence, that although the awning was often swelled out and shaken by the wind, which is always very powerful in that place, as everyone knows, yet it was never disturbed or damaged in any way whatever. This awning was made of five pieces, to the end that it might be easier to handle, but, when set into place, they were all joined and fastened and sewn together in such a manner that it appeared like one whole. Three pieces covered the piazza and the space that is between S. Giovanni and S. Maria del

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Fiore; and in the middle piece, in a straight line between the principal doors, were the aforesaid circles containing the arms of the Commune. And the remaining two pieces covered the sides—one towards the Misericordia, and the other towards the Canon's house and the Office of Works of S. Giovanni.

The Clouds, which were made of various kinds and with diverse inventions by the Companies, were generally fashioned in the following manner. A square framework was made of planks, about two braccia in height, with four stout legs at the corners, contrived after the manner of the trestles of a table, and fastened together with cross-pieces. On this framework two panels were laid crosswise, each one braccio wide, with a hole in the middle half a braccio in diameter, in which was fixed a high pole, whereon there was placed a mandorla all covered with cotton-wool, cherubim, lights, and other ornaments, and within this, on a horizontal bar of iron, there sat or stood, according as might be desired, a person representing that Saint whom the particular Company principally honoured as their peculiar patron and protector—to be exact, a Christ, or a Madonna, or a S. John, or some other—and the draperies of this figure covered the iron bar in such a manner that it could not be seen. Round the same pole, lower down, below the mandorla, there radiated four or five iron bars in the manner of the branches of a tree, and at the end of each, attached likewise with irons, stood a little boy dressed like an angel. These boys could move round and round at pleasure on the iron brackets on which their feet rested, for the brackets hung on hinges. And with similar branches there were sometimes made two or three tiers of angels or of saints, according to the nature of the subjects to be represented. The whole of this structure, with the pole and the iron bars (which sometimes represented a lily, sometimes a tree, and often a cloud or some other similar thing), was covered with cotton-wool, and, as has been said, with cherubim, seraphim, golden stars, and other suchlike ornaments. Within were porters or peasants, who carried it on their shoulders, placing themselves round the wooden base that we have called the framework, in which, below the places where the weight rested on their shoulders, were fixed cushions of leather stuffed with down, or cotton-wool, or some other soft and yielding material. All the machinery, steps, and other things were covered, as has been said above, with cotton-wool, which made a beautiful effect; and all these contrivances were called Clouds. Behind them came troops of men on horseback and foot-soldiers of various sorts, according to the nature of the story to be represented, even as in our own day they go behind the cars or other things that are used in place of the said Clouds. Of the form of the latter I have some designs in my book of drawings, very well done by the hand of Cecca, which are truly ingenious and full of beautiful conceptions.

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It was from the plans of the same man that those saints were made that went or were carried in processions, either dead or tortured in various ways, for some appeared to be transfixed by a lance or a sword, others had a dagger in the throat, and others had other suchlike weapons in their bodies. With regard to this, it is very well known to-day that it is done with a sword, lance, or dagger broken in half, the pieces of which are held firmly opposite to one another on either side by iron rings, after taking away the proportionate amount that has to appear to be fixed in the person of the sufferer; wherefore I will say no more about them, save that they seem for the most part to have been invented by Cecca.

The giants, likewise, that went about in the said festival, were made in the following manner. Certain men who were very skilful at walking on stilts, or, as they are called in other parts, on wooden legs, had some made five or six braccia high, and, having dressed and decked them with great masks and other ornaments in the way of draperies, and imitations of armour, so that they seemed to have the members and heads of giants, they mounted them and walked dexterously along, appearing truly to be giants. In front of them, however, they had a man who carried a pike, on which the giant leant with one hand, but in such a fashion that the pike appeared to be his own weapon, whether mace, lance, or a great bell-clapper, such as Morgante is said by the poets of romance to have been wont to carry. And even as there were giants, so there were also giantesses, which produced a truly beautiful and marvellous effect.

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Different from these, again, were the little phantoms, for these walked on similar stilts five or six braccia high, without anything save their own proper form, in such a manner that they appeared to be true spirits. They likewise had a man in front of them with a pike to assist them; but it is stated that some actually walked very well at so great a height without leaning on anything whatsoever, and I am sure that he who knows what Florentine brains are will in no way marvel at this. For, not to mention that native of Montughi (near Florence) who has surpassed all the masters that ever lived at climbing and dancing on the rope, whoever knew a man called Ravidino, who died less than ten years ago, remembers that climbing to any height on a rope or cord, leaping from the walls of Florence to the earth, and walking on stilts much higher than those described above, were as easy to him as it is for an ordinary man to walk on the level. Wherefore it is no marvel if the men of those times, who practised suchlike exercises for money or for other reasons, did what has been related above, and even greater things.

I will not speak of certain waxen candles which used to be painted with various fanciful devices, but so rudely that they have given their name to vulgar painters, insomuch that bad pictures are called "candle puppets"; for it is not worth the trouble. I will only say that at the time of Cecca they fell for the most part into disuse, and that in their place were made the cars that are still used to-day, in the form of triumphal chariots. The first of these was the car^[21] of the Mint, which was brought to that perfection which is still seen every year when it is sent out for the said festival by the Masters and Lords of the Mint, with a S. John on the highest part and with many other angels and saints around and below him, all represented by living persons. Not long ago it

was determined that one should be made for every borough that gave an offering of wax, and ten were made, in order to do magnificent honour to that festival; but the plan was carried no further, by reason of events that supervened no long time after. That first car of the Mint, then, was made under the direction of Cecca by Domenico, Marco, and Giuliano del Tasso, who were among the best master-carpenters, both in squared-work and in carving, who were then working in Florence; and in this car, among other things, no small praise is due to the wheels below it, which are pivoted, in order that the structure may be able to turn sharp corners, and may be managed in such a manner as to shake it as little as possible, particularly for the sake of those who stand fastened upon it.

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The same man made a structure for the cleaning and restoration of the mosaics in the tribune of S. Giovanni, which could be turned, raised, lowered, and advanced at pleasure, and that with such ease that two men could handle it; which invention gave Cecca very great repute.

When the Florentine army was besieging Piancaldoli, Cecca ingeniously contrived to enable the soldiers to enter it by means of mines, without striking a blow. Afterwards, continuing to follow the same army to certain other strongholds, his evil fortune would have it that he should be killed while attempting to measure certain heights at a difficult point; for when he had put his head out beyond the wall in order to let a plumb-line down, a priest who was with the enemy (who feared the genius of Cecca more than the might of the whole camp) discharged a catapult at him and fixed a great dart in his head, insomuch that the poor fellow died on the spot. The fate and the loss of Cecca caused great grief to the whole army and to his fellow-citizens; but since there was no remedy, they sent him back in a coffin to Florence, where his sisters gave him honourable burial in S. Piero Scheraggio; and below his portrait in marble there was placed the following epitaph:

FABRUM MAGISTER CICCA, NATUS OPPIDIS VEL OBSIDENDIS VEL TUENDIS,
HIC JACET. VIXIT ANN. XXXXI, MENS. IV, DIES XIV. OBIIT PRO PATRIA
TELO ICTUS. PIÆ SORORES MONUMENTUM FECERUNT MCCCCXCIX.

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DON BARTOLOMMEO DELLA GATTA

DON BARTOLOMMEO DELLA GATTA, ABBOT OF S. CLEMENTE

ILLUMINATOR AND PAINTER

Rarely does it happen that a man of good character and exemplary life fails to be provided by Heaven with the best of friends and with honourable dwellings, or to be held in veneration when alive by reason of the goodness of his ways, and very greatly regretted when dead by all who knew him, as was Don Bartolommeo della Gatta, Abbot of S. Clemente in Arezzo, who was excellent in diverse pursuits and most praiseworthy in all his actions. This man, who was a monk of the Angeli in Florence, a seat of the Order of Camaldoli, was in his youth—perchance for the reasons mentioned above in the Life of Don Lorenzo—a very rare illuminator, and a very able master of design. Of this we have proof in the books that he illuminated for the Monks of SS. Fiore e Lucilla in the Abbey of Arezzo, particularly a missal that was presented to Pope Sixtus, in which, on the first page of the Secret Prayers, there was a very beautiful Passion of Christ. Those are likewise by his hand which are in S. Martino, the Duomo of Lucca.

A little while after these works the said Abbey of S. Clemente in Arezzo was presented to this father by Mariotto Maldoli of Arezzo, General of the Order of Camaldoli, who belonged to the same family from which sprang that Maldolo who gave the site and lands of Camaldoli, then called Campo di Maldolo, to S. Romualdo, the founder of that Order. Don Bartolommeo, in gratitude for that benefice, afterwards executed many works for that General and for his Order. After this there came the plague of 1468, by reason of which the Abbot, like many others, stayed indoors without going about much, and devoted himself to painting large figures; and seeing that he was succeeding as well as he could desire, he began to execute certain works. The first was a S. Rocco that he painted on a panel for the Rectors of the Confraternity of Arezzo, which is now in the Audience Chamber where they assemble. This figure is recommending the people of Arezzo to Our Lady, and in this picture he portrayed the Piazza of the said city and the holy house of that Confraternity, with certain grave-diggers who are returning from burying the dead. He also painted another S. Rocco for the Church of S. Pietro, likewise on a panel, wherein he portrayed the city of Arezzo exactly as it stood at that time, when it was very different from what

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it is to-day. And he made another, which was much better than the two mentioned above, on a panel which is in the Chapel of the Lippi in the Church of the Pieve of Arezzo; and this S. Rocco is a rare and beautiful figure, almost the best that he ever made, and the head and hands are as beautiful and natural as they could be. In the same city of Arezzo, in S. Pietro, a seat of the Servite Friars, he painted an Angel Raphael on a panel; and in the same place he made a portrait of the Blessed Jacopo Filippo of Piacenza.

Afterwards, being summoned to Rome, he painted a scene in the Chapel of Pope Sixtus, in company with Luca da Cortona and Pietro Perugino. On returning to Arezzo, he painted a S. Jerome in Penitence in the Chapel of the Gozzari in the Vescovado; and this figure, lean and shaven, with the eyes fixed most intently on the Crucifix, and beating his breast, shows very clearly how greatly the passions of love can disturb the chastity even of a body so grievously wasted away. In this work he made an enormous crag, with certain cliffs of rock, among the fissures of which he painted some stories of that Saint, with very graceful little figures. After this, in a chapel in S. Agostino, for the Nuns of the Third Order, as they are called, he wrought in fresco a Coronation of Our Lady, which is very well done and much extolled; and below this, in another chapel, a large panel with an Assumption and certain angels beautifully robed in delicate draperies. This panel, for a work made in distemper, is much extolled, and in truth it was wrought with good design and executed with extraordinary diligence. In the lunette that is over the door of the Church of S. Donato, in the Fortress of Arezzo, the same man painted in fresco a

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Madonna with the Child in her arms, S. Donatus, and S. Giovanni Gualberto, all very beautiful figures. In the Abbey of S. Fiore in the said city, beside the principal door of entrance into the church, there is a chapel painted by his hand, wherein are S. Benedict and other saints, wrought with much grace, good handling, and sweetness.

For Gentile of Urbino, Bishop of Arezzo, who was much his friend, and with whom he almost always lived, he painted a Dead Christ in a chapel in the Palace of the Vescovado; and in a loggia he portrayed the Bishop himself, his vicar, and Ser Matteo Francini, his court-notary, who is reading a Bull to him; and there he also made his own portrait and those of certain canons of that city. For the same Bishop he designed a loggia which issues from the Palace and leads to the Vescovado, on the same level with both. In the centre of this the Bishop had intended to make a place of burial for himself in the form of a chapel, in which he wished to be interred after his death; and he had carried it well on, when he was overtaken by death, and it remained unfinished, for, although he left orders that it should be completed by his successor, nothing more was done, as generally happens with works of this sort which are left by a man to be finished after his death. For the said Bishop the Abbot painted a large and beautiful chapel in the Duomo Vecchio, but, as it had only a short life, there is no need to say more about it.

Besides this, he made works in various places throughout the whole city, such as three figures in the Carmine, and the Chapel of the Nuns of S. Orsina. At Castiglione Aretino, for the Chapel of the High-Altar in the Pieve of S. Giuliano, he painted a panel in distemper, containing a very beautiful Madonna, S. Julian, and S. Michelagnolo—figures very well wrought and executed, particularly S. Julian, who, with his eyes fixed on the Christ lying in the arms of the Madonna, appears to be much afflicted at having killed his father and mother. In a chapel a little below this, likewise, is a little door painted by his hand (which formerly belonged to an old organ), wherein there is a S. Michael, which is held to be a marvellous thing, with a child in swaddling-clothes, which appears alive, in the arms of a woman. For the Nuns of the Murate at Arezzo he painted the Chapel of the High-Altar, a work which is truly much extolled. At Monte San Savino he painted a shrine opposite to the Palace of Cardinal di Monte, which was held very beautiful. And at Borgo San Sepolcro, where there is now the Vescovado, he decorated a chapel, which brought him very great praise and profit.

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Don Clemente was a man of very versatile intelligence, and, besides being a great musician, he made organs of lead with his own hand. In S. Domenico he made one of cardboard, which has ever remained sweet and good; and in S. Clemente there was another, also by his hand, which was placed on high, with the keyboard below on the level of the choir—truly with very beautiful judgment, since, the place being such that the monks were few, he wished that the organist should sing as well as play. And since this Abbot loved his Order, like a true minister and not a squanderer of the things of God, he enriched that place greatly with buildings and pictures, particularly by rebuilding the principal chapel of his church and painting the whole of it; and in two niches, one on either side of it, he painted a S. Rocco and a S. Bartholomew, which were ruined together with the church.

But to return to the Abbot, who was a good and worthy churchman. He left a disciple in painting named Maestro Lappoli, an Aretine, who was an able and practised painter, as is shown by the works from his hand which are in S. Agostino, in the Chapel of S. Sebastiano, where there is that Saint wrought in relief by the same man, with figures round him, in painting, of S. Biagio, S. Rocco, S. Anthony of Padua, and S. Bernardino; while on the arch of the chapel is an Annunciation, and on the vaulting are the four Evangelists, wrought in fresco with a high finish. By the hand of the same man, in another chapel on the left hand as one enters the said church by the side-door, is a Nativity in fresco, with the Madonna receiving the Annunciation from the Angel, in the figure of which Angel he portrayed Giuliano Bacci, then a young man of very beautiful aspect. Over the said door, on the outer side, he made an Annunciation, with S. Peter on one side and S. Paul on the other, portraying in the face of the Madonna the mother of Messer Pietro Aretino, a very famous poet. In S. Francesco, for the Chapel of S. Bernardino, he painted a panel with that Saint, who appears alive, and so beautiful that this is the best figure that he ever

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made. In the Chapel of the Pietramaleschi in the Vescovado he painted a very beautiful S. Ignazio on a panel in distemper; and in the Pieve, at the entrance of the upper door which opens on the piazza, a S. Andrew and a S. Sebastian. For the Company of the Trinità, by order of Buoninsegna Buoninsegni of Arezzo, he made a work with beautiful invention, which can be numbered among the best that he ever executed, and this was a Crucifix over an altar, with a S. Martin on one side and a S. Rocco on the other, and two figures kneeling at the foot, one in the form of a poor man, lean, emaciated, and wretchedly clothed, from whom there issued certain rays that shone straight on the wounds of the Saviour, while the Saint gazed on him most intently; and the other in the form of a rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, and all ruddy and cheerful in countenance, whose rays, as he was adoring Christ, although they were issuing from his heart, like those of the poor man, appeared not to shine directly on the wounds of the Crucified Christ, but to stray and spread over certain plains and fields full of grain, green crops, cattle, gardens, and other suchlike things, while some diverged over the sea towards certain boats laden with merchandise; and others, finally, shone on certain money-changers' tables. All these things were wrought by Matteo with judgment, great mastery, and much diligence; but they were thrown to the ground no long time after in the making of a chapel. Beneath the pulpit of the Pieve the same man made a Christ with the Cross for Messer Leonardo Albergotti.

A disciple of the Abbot of S. Clemente, likewise, was a Servite friar of Arezzo, who painted in colours the façade of the house of the Belichini in Arezzo, and two chapels in fresco, one beside the other, in S. Pietro. Another disciple of Don Bartolommeo was Domenico Pecori of Arezzo, who made three figures in distemper on a panel at Sargiano, and painted a very beautiful banner in oil, to be carried in processions, for the Company of S. Maria Maddalena. For Messer Presentino Bisdomini, in the Chapel of S. Andrea in the Pieve, he made a picture of S. Apollonia, similar to that mentioned above; and he finished many works left incomplete by his master, such as the panel of S. Sebastian and S. Fabiano with the Madonna, in S. Pietro, for the family of the Benucci. In the Church of S. Antonio he painted the panel of the high-altar, wherein is a very devout Madonna, with some saints; and since the said Madonna is adoring the Child, whom she has in her lap, he made it appear that a little angel, kneeling behind her, is supporting Our Lord on a cushion, the Madonna not being able to uphold Him because she has her hands clasped in the act of adoration. In the Church of S. Giustino, for Messer Antonio Roselli, he painted a chapel with the Magi in fresco; and for the Company of the Madonna, in the Pieve, he painted a very large panel containing a Madonna in the sky, with the people of Arezzo beneath, in which he made many portraits from the life. In this last work he was helped by a Spanish painter, who painted very well in oil and therein gave assistance to Domenico, who had not as much skill in painting in oil as he had in distemper. With the help of the same man he executed a panel for the Company of the Trinità, containing the Circumcision of Our Lord, which was held a very good work, and a "Noli Me Tangere" in fresco in the garden of S. Fiore. Finally, he painted a panel with many figures in the Vescovado, for Messer Donato Marinelli, Primicere. This work, which then brought him and still continues to bring him very great honour, shows good invention, good design, and strong relief; and in making it, being now very old, he called in the aid of a Sienese painter, Capanna, a passing good master, who painted so many walls in chiaroscuro and so many panels in Siena, and who, if he had lived longer, would have done himself much credit in his art, in so far as one may judge from the little that he executed. Domenico wrought for the Confraternity of Arezzo a baldacchino painted in oil, a rich and costly work, which was lent not many years ago for the holding of a representation in S. Francesco at the festival of S. John and S. Paul, to adorn a Paradise near the roof of the church. A fire breaking out in consequence of the great quantity of lights, this work was burnt, together with the man who was representing God the Father, who, being fastened, could not escape, as the angels did, and many church-hangings were destroyed, while great harm came to the spectators, who, terrified by the fire, struggled furiously to fly from the church, everyone seeking to be the first, so that about eighty were trampled down in the press, which was something very pitiful. This baldacchino was afterwards reconstructed with greater richness, and painted by Giorgio Vasari. Domenico then devoted himself to the making of glass windows, and there were three by his hand in the Vescovado, which were ruined by the artillery in the wars.

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Another pupil of the same master was the painter Angelo di Lorentino, who was a man of passing good ability. He painted the arch over the door of S. Domenico, and if he had received assistance he would have become a very good master.

The Abbot died at the age of eighty-three, leaving unfinished the Temple of the Madonna delle Lacrime, for which he had made a model; it was afterwards completed by various masters. He deserves praise, then, as illuminator, architect, painter, and musician. He was given burial by his monks in his Abbey of S. Clemente, and his works have ever been so highly esteemed in the said city that the following verses may be read over his tomb:

PINGEBAT DOCTE ZEUSIS, CONDEBAT ET AEDES
NICON, PAN CAPRIPES, FISTULA PRIMA TUA EST.
NON TAMEN EX VOBIS MECUM CERTAVERIT ULLUS;
QUÆ TRES FECISTIS, UNICUS HÆC FACIO.

He died in 1461, having added to the art of illumination that beauty which is seen in all his works, as some drawings by his hand can bear witness which are in our book. His method of working was afterwards imitated by Girolamo Padovano in some books that he illuminated for S. Maria Nuova in Florence; by Gherardo, a Florentine illuminator; (and by Attavante,^[22]) who was also called Vante, of whom we have spoken in another place, particularly with regard to those of

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his works which are in Venice; with respect to which I included word for word a note sent to me by certain gentlemen of Venice, contenting myself, in order to recompense them for the great pains that they had taken to discover all that is to be read there, with relating the whole as they wrote it, since I had no personal knowledge of these works on which to form a judgment of my own.

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GHERARDO

GHERARDO

ILLUMINATOR OF FLORENCE

It is certain that among all the enduring works that are made in colours there is none that resists the assault of wind and water better than mosaic. And well was this known in his day to the elder Lorenzo de' Medici of Florence, who, like a man of spirit given to investigating the memorials of the ancients, sought to bring back into use what had been hidden for many years, and, since he took great delight in pictures and sculptures, could not fail to take delight also in mosaic. Wherefore, seeing that Gherardo, an illuminator of that time and a man of inquiring brain, was investigating the difficulties of that calling, he showed him great favour, as one who ever assisted those in whom he saw some germ of spirit and intellect. Placing him, therefore, in the company of Domenico del Ghirlandajo, he obtained for him from the Wardens of Works of S. Maria del Fiore a commission for decorating the chapels of the transepts, beginning with that of the Sacrament, wherein lies the body of S. Zanobi. Whereupon Gherardo, growing ever in keenness of intelligence, would have executed most marvellous works in company with Domenico, if death had not intervened, as may be judged from the beginning of that chapel, which remained unfinished.

Gherardo, in addition to his mosaics, was a most delicate illuminator, and he also made large figures on walls. Without the Porta alla Croce there is a shrine in fresco by his hand, and there is another in Florence, much extolled, at the head of the Via Larga. On the façade of the Church of S. Gilio at S. Maria Nuova, beneath the stories painted by Lorenzo di Bicci, wherein is the consecration of that church by Pope Martin V, Gherardo depicted the same Pope conferring the monk's habit and many privileges on the Director of the Hospital. In this scene there were far fewer figures than it appeared to require, because it was cut in half by a shrine containing a Madonna, which has been removed recently by Don Isidoro Montaguto, the present Director of that place, in the reconstructing of a principal door for the building; and Francesco Brini, a young painter of Florence, has been commissioned to paint the rest of the scene. But to return to Gherardo; it would scarcely have been possible for even a well-practised master to accomplish without great fatigue and diligence what he did in that work, which is wrought most excellently in fresco. For the church of the same hospital Gherardo illuminated an infinite number of books, with some for S. Maria del Fiore in Florence, and certain others for Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary. These last, on the death of the said King, together with some by the hand of Vante and of other masters who worked for that King in Florence, were purchased and taken over by the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici, who placed them among those so greatly celebrated which were being collected for the formation of the library afterwards built by Pope Clement VII, which is now being thrown open to the public by order of Duke Cosimo.

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Having thus developed, as has been related, from a master of illumination into a painter, in addition to the said works, he made some great figures in a large cartoon for the Evangelists that he had to make in mosaic in the Chapel of S. Zanobi. But before the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici had obtained for him the commission for the said chapel, wishing to show that he understood the art of mosaic, and that he could work without a companion, he made a life-size head of S. Zanobi, which remained in S. Maria del Fiore, and on days of the highest solemnity it is set up on the altar of the said Saint, or in some other place, as a rare thing.

The while that Gherardo was labouring at these things, there were brought to Florence certain prints in the German manner wrought by Martin and by Albrecht Dürer; whereupon, being much pleased with that sort of engraving, he set himself to work with the graver and copied some of those plates very well, as may be seen from certain examples that are in our book, together with some drawings by the same man's hand. Gherardo painted many pictures which were sent abroad, one of which is in the Chapel of S. Caterina da Siena in the Church of S. Domenico at Bologna, containing a very good painting of S. Catherine. And in S. Marco at Florence, over the table of Pardons, he painted a lunette full of very graceful figures. But the more he satisfied

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others the less did he satisfy himself in any of his works, with the exception of mosaic, in which sort of painting he was rather the rival than the companion of Domenico Ghirlandajo; and if he had lived longer he would have become most excellent in that art, for he was very willing to take pains with it, and he had discovered the greater part of its best secrets.

Some declare that Attavante, otherwise Vante, an illuminator of Florence, of whom we have spoken above in more than one place, was a disciple of Gherardo, as was Stefano, likewise a Florentine illuminator; but I hold it as certain, considering that both lived at the same time, that Attavante was rather the friend, companion, and contemporary of Gherardo than his disciple. Gherardo died well advanced in years, leaving everything that he used in his art to his disciple Stefano, who, devoting himself no long time after to architecture, abandoned the art of illuminating, and handed over all his appliances in connection with that profession to the elder Boccardino, who illuminated the greater part of the books that are in the Badia of Florence. Gherardo died at the age of sixty-three, and his works date about the year of our salvation 1470.

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DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO

DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO

PAINTER OF FLORENCE

Domenico di Tommaso del Ghirlandajo, who, from his talent and from the greatness and the vast number of his works, may be called one of the most important and most excellent masters of his age, was made by nature to be a painter; and for this reason, in spite of the opposition of those who had charge of him (which often nips the finest fruits of our intellects in the bud by occupying them with work for which they are not suited, and by diverting them from that to which nature inclines them), he followed his natural instinct, secured very great honour for himself and profit for his art and for his kindred, and became the great delight of his age. He was apprenticed by his father to his own art of goldsmith, in which Tommaso was a master more than passing good, for it was he who made the greater part of the silver votive offerings that were formerly preserved in the press of the Nunziata, and the silver lamps of the chapel, which were all destroyed in the siege of the city in the year 1529. Tommaso was the first who invented and put into execution those ornaments worn on the head by the girls of Florence, which are called *ghirlande*,^[23] whence he gained the name of Ghirlandajo, not only because he was their first inventor, but also because he made an infinite number of them, of a beauty so rare that none appeared to please save such as came out of his shop.

Being thus apprenticed to the goldsmith's art, but taking no pleasure therein, he was ever occupied in drawing. Endowed by nature with a perfect spirit and with an admirable and judicious taste in painting, although he was a goldsmith in his boyhood, yet, by devoting himself ever to design, he became so quick, so ready, and so facile, that many say that while he was working as a goldsmith he would draw a portrait of all who passed the shop, producing a likeness in a second; and of this we still have proof in an infinite number of portraits in his works, which show a most lifelike resemblance.

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His first pictures were in the Chapel of the Vespucci in Ognissanti, where there is a Dead Christ with some saints, and a Misericordia over an arch, in which is the portrait of Amerigo Vespucci, who made the voyages to the Indies; and in the refectory of that place he painted a Last Supper in fresco. In S. Croce, on the right hand of the entrance into the church, he painted the Story of S. Paulino; wherefore, having acquired very great fame and coming into much credit, he painted a chapel in S. Trinita for Francesco Sassetti, with stories of S. Francis. This work was admirably executed by him, and wrought with grace, lovingness, and a high finish; and he counterfeited and portrayed therein the Ponte a S. Trinita, with the Palace of the Spini. On the first wall he depicted the story of S. Francis appearing in the air and restoring the child to life; and here, in those women who see him being restored to life—after their sorrow for his death as they bear him to the grave—there are seen gladness and marvel at his resurrection. He also counterfeited the friars issuing from the church behind the Cross, together with some grave-diggers, to bury him, all wrought very naturally; and there are likewise other figures marvelling at that event which give no little pleasure to the eye, among which are portraits of Maso degli Albizzi, Messer Agnolo Acciaiuoli, and Messer Palla Strozzi, eminent citizens often cited in the history of the city. On another wall he painted S. Francis, in the presence of the vicar, renouncing his inheritance from his father, Pietro Bernardone, and assuming the habit of sackcloth, which he is girding round him with the cord. On the middle wall he is shown going to Rome and having his Rule

confirmed by Pope Honorius, and presenting roses in January to that Pontiff. In this scene he depicted the Hall of the Consistory, with Cardinals seated around, and certain steps ascending to it, furnishing the flight of steps with a balustrade, and painting there some half-length figures portrayed from the life, among which is the portrait of the elder Lorenzo de' Medici, the Magnificent; and there he also painted S. Francis receiving the Stigmata. In the last he made the Saint dead, with his friars mourning for him, among whom is one friar kissing his hands—an effect that could not be rendered better in painting; not to mention that a Bishop in full robes, with spectacles on his nose, is chanting the prayers for the dead so vividly, that only the lack of sound shows him to be painted. In one of two pictures that are on either side of the panel he portrayed Francesco Sassetti on his knees, and in the other his wife, Monna Nera, with their children (but these last are in the aforesaid scene of the child being restored to life), and with certain beautiful maidens of the same family, whose names I have not been able to discover, all in the costumes and fashions of that age, which gives no little pleasure. Besides this, he made four Sibyls on the vaulting, and an ornament above the arch on the front wall without the chapel, containing the scene of the Tiburtine Sibyl making the Emperor Octavian adore Christ, which is executed in a masterly manner for a work in fresco, with much vivacity and loveliness in the colours. To this work he added a panel wrought in distemper, also by his hand, containing a Nativity of Christ that should amaze any person of understanding, wherein he portrayed himself and made certain heads of shepherds, which are held to be something divine. Of this Sibyl and of other parts of this work there are some very beautiful drawings in our book, made in chiaroscuro, and in particular the view in perspective of the Ponte a S. Trinita.

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For the Frati Ingesuati he painted a panel for their high-altar, with certain Saints kneeling—namely, S. Giusto, Bishop of Volterra, who was the titular Saint of that church; S. Zanobi, Bishop of Florence; an Angel Raphael; a S. Michael, clad in most beautiful armour; and other saints. For this work Domenico truly deserves praise, for he was the first who began to counterfeit with colours certain trimmings and ornaments of gold, which had not been done up to that time; and he swept away in great measure those borders of gilding that were made with mordant or with bole, which were more suitable for church-hangings than for the work of good masters. More beautiful than all the other figures is the Madonna, who has the Child in her arms and four little angels round her. This panel, which is wrought as well as any work in distemper could be, was then placed in the church of those friars without the Porta a Pinti; but since that building, as will be told elsewhere, was destroyed, it is now in the Church of S. Giovannino, within the Porta S. Piero Gattolini, where there is the Convent of the aforesaid Ingesuati.

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In the Church of Cestello he painted a panel—afterwards finished by his brothers David and Benedetto—containing the Visitation of Our Lady, with certain most charming and beautiful heads of women. In the Church of the Innocenti he painted the Story of the Magi on a panel in distemper, which is much extolled. In this are heads most beautiful in expression and varied in features, both young and old; and in the head of Our Lady, in particular, are seen all the dignity, beauty, and grace that art can give to the Mother of the Son of God. On the tramezzo^[24] of the Church of S. Marco there is another panel, with a Last Supper in the guest-room, both executed with diligence; and in the house of Giovanni Tornabuoni there is a round picture with the Story of the Magi, wrought with diligence. In the Little Hospital, for the elder Lorenzo de' Medici, he painted the story of Vulcan, in which many nude figures are at work with hammers making thunderbolts for Jove. And in the Church of Ognissanti in Florence, in competition with Sandro di Botticello, he painted a S. Jerome in fresco (which is now beside the door that leads to the choir), surrounding him with an infinite number of instruments and books, such as are used by the learned. The friars having occasion to remove the choir from the place where it stood, this picture, together with that of Sandro di Botticello, has been bound round with irons and transported without injury into the middle of the church, at the very time when these Lives are being printed for the second time. He also painted the arch over the door of S. Maria Ughi, and a little shrine for the Guild of Linen-Manufacturers, and likewise a very beautiful S. George, slaying the Dragon, in the same Church of Ognissanti. And in truth he had a very good knowledge of the method of painting on walls, which he did with very great facility, although he was scrupulously careful in the composition of his works.



THE DEATH OF S. FRANCIS
(After the fresco by Domenico Ghirlandajo. Florence: S. Trinita)
Alinari
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Being then summoned to Rome by Pope Sixtus IV to paint his chapel, in company with other masters, he painted there Christ calling Peter and Andrew from their nets, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the greater part of which has since been spoilt in consequence of being over the door, on which it became necessary to replace an architrave that had fallen down. There was living in Rome at this same time Francesco Tornabuoni, a rich and honoured merchant, much the friend of Domenico. This man, whose wife had died in childbirth, as is told in the Life of Andrea Verrocchio, desiring to honour her as became their noble station, had caused a tomb to be made for her in the Minerva; and he also wished Domenico to paint the whole wall against which this tomb stood, and likewise to make for it a little panel in distemper. On that wall, therefore, he painted four stories—two of S. John the Baptist and two of the Madonna—which brought him truly great praise at that time. And Francesco took so much pleasure in his dealings with Domenico, that, when the latter returned to Florence rich in honour and in gains, Francesco recommended him by letters to his relative Giovanni, telling him how well the painter had served him in that work, and how well satisfied the Pope had been with his pictures. Hearing this, Giovanni began to contemplate employing him on some magnificent work, such as would honour his own memory and bring fame and profit to Domenico.

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Now it chanced that the principal chapel of S. Maria Novella (a convent of Preaching Friars), formerly painted by Andrea Orcagna, was injured in many parts by rain in consequence of the roof of the vaulting being badly covered. For this reason many citizens had wished to restore it, or rather, to have it painted anew; but the owners, who belonged to the family of the Ricci, had never consented to this, being unable to bear so great an expense themselves, and unwilling to allow others to do so, lest they should lose the rights of ownership and the distinction of the arms handed down to them by their ancestors. Giovanni, then, being desirous that Domenico should make him his memorial there, set to work in this matter, trying various ways; and finally he promised the Ricci to bear the whole expense himself, to give them some sort of recompense, and to have their arms placed in the most conspicuous and honourable place in that chapel. And so they came to an agreement, making a contract in the form of a very precise instrument according to the terms described above. Giovanni allotted this work to Domenico, with the same subjects as were painted there before; and they agreed that the price should be 1,200 gold ducats of full weight, with 200 more in the event of the work giving satisfaction to Giovanni. Thereupon Domenico put his hand to the work and laboured without ceasing for four years until he had finished it—which was in 1485—to the very great satisfaction and contentment of Giovanni, who, while admitting that he had been well served, and confessing ingenuously that Domenico had earned the additional 200 ducats, said that he would be pleased if he would be satisfied with the original price. And Domenico, who esteemed glory and honour much more than riches, immediately let him off all the rest, declaring that he set much greater store on having given him satisfaction than on the matter of complete payment.

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Giovanni afterwards caused two large coats of arms to be made of stone—one for the Tornaquinci and the other for the Tornabuoni—and placed on the pilasters without the chapel, and in the arch he placed other arms belonging to that family, which is divided into various names and various arms—namely, in addition to the two already mentioned, those of the Ghiachinotti, Popoleschi, Marabottini, and Cardinali. And afterwards, when Domenico painted the altar-panel, he caused to be placed in the gilt ornament, under an arch, as a finishing touch to that panel, a very beautiful Tabernacle of the Sacrament, on the frontal of which he made a little shield a quarter of a braccio in length, containing the arms of the said owners—that is, the Ricci. And a fine jest it was at the

opening of the chapel, for these Ricci looked for their arms with much ado, and finally, not being able to find them, went off to the Tribunal of Eight, contract in hand. Whereupon the Tornabuoni showed that these arms had been placed in the most conspicuous and most honourable part of the work; and although the others exclaimed that they were invisible, they were told that they were in the wrong, and that they must be content, since the Tornabuoni had caused them to be placed in so honourable a position as the neighbourhood of the most Holy Sacrament. And so it was decided by that tribunal that they should be left untouched, as they may be seen to-day. Now, if this should appear to anyone to be outside the scope of the Life that I have to write, let him not be vexed, for it all flowed naturally from the tip of my pen. And it should serve, if for nothing else, at least to show how easily poverty falls a prey to riches, and how riches, if accompanied by discretion, achieve without censure anything that a man desires.

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**DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO: THE VISION OF S. FINA
(*San Gimignano. Fresco*)**

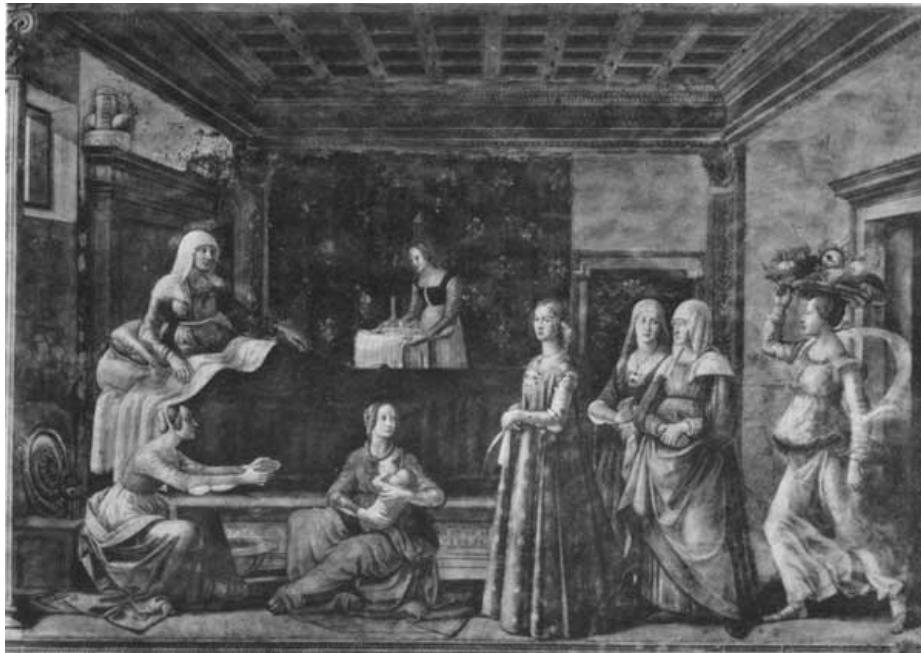
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But to return to the beautiful works of Domenico; in that chapel, first of all, are the four Evangelists on the vaulting, larger than life; and, on the window-wall, stories of S. Dominic, S. Peter Martyr, S. John going into the Desert, the Madonna receiving the Annunciation from the Angel, and many patron saints of Florence on their knees above the window; while at the foot, on the right hand, is a portrait from life of Giovanni Tornabuoni, with one of his wife on the left, which are both said to be very lifelike. On the right-hand wall are seven scenes—six below, in compartments as large as the wall allows, and the last above, twice as broad as any of the others and bounded by the arch of the vaulting; and on the left-hand wall are also seven scenes from the life of S. John the Baptist. The first on the right-hand wall is the Expulsion of Joachim from the Temple, wherein patience is depicted in his countenance, with that contempt and hatred in the faces of the others which the Jews felt for those who came to the Temple without having children. In this scene, in the part near the window, are four men portrayed from life, one of whom, old, shaven, and wearing a red cap, is Alesso Baldovinetti, Domenico's master in painting and in mosaic. Another, bareheaded, who is holding one hand on his side and is wearing a red mantle, with a blue garment below, is Domenico himself, the master of the work, who portrayed himself in a mirror. The one who has long black locks and thick lips is Bastiano da San Gimignano, his disciple and brother-in-law; and the last, who has his back turned, with a little cap on his head, is the painter David Ghirlandajo, his brother. All these are said, by those who knew them, to be truly vivid and lifelike portraits. In the second scene is the Nativity of Our Lady, executed with great diligence, and, among other notable things that he painted therein, there is in the building (drawn in perspective) a window that gives light to the room, which deceives all who see it. Besides this, while S. Anna is in bed, and certain ladies are visiting her, he painted some women washing the Madonna with great care—one is getting ready the water, another is preparing the swaddling-clothes, a third is busy with some service, a fourth with another, and, while each is attending to her own duty, another woman is holding the little child in her arms and making her laugh by smiling at her, with a womanly grace truly worthy of such a work; besides many other expressions that are in each figure. In the third, which is above the first, is the Madonna ascending the steps of the Temple, with a building which recedes from the eye correctly enough, in addition to a nude figure that brought him praise at that time, when few were to be seen, although it had not that complete perfection which is shown by those painted in our own day, for those masters were not as excellent as ours. Next to this is the Marriage of Our Lady, wherein he represented the unbridled rage of those who are breaking their rods because they do not blossom like that of Joseph; and this scene has an abundance of figures in an appropriate building. In the fifth are seen the Magi arriving in Bethlehem with a great number of men, horses, and

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dromedaries, and a variety of other things—a scene truly well composed. Next to this is the sixth, showing the impious cruelty practised by Herod against the Innocents, wherein there is seen a most beautiful combat between women and soldiers, with horses that are striking and driving them about; and in truth this is the best of all the stories that are to be seen by his hand, for it is executed with judgment, intelligence, and great art. There may be seen therein the impious resolution of those who, at the command of Herod, without regard for the mothers, are slaying those poor infants, among which is one, still clinging to the breast, that is dying from wounds received in its throat, so that it is sucking, not to say drinking, as much blood as milk from that breast—an effect truly natural, and, being wrought in such a manner as it is, able to kindle a spark of pity in the coldest heart. There is also a soldier who has seized a child by force, and while he runs off with it, pressing it against his breast to kill it, the mother is seen hanging from his hair in the utmost fury, and forcing him to bend his back in the form of an arch, so that three very beautiful effects are shown among them—one in the death of the child, which is seen expiring; the second in the impious rage of the soldier, who, feeling himself drawn backwards so strangely, is shown in the act of avenging himself on the child; and the third is that the mother, seeing the death of her babe, is seeking with fury, grief, and disdain to prevent the villain from going off scathless; and the whole is truly more the work of a philosopher admirable in judgment than of a painter. There are many other emotions depicted, which will demonstrate to him who studies them that this man was without doubt an excellent master in his time. Above this, in the seventh scene, which embraces the space of two, and is bounded by the arch of the vaulting, are the Death and the Assumption of Our Lady, with an infinite number of angels, and innumerable figures, landscapes, and other ornaments, of which he used to paint an abundance in his facile and practised manner.

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THE BIRTH OF S. JOHN THE BAPTIST
(After the fresco by Domenico Ghirlandajo. Florence: S. Maria Novella)
Anderson

[View larger image](#)

On the other wall are stories of S. John, and in the first is Zacharias sacrificing in the Temple, when the Angel appears to him and makes him dumb for his unbelief. In this scene, showing how sacrifices in temples are ever attended by a throng of the most distinguished men, and wishing to make it as honourable as he was able, he portrayed a good number of the Florentine citizens who then governed that State, particularly all those of the house of Tornabuoni, both young and old. Besides this, in order to show that his age was rich in every sort of talent, above all in learning, he made a group of four half-length figures conversing together at the foot of the scene, representing the most learned men then to be found in Florence. The first of these, who is wearing the dress of a Canon, is Messer Marsilio Ficino; the second, in a red mantle, with a black band round his neck, is Cristofano Landino; the figure turning towards him is Demetrius the Greek; and he who is standing between them, with one hand slightly raised, is Messer Angelo Poliziano; and all are very lifelike and vivacious. In the second scene, next to this, there follows the Visitation of Our Lady to S. Elizabeth, with a company of many women dressed in costumes of those times, among whom is a portrait of Ginevra de' Benci, then a most beautiful maiden. In the third, above the first, is the birth of S. John, wherein there is a very beautiful scene, for while S. Elizabeth is lying in bed, and certain neighbours come to see her, and the nurse is seated suckling the infant, one woman is joyfully demanding it from her, that she may show to the others what an unexampled feat the mistress of the house has performed in her old age. Finally, there is a woman, who is very beautiful, bringing fruits and flasks from the country, according to the Florentine custom. In the fourth scene, next to this, is Zacharias, still dumb, marvelling—but with undaunted heart—that this child should have been born to him; and while they keep asking him

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about the name, he is writing on his knee, with his eyes fixed on his son, whom a woman who has knelt down before him is holding reverently in her arms, and he is tracing with his pen on the paper, "John shall be his name," to the no little marvel of many other figures, who appear to be in doubt whether the thing be true or not. There follows in the fifth his preaching to the multitude, in which scene there is shown that attention which the populace ever gives when hearing new things, particularly in the heads of the Scribes, who, while listening to John, appear from a certain expression of countenance to be deriding his law, and even to hate it; and there are seen many men and women, variously attired, both standing and seated. In the sixth S. John is seen baptizing Christ, in whose reverent expression Domenico showed very clearly the faith that should be placed in such a Sacrament. And since this did not fail to achieve a very great effect, he depicted many already naked and barefooted, waiting to be baptized, and revealing faith and willingness carved in their faces; and one among them, who is taking off his shoe, personifies readiness itself. In the last, which is in the arch next to the vaulting, are the sumptuous Feast of Herod and the Dance of Herodias, with an infinite number of servants performing various services in that scene; not to mention the grandeur of an edifice drawn in perspective, which proves the talent of Domenico no less clearly than do the other pictures.

The panel, which stands by itself, he executed in distemper, as he did the other figures in the six pictures. Besides the Madonna, who is seated in the sky with the Child in her arms, and the other saints who are round her, there are S. Laurence and S. Stephen, who are absolutely alive, with S. Vincent and S. Peter Martyr, who lack nothing save speech. It is true that a part of this panel remained unfinished in consequence of his death; but he had carried it so far on that there was nothing left to complete save certain figures on the back, where there is the Resurrection of Christ, with three figures in the other pictures, and the whole was afterwards finished by Benedetto and David Ghirlandajo, his brothers. This chapel was held to be a very beautiful work, grand, ornate, and lovely, through the vivacity of the colours, through the masterly finish in their application on the walls, and because very little retouching was done on the dry, not to mention the invention and the composition of the subjects. And in truth Domenico deserves the greatest praise on all accounts, particularly for the liveliness of the heads, which, being portrayed from nature, present to every eye most lifelike effigies of many distinguished persons.

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For the same Giovanni Tornabuoni, at his Villa of Casso Maccherelli, which stands on the River Terzolle at no great distance from the city, he painted a chapel which has since been half destroyed through being too near to the river; but the paintings, although they have been uncovered for many years, continually washed by rain and scorched by the sun, have remained so fresh that one might think they had been covered—so great is the value of working in fresco, when the work is done with care and judgment and not retouched on the dry. He also made many figures of Florentine Saints, with most beautiful adornments, in that hall of the Palace of the Signoria which contains the marvellous clock of Lorenzo della Volpaia. And so great was his love of working and of giving satisfaction to all, that he commanded his lads to accept any work that might be brought to his shop, even hoops for women's baskets, saying that if they would not do them he would paint them himself, to the end that none might leave the shop unsatisfied. But when household cares fell upon him he was troubled, and he therefore laid the charge of all expenditure on his brother David, saying to him, "Leave me to work, and do thou provide, for now that I have begun to understand the methods of this art, it grieves me that they will not commission me to paint the whole circuit of the walls of the city of Florence with stories"; thus revealing a spirit absolutely invincible and resolute in every action.

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For S. Martino in Lucca he painted S. Peter and S. Paul on a panel. In the Abbey of Settimo, without Florence, he painted the wall of the principal chapel in fresco, with two panels in distemper in the tramezzo^[25] of the church. In Florence, also, he executed many pictures, round, square, and of other kinds, which can only be seen in the houses of individual citizens. In Pisa he painted the recess behind the high-altar of the Duomo, and he worked in many parts of that city, painting, for example, on the front wall of the Office of Works, a scene of King Charles, portrayed from life, making supplication for Pisa; and two panels in distemper, that of the high-altar and another, for the Frati Gesuati in S. Girolamo. In that place there is also a picture of S. Rocco and S. Sebastian by the hand of the same man, which was given by one or other of the Medici to those fathers, who have therefore added to it the arms of Pope Leo X.

He is said to have been so accurate in draughtsmanship, that, when making drawings of the antiquities of Rome, such as arches, baths, columns, colossea, obelisks, amphitheatres, and aqueducts, he would work with the eye alone, without rule, compasses, or measurements; and after he had made them, on being measured, they were found absolutely correct, as if he had used measurements. He drew the Colosseum by the eye, placing at the foot of it a figure standing upright, from the proportions of which the whole edifice could be measured; this was tried by some masters after his death, and found quite correct.

Over a door of the cemetery of S. Maria Nuova he painted a S. Michael in fresco, clad in armour which reflects the light most beautifully—a thing seldom done before his day. At the Abbey of Passignano, a seat of the Monks of Vallombrosa, he wrought certain works in company with his brother David and Bastiano da San Gimignano. Here the two others, finding themselves poorly fed by the monks before the arrival of Domenico, complained to the Abbot, praying him to have them better served, since it was not right that they should be treated like bricklayers' labourers. This the Abbot promised to do, saying in excuse that it was due more to the ignorance of the monks who looked after strangers than to malice. Domenico arrived, but everything continued just the same; whereupon David, seeking out the Abbot once again, declared with due apologies

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that he was not doing this for his own sake but on account of the merits and talents of his brother. But the Abbot, like the ignorant man that he was, made no other answer. That evening, then, when they had sat down to supper, up came the stranger's steward with a board covered with bowls and messes only fit for a hangman, exactly the same as before. Thereupon David, flying into a rage, upset the soup over the friar, and, seizing the loaf that was on the table, fell upon him with it and belaboured him in such a manner that he was carried away to his cell more dead than alive. The Abbot, who was already in bed, got up and ran to the noise, believing that the monastery was tumbling down; and finding the friar in a sorry plight, he began to upbraid David. Enraged by this, David bade him be gone out of his sight, saying that the talent of Domenico was worth more than all the pigs of Abbots like him that had ever lived in that monastery. Whereupon the Abbot, seeing himself in the wrong, did his utmost from that time onwards to treat them like the important men that they were.

This work finished, Domenico returned to Florence, where he painted a panel for Signor di Carpi, sending another to Rimini for Signor Carlo Malatesta, who had it placed in his chapel in S. Domenico. The latter panel was in distemper, with three very beautiful figures, and with little scenes below; and behind were figures painted to look like bronze, with very great design and art. Besides these, he painted two panels for the Abbey of S. Giusto, a seat of the Order of Camaldoli, without Volterra; these panels, which are wondrously beautiful, he executed at the order of the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici, for the reason that the abbey was then held "in commendam" by his son Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, who was afterwards Pope Leo. This abbey was restored not many years ago by the Very Reverend Messer Giovan Batista Bava of Volterra, who likewise held it "in commendam," to the said Congregation of Camaldoli.

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Being then summoned to Siena through the agency of the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici, Domenico undertook to adorn the façade of the Duomo with mosaics, Lorenzo acting as surety for him in this work to the extent of 20,000 ducats. And he began the work with much confidence and a better manner, but, being overtaken by death, he left it unfinished; even as, by reason of the death of the aforesaid Magnificent Lorenzo, there remained unfinished at Florence the Chapel of S. Zanobi, on which Domenico had begun to work in mosaic in company with the illuminator Gherardo. By the hand of Domenico is a very beautiful Annunciation in mosaic that is to be seen over that side-door of S. Maria del Fiore which leads to the Servi; and nothing better than this has yet been seen among the works of our modern masters of mosaic. Domenico used to say that painting was mere drawing, and that the true painting for eternity was mosaic.

A pupil of his, who lived with him in order to learn, was Bastiano Mainardi da San Gimignano, who became a very able master of his manner in fresco; wherefore he went with Domenico to San Gimignano, where they painted in company the Chapel of S. Fina, which is a beautiful work. Now the faithful and willing service of Bastiano, who acquitted himself very well, induced Domenico to judge him worthy to have a sister of his own for wife; and so their friendship was changed into relationship—a proof of liberality worthy of a loving master, who was pleased to reward the proficiency that his disciple had acquired by labouring at his art. Domenico caused the said Bastiano to paint a Madonna ascending into Heaven in the Chapel of the Baroncelli and Bandini in S. Croce (although he made the cartoon himself), with S. Thomas below receiving the Girdle—a beautiful work in fresco. In Siena, in an apartment of the Palace of the Spannocchi, Domenico and Bastiano together painted many scenes in distemper, with little figures; and in Pisa, in addition to the aforesaid recess in the Duomo, they filled the whole arch of that chapel with angels, besides painting the folding doors that close the organ, and beginning to overlay the ceiling with gold. Afterwards, just when Domenico was about to put his hand to some very great works both in Pisa and in Siena, he fell sick of a most grievous putrid fever, which cut short his life in five days. As he lay ill, the Tornabuoni sent him a hundred ducats of gold as a gift, proving their regard and particular friendship for Domenico in return for his unceasing labours in the service of Giovanni and of his house. Domenico lived forty-four years, and he was buried with beautiful obsequies in S. Maria Novella by his brothers David and Benedetto and his son Ridolfo, amid much weeping and sorrowful regrets. The loss of so great a man was a great grief to his friends; and many excellent foreign painters, hearing that he was dead, wrote to his relatives lamenting his most untimely death. The disciples that he left were David and Benedetto Ghirlandajo, Bastiano Mainardi da San Gimignano, the Florentine Michelagnolo Buonarroti, Francesco Granaccio, Niccolò Cieco, Jacopo del Tedesco, Jacopo dell' Indaco, Baldino Baldinelli, and other masters, all Florentines. He died in 1495.

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**THE MADONNA GIVING THE GIRDLE TO S.
THOMAS**
*(After the panel by Bastiano Mainardi. Florence:
S. Croce)*
Brogi
[View larger image](#)

Domenico enriched the art of painting by working in mosaic with a manner more modern than was shown by any of the innumerable Tuscans who essayed it, as is proved by the works that he wrought, few though they may be. Wherefore he has deserved to be held in honour and esteem for such rich and undying benefits to art, and to be celebrated with extraordinary praises after his death.

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ANTONIO AND PIERO POLLAIUOLO

LIVES OF ANTONIO AND PIERO POLLAIUOLO

PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS OF FLORENCE

Many men begin in a humble spirit with unimportant works, who, gaining courage from proficiency, grow also in power and ability, in such a manner that they aspire to greater undertakings and almost reach Heaven with their beautiful thoughts. Raised by fortune, they very often chance upon some liberal Prince, who, finding himself well served by them, is forced to remunerate their labours so richly that their descendants derive great benefits and advantages from them. Wherefore such men walk through this life to the end with so much glory, that they leave marvellous memorials of themselves to the world, as did Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo, who were greatly esteemed in their day for the rare acquirements that they had made with their industry and labour.

These men were born in the city of Florence, one no long time after the other, from a father of

humble station and no great wealth, who, recognizing by many signs the good and acute intelligence of his sons, but not having the means to educate them in letters, apprenticed Antonio to the goldsmith's art under Bartoluccio Ghiberti, a very excellent master in that calling at that time; and Piero he placed under Andrea dal Castagno, who was then the best painter in Florence, to learn painting. Antonio, then, being pushed on by Bartoluccio, not only learnt to set jewels and to fire enamels on silver, but was also held the best master of the tools of that art. Wherefore Lorenzo Ghiberti, who was then working on the doors of S. Giovanni, having observed the manner of Antonio, called him into that work in company with many other young men, and set him to labour on one of the festoons which he then had in hand.

On this Antonio made a quail which is still in existence, so beautiful and so perfect that it lacks nothing but the power of flight. Antonio, therefore, had not spent many weeks over this work before he was known as the best, both in design and in patient execution, of all those who were working there, and as more gifted and more diligent than any other. Whereupon, growing ever both in ability and in fame, he left Bartoluccio and Lorenzo, and opened a fine and magnificent goldsmith's shop for himself in the Mercato Nuovo in that city. And for many years he followed that art, never ceasing to make new designs, and executing in relief wax candles and other things of fancy, which in a short time caused him to be held—as he was—the first master of his calling.

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There lived at the same time another goldsmith called Maso Finiguerra, who had an extraordinary fame, and deservedly, since there had never been seen any master of engraving and of niello who could make so great a number of figures as he could, whether in a small or in a large space; as is still proved by certain paxes in the Church of S. Giovanni in Florence, wrought by him with most minutely elaborated stories from the Passion of Christ. This man drew very well and in abundance, and in our book are many of his drawings of figures, both draped and nude, and scenes done in water-colour. In competition with him Antonio executed certain scenes, in which he equalled him in diligence and surpassed him in design; wherefore the Consuls of the Guild of Merchants, seeing the excellence of Antonio, and remembering that there were certain scenes in silver to be wrought for the altar of S. Giovanni, such as it had ever been the custom for various masters to make at different times, determined among themselves that Antonio also should make some. This came to pass; and his works turned out so excellent, that they are recognized as the best among them all. These were the Feast of Herod and the Dance of Herodias; but more beautiful than anything else was the S. John that is in the middle of the altar, a work wrought wholly with the chasing-tool, and much extolled. For this reason he was commissioned by the said Consuls to make the candelabra of silver, each three braccia in height, and the Cross in proportion; which work he brought to such perfection, with such an abundance of carving, that it has ever been esteemed a marvellous thing both by foreigners and by his countrymen.



SS. EUSTACE, JAMES, AND VINCENT
(After the panel by Piero Pollaiuolo. Florence: Uffizi, 1301)
Alinari

In this calling he took infinite pains, both with the works that he executed in gold and with those in enamel and silver. Among these are some very beautiful paxes in S. Giovanni, coloured by the action of fire, which are such that they could be scarcely improved with the brush; and some of his marvellous enamels may be seen in other churches in Florence, Rome, and other parts of Italy.

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He taught this art to the Florentine Mazzingo and to Giuliano del Facchino, both passing good masters, and to Giovanni Turini of Siena, who surpassed these his companions considerably in that profession, in which, from Antonio di Salvi—who made many good works, such as a large silver Cross for the Badia of Florence, and other things—to our own day, there has been nothing done than can be held in particular account. But of his works and of those of the Pollaiuoli many have been destroyed and melted down to meet the necessities of the city in times of war.

For this reason, recognizing that this art gave no long life to the labours of its craftsmen, and desiring to gain a more lasting memory, Antonio resolved to pursue it no longer. And so, his brother Piero being a painter, he associated himself with him in order to learn the methods of handling and using colours; but it appeared to him an art so different from the goldsmith's, that, if he had not been so hasty in resolving to abandon his own art entirely, it might well have been that he would never have brought himself to turn to the other. However, spurred by fear of shame rather than by hope of profit, in a few months he acquired a practical knowledge of colouring and became an excellent master. He associated himself entirely with Piero, and they made many pictures in company; among others, since they took great delight in colour, a panel in oil in S. Miniato al Monte without Florence, for the Cardinal of Portugal. On this panel, which was placed on the altar of his chapel, they painted S. James the Apostle, S. Eustace, and S. Vincent, which have been much extolled. Piero, in particular, painted certain prophets on the wall in oil (a method that he had learnt from Andrea dal Castagno), in the corners of the angles below the architrave, where the lunettes of the arches run; and in one of the lunettes he painted the Virgin receiving the Annunciation, with three figures. For the Capitani di Parte he painted a Madonna with the Child in her arms in a lunette, with a frieze of seraphim all round, also wrought in oil. They also painted in oil, on canvas, on a pilaster of S. Michele in Orto, an Angel Raphael with Tobias; and they made certain Virtues in the Mercatanzia of Florence, in the very place where that Tribunal holds its sittings. In the Proconsulate Antonio made portraits from life of Messer Poggio, Secretary to the Signoria of Florence, who continued the History of Florence after Messer Leonardo d'Arezzo, and of Messer Giannozzo Manetti, a man of no small learning and repute, in the same place where other masters some time before had made portraits of Zanobi da Strada, a poet of Florence, Donato Acciaiuoli, and others. In the Chapel of the Pucci, in S. Sebastiano de' Servi, he painted the panel of the altar, which is a rare and excellent work, containing marvellous horses, nudes, and very beautiful figures in foreshortening, and S. Sebastian himself portrayed from life—namely, from Gino di Lodovico Capponi. This work received greater praise than any other that Antonio ever made, since, seeking to imitate nature to the utmost of his power, he showed in one of the archers, who is resting his cross-bow against his chest and bending down to the ground in order to load it, all the force that a man of strong arm can exert in loading that weapon, for we see his veins and muscles swelling, and the man himself holding his breath in order to gain more strength. Nor is this the only figure wrought with careful consideration, for all the others in their various attitudes also demonstrate clearly enough the thought and the intelligence that he put into this work, which was certainly appreciated by Antonio Pucci, who gave him 300 crowns for it, declaring that he was barely paying him for the colours. It was finished in the year 1475.

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**ANTONIO POLLAIUOLO: DAVID VICTOR
(Berlin: Kaiser Friedrich Museum, 73A.
Panel)**

[View larger image](#)

Gaining courage from this, therefore, he painted at S. Miniato fra le Torri, without the Gate, a S. Christopher ten braccia in height, a very beautiful work executed in a modern manner, the figure being better proportioned than any other of that size that had been made up to that time. He then made a Crucifix with S. Antonino, on canvas, which was placed in the chapel of that Saint in S. Marco. In the Palace of the Signoria of Florence, at the Porta della Catena, he made a S. John the Baptist; and in the house of the Medici he painted for the elder Lorenzo three figures of Hercules in three pictures, each five braccia in height. The first of these, which is slaying Antaeus, is a very beautiful figure, in which the strength of Hercules as he crushes the other is seen most vividly, for the muscles and nerves of that figure are all strained in the struggle to destroy Antaeus. The head of Hercules shows the gnashing of the teeth so well in harmony with the other parts, that even the toes of his feet are raised in the effort. Nor did he take less pains with Antaeus, who, crushed in the arms of Hercules, is seen sinking and losing all his strength, and giving up his breath through his open mouth. The second Hercules, who is slaying the Lion, has the left knee pressed against its chest, and, setting his teeth and extending his arms, and grasping the Lion's jaws with both his hands, he is opening them and rending them asunder by main force, although the beast is tearing his arms grievously with its claws in self-defence. The third picture, wherein Hercules is slaying the Hydra, is something truly marvellous, particularly the serpent, which he made so lively and so natural in colouring that nothing could be made more life-like. In that beast are seen venom, fire, ferocity, rage, and such vivacity, that he deserves to be celebrated and to be closely imitated in this by all good craftsmen.

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For the Company of S. Angelo in Arezzo he executed an oil-painting on cloth, with a Crucifix on one side, and on the other S. Michael in combat with the Dragon, as beautiful as any work that there is to be seen by his hand; for the figure of S. Michael, who is bravely confronting the Dragon, setting his teeth and knitting his brows, truly seems to have descended from Heaven in order to effect the vengeance of God against the pride of Lucifer, and it is indeed a marvellous work. He had a more modern grasp of the nude than the masters before his day, and he dissected many bodies in order to study their anatomy. He was the first to demonstrate the method of searching out the muscles, in order that they might have their due form and place in his figures, and he engraved on copper a battle of nude figures all girt round with a chain; and after this one he made other engravings, with much better workmanship than had been shown by the other masters who had lived before him.

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For these reasons, then, he became famous among craftsmen, and after the death of Pope Sixtus IV he was summoned by his successor, Pope Innocent, to Rome, where he made a tomb of metal for the said Innocent, wherein he portrayed him from nature, seated in the attitude of giving the Benediction; and this was placed in S. Pietro. That of the said Pope Sixtus, which was finished at very great cost, was placed in the chapel that is called by the name of that Pontiff. It stands quite by itself, with very rich adornments, and on it there lies an excellent figure of the Pope; and the

tomb of Innocent stands in S. Pietro, beside the chapel that contains the Lance of Christ. It is said that the same man designed the Palace of the Belvedere for the said Pope Innocent, although, since he had little experience of building, it was erected by others. Finally, after becoming rich, these two brothers died almost at the same time in 1498, and were buried by their relatives in S. Pietro in Vincula; and in memory of them, beside the middle door, on the left as one enters into the church, there were placed two medallions of marble with their portraits and with the following epitaph:

ANTONIUS PULLARIUS PATRIA FLORENTINUS, PICTOR INSIGNIS, QUI
DUORUM PONTIF. XISTI ET INNOCENTII ÆREA MONIMENTA MIRO OPIFIC.
EXPRESSIT, RE FAMIL. COMPOSITA EX TEST. HIC SE CUM PETRO FRATRE
CONDI VOLUIT. VIX. AN. LXXII. OBIIT ANNO SAL. MIID.

The same man made a very beautiful battle of nude figures in low-relief and of metal, which went to Spain; of this every craftsman in Florence has a plaster cast. And after his death there were found the design and model that he had made at the command of Lodovico Sforza for the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, of which design there are two forms in our book; in one the Duke has Verona beneath him, and in the other he is on a pedestal covered with battle pieces, in full armour, and forcing his horse to leap on a man in armour. But the reason why he did not put these designs into execution I have not yet been able to discover. The same man made some very beautiful medals; among others, one representing the conspiracy of the Pazzi, containing on one side the heads of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, and on the reverse the choir of S. Maria del Fiore, with the whole event exactly as it happened. He also made the medals of certain Pontiffs, and many other things that are known to craftsmen.

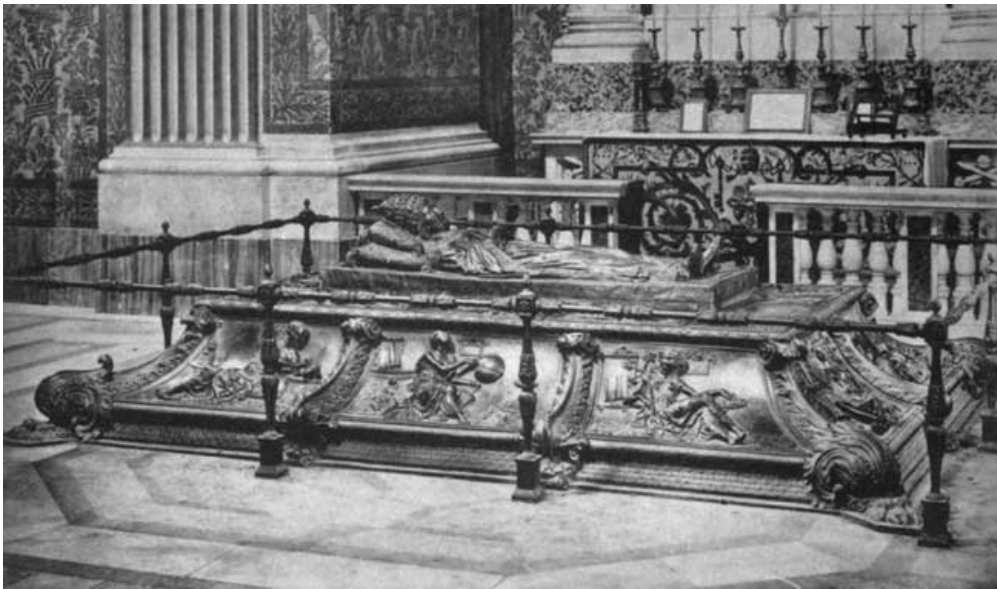
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THE MARTYRDOM OF S. SEBASTIAN
*(After the panel by Antonio Pollaiuolo. London:
National Gallery, 292)*

Mansell

[View larger image](#)



TOMB OF POPE SIXTUS IV
(After Antonio Pollaiuolo. Rome: S. Peter's)
Anderson

[View larger image](#)

Antonio was seventy-two years of age when he died, and Piero sixty-five. The former left many disciples, among whom was Andrea Sansovino. Antonio had a most fortunate life in his day, finding rich Pontiffs, and his own city at the height of its greatness and delighting in talent, wherefore he was much esteemed; whereas, if he had chanced to live in an unfavourable age, he would not have produced such fruits as he did, since troublous times are deadly enemies to the sciences in which men labour and take delight.

For S. Giovanni in Florence, after the design of this man, there were made two dalmatics, a chasuble, and a cope, of double brocade, all woven in one piece without a single seam; and for these, as borders and ornaments, there were embroidered the stories of the life of S. John, with most delicate workmanship and art, by Paolo da Verona, a divine master of that profession and rare in intelligence beyond all others, who executed the figures no less well with the needle than Antonio would have done them with his brush; wherefore we owe no small obligation to the one for his design and to the other for his patience in embroidering it. This work took twenty-six years to complete; but of these embroideries, which, being made with the close stitch, are not only more durable but also seem like a real painting done with the brush, the good method is now all but lost, since we now use a more open stitch, which is less durable and less lovely to the eye.

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SANDRO BOTTICELLI

LIFE OF SANDRO BOTTICELLI

[ALESSANDRO FILIPEPI OR SANDRO DI BOTTICELLO]

PAINTER OF FLORENCE

At the same time with the elder Lorenzo de' Medici, the Magnificent, which was truly a golden age for men of intellect, there also flourished one Alessandro, called Sandro after our custom, and surnamed Di Botticello for a reason that we shall see below. This man was the son of Mariano Filipepi, a citizen of Florence, who brought him up with care, and had him instructed in all those things that are usually taught to children before they are old enough to be apprenticed to some calling. But although he found it easy to learn whatever he wished, nevertheless he was ever restless, nor was he contented with any form of learning, whether reading, writing, or arithmetic, insomuch that his father, weary of the vagaries of his son's brain, in despair apprenticed him as a goldsmith with a boon-companion of his own, called Botticello, no mean master of that art in his day.

Now in that age there was a very close connection—nay, almost a constant intercourse—between the goldsmiths and the painters; wherefore Sandro, who was a ready fellow and had devoted himself wholly to design, became enamoured of painting, and determined to devote himself to that. For this reason he spoke out his mind freely to his father, who, recognizing the inclination of his brain, took him to Fra Filippo of the Carmine, a most excellent painter of that time, with whom he placed him to learn the art, according to Sandro's own desire. Thereupon, devoting himself heart and soul to that art, Sandro followed and imitated his master so well that Fra Filippo, growing to love him, taught him very thoroughly, so that he soon rose to such a rank as none would have expected for him.

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While still quite young, he painted a figure of Fortitude in the Mercatanzia of Florence, among the pictures of Virtues that were wrought by Antonio and Piero del Pollaiuolo. For the Chapel of the Bardi in S. Spirito at Florence he painted a panel, wrought with diligence and brought to a fine completion, which contains certain olive-trees and palms executed with consummate lovingness. He painted a panel for the Convertite Nuns, and another for those of S. Barnaba. In the tramezzo^[26] of the Ognissanti, by the door that leads into the choir, he painted for the Vespucci a S. Augustine in fresco, with which he took very great pains, seeking to surpass all the painters of his time, and particularly Domenico Ghirlandajo, who had made a S. Jerome on the other side; and this work won very great praise, for in the head of that Saint he depicted the profound meditation and acute subtlety that are found in men of wisdom who are ever concentrated on the investigation of the highest and most difficult matters. This picture, as was said in the Life of Ghirlandajo, has this year (1564) been removed safe and sound from its original position.

Having thus come into credit and reputation, he was commissioned by the Guild of Porta Santa Maria to paint in S. Marco a panel with the Coronation of Our Lady and a choir of angels, which he designed and executed very well. He made many works in the house of the Medici for the elder Lorenzo, particularly a Pallas on a device of great branches, which spouted forth fire: this he painted of the size of life, as he did a S. Sebastian. In S. Maria Maggiore in Florence, beside the Chapel of the Panciaticchi, there is a very beautiful Pietà with little figures. For various houses throughout the city he painted round pictures, and many female nudes, of which there are still two at Castello, a villa of Duke Cosimo's; one representing the birth of Venus, with those Winds and Zephyrs that bring her to the earth, with the Cupids; and likewise another Venus, whom the Graces are covering with flowers, as a symbol of spring; and all this he is seen to have expressed very gracefully. Round an apartment of the house of Giovanni Vespucci, now belonging to Piero Salviati, in the Via de' Servi, he made many pictures which were enclosed by frames of walnut-wood, by way of ornament and panelling, with many most lively and beautiful figures. In the house of the Pucci, likewise, he painted with little figures Boccaccio's tale of Nastagio degli Onesti in four square pictures of most charming and beautiful workmanship, and the Epiphany in a round picture. For a chapel in the Monastery of Cestello he painted an Annunciation on a panel. Near the side-door of S. Pietro Maggiore, for Matteo Palmieri, he painted a panel with an infinite number of figures—namely, the Assumption of Our Lady, with the zones of Heaven as they are represented, and the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Evangelists, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Doctors, the Virgins, and the Hierarchies; all from the design given to him by Matteo, who was a learned and able man. This work he painted with mastery and consummate diligence; and at the foot is a portrait of Matteo on his knees, with that of his wife. But for all that the work is most beautiful, and should have silenced envy, nevertheless there were certain malignant slanderers who, not being able to do it any other damage, said that both Matteo and Sandro had committed therein the grievous sin of heresy. As to whether this be true or false, I cannot be expected to judge; it is enough that the figures painted therein by Sandro are truly worthy of praise, by reason of the pains that he took in drawing the zones of Heaven and in the distribution of figures, angels, foreshortenings, and views, all varied in diverse ways, the whole being executed with good design.

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SANDRO BOTTICELLI: PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR

(Florence: Pitti Palace, Panel)

[View larger image](#)



SANDRO BOTTICELLI: GIOVANNA TORNABUONI AND THE GRACES

(Paris: Louvre, 1297. Fresco)

[View larger image](#)

At this time Sandro was commissioned to paint a little panel with figures three-quarters of a braccio in length, which was placed between two doors in the principal façade of S. Maria Novella, on the left as one enters the church by the door in the centre. It contains the Adoration of the Magi, and wonderful feeling is seen in the first old man, who, kissing the foot of Our Lord, and melting with tenderness, shows very clearly that he has achieved the end of his long journey. The figure of this King is an actual portrait of the elder Cosimo de' Medici, the most lifelike and most natural that is to be found of him in our own day. The second, who is Giuliano de' Medici, father of Pope Clement VII, is seen devoutly doing reverence to the Child with a most intent expression, and presenting Him with his offering. The third, also on his knees, appears to be

adoring Him and giving Him thanks, while confessing that He is the true Messiah; this is Giovanni, son of Cosimo.

It is not possible to describe the beauty that Sandro depicted in the heads that are therein seen, which are drawn in various attitudes, some in full face, some in profile, some in three-quarter face, others bending down, and others, again, in various manners; with different expressions for the young and the old, and with all the bizarre effects that reveal to us the perfection of his skill; and he distinguished the Courts of the three Kings one from another, insomuch that one can see which are the retainers of each. This is truly a most admirable work, and executed so beautifully, whether in colouring, drawing, or composition, that every craftsman at the present day stands in a marvel thereat. And at that time it brought him such great fame, both in Florence and abroad, that Pope Sixtus IV, having accomplished the building of the chapel of his palace in Rome, and wishing to have it painted, ordained that he should be made head of that work; whereupon he painted therein with his own hand the following scenes—namely, the Temptation of Christ by the Devil, Moses slaying the Egyptian, Moses receiving drink from the daughters of Jethro the Midianite, and likewise fire descending from Heaven on the sacrifice of the sons of Aaron, with certain Sanctified Popes in the niches above the scenes. Having therefore acquired still greater fame and reputation among the great number of competitors who worked with him, both Florentines and men of other cities, he received from the Pope a good sum of money, the whole of which he consumed and squandered in a moment during his residence in Rome, where he lived in haphazard fashion, as was his wont.

Having at the same time finished and unveiled the part that had been assigned to him, he returned immediately to Florence, where, being a man of inquiring mind, he made a commentary on part of Dante, illustrated the *Inferno*, and printed it; on which he wasted much of his time, bringing infinite disorder into his life by neglecting his work. He also printed many of the drawings that he had made, but in a bad manner, for the engraving was poorly done. The best of these that is to be seen by his hand is the *Triumph of the Faith* effected by Fra Girolamo Savonarola of Ferrara, of whose sect he was so ardent a partisan that he was thereby induced to desert his painting, and, having no income to live on, fell into very great distress. For this reason, persisting in his attachment to that party, and becoming a *Piagnone*^[27] (as the members of the sect were then called), he abandoned his work; wherefore he ended in his old age by finding himself so poor, that, if Lorenzo de' Medici, for whom, besides many other things, he had done some work at the little hospital in the district of Volterra, had not succoured him the while that he lived, as did afterwards his friends and many excellent men who loved him for his talent, he would have almost died of hunger.

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THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI
(After the panel by Sandro Botticelli. Florence: Uffizi, 1286)
M. S.

[View larger image](#)

In S. Francesco, without the Porta a San Miniato, there is a Madonna in a round picture by the hand of Sandro, with some angels of the size of life, which was held a very beautiful work. Sandro was a man of very pleasant humour, often playing tricks on his disciples and his friends; wherefore it is related that once, when a pupil of his who was called Biagio had made a round picture exactly like the one mentioned above, in order to sell it, Sandro sold it for six florins of gold to a citizen; then, finding Biagio, he said to him, "At last I have sold this thy picture; so this

evening it must be hung on high, where it will be seen better, and in the morning thou must go to the house of the citizen who has bought it, and bring him here, that he may see it in a good light in its proper place; and then he will pay thee the money." "O, my master," said Biagio, "how well you have done." Then, going into the shop, he hung the picture at a good height, and went off. Meanwhile Sandro and Jacopo, who was another of his disciples, made eight caps of paper, like those worn by citizens, and fixed them with white wax on the heads of the eight angels that surrounded the Madonna in the said picture. Now, in the morning, up comes Biagio with his citizen, who had bought the picture and was in the secret. They entered the shop, and Biagio, looking up, saw his Madonna seated, not among his angels, but among the Signoria of Florence, with all those caps. Thereupon he was just about to begin to make an outcry and to excuse himself to the man who had bought it, when, seeing that the other, instead of complaining, was actually praising the picture, he kept silent himself. Finally, going with the citizen to his house, Biagio received his payment of six florins, the price for which his master had sold the picture; and then, returning to the shop just as Sandro and Jacopo had removed the paper caps, he saw his angels as true angels, and not as citizens in their caps. All in a maze, and not knowing what to say, he turned at last to Sandro and said: "Master, I know not whether I am dreaming, or whether this is true. When I came here before, these angels had red caps on their heads, and now they have not; what does it mean?" "Thou art out of thy wits, Biagio," said Sandro; "this money has turned thy head. If it were so, thinkest thou that the citizen would have bought the picture?" "It is true," replied Biagio, "that he said nothing to me about it, but for all that it seemed to me strange." Finally, all the other lads gathered round him and wrought on him to believe that it had been a fit of giddiness.

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Another time a cloth-weaver came to live in a house next to Sandro's, and erected no less than eight looms, which, when at work, not only deafened poor Sandro with the noise of the treadles and the movement of the frames, but shook his whole house, the walls of which were no stronger than they should be, so that what with the one thing and the other he could not work or even stay at home. Time after time he besought his neighbour to put an end to this annoyance, but the other said that he both would and could do what he pleased in his own house; whereupon Sandro, in disdain, balanced on the top of his own wall, which was higher than his neighbour's and not very strong, an enormous stone, more than enough to fill a wagon, which threatened to fall at the slightest shaking of the wall and to shatter the roof, ceilings, webs, and looms of his neighbour, who, terrified by this danger, ran to Sandro, but was answered in his very own words—namely, that he both could and would do whatever he pleased in his own house. Nor could he get any other answer out of him, so that he was forced to come to a reasonable agreement and to be a good neighbour to Sandro.



SANDRO BOTTICELLI: THE MADONNA OF THE POMEGRANATE

(Florence: Uffizi, 1289. Panel)

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It is also related that Sandro, for a jest, accused a friend of his own of heresy before his vicar, and the friend, on appearing, asked who the accuser was and what the accusation; and having

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been told that it was Sandro, who had charged him with holding the opinion of the Epicureans, and believing that the soul dies with the body, he insisted on being confronted with the accuser before the judge. Sandro therefore appeared, and the other said: "It is true that I hold this opinion with regard to this man's soul, for he is an animal. Nay, does it not seem to you that he is the heretic, since without a scrap of learning, and scarcely knowing how to read, he plays the commentator to Dante and takes his name in vain?"

It is also said that he had a surpassing love for all whom he saw to be zealous students of art; and that he earned much, but wasted everything through negligence and lack of management. Finally, having grown old and useless, and being forced to walk with crutches, without which he could not stand upright, he died, infirm and decrepit, at the age of seventy-eight, and was buried in Ognissanti at Florence in the year 1515.

In the guardaroba of the Lord Duke Cosimo there are two very beautiful heads of women in profile by his hand, one of which is said to be the mistress of Giuliano de' Medici, brother of Lorenzo, and the other Madonna Lucrezia de' Tornabuoni, wife of the said Lorenzo. In the same place, likewise by the hand of Sandro, is a Bacchus who is raising a cask with both his hands, and putting it to his mouth—a very graceful figure. And in the Duomo of Pisa he began an Assumption, with a choir of angels, in the Chapel of the Impagliata; but afterwards, being displeased with it, he left it unfinished. In S. Francesco at Montevarchi he painted the panel of the high-altar; and in the Pieve of Empoli, on the same side as the S. Sebastian of Rossellino, he made two angels. He was among the first to discover the method of decorating standards and other sorts of hangings with the so-called inlaid work, to the end that the colours might not fade and might show the tint of the cloth on either side. By his hand, and made thus, is the baldacchino of Orsanmichele, covered with beautiful and varied figures of Our Lady; which proves how much better such a method preserves the cloth than does the use of mordants, which eat it away and make its life but short, although, being less costly, mordants are now used more than anything else.

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Sandro's drawings were extraordinarily good, and so many, that for some time after his death all the craftsmen strove to obtain some of them; and we have some in our book, made with great mastery and judgment. His scenes abounded with figures, as may be seen from the embroidered border of the Cross that the Friars of S. Maria Novella carry in processions, all made from his design. Great was the praise, then, that Sandro deserved for all the pictures that he chose to make with diligence and love, as he did the aforesaid panel of the Magi in S. Maria Novella, which is marvellous. Very beautiful, too, is a little round picture by his hand that is seen in the apartment of the Prior of the Angeli in Florence, in which the figures are small but very graceful and wrought with beautiful consideration. Of the same size as the aforesaid panel of the Magi, and by the same man's hand, is a picture in the possession of Messer Fabio Segni, a gentleman of Florence, in which there is painted the Calumny of Apelles, as beautiful as any picture could be. Under this panel, which Sandro himself presented to Antonio Segni, who was much his friend, there may now be read the following verses, written by the said Messer Fabio:

INDICIO QUEMQUAM NE FALSO LÆDERE TENTENT
TERRARUM REGES, PARVA TABELLA MONET.
HUIC SIMILEM ÆGYPTI REGI DONAVIT APELLES;
REX FUIT ET DIGNUS MUNERE, MUNUS EO.



THE CALUMNY OF APELLES
(After the panel by Sandro Botticelli. Florence: Uffizi, 1182)
M. S.

BENEDETTO DA MAIANO

LIFE OF BENEDETTO DA MAIANO

SCULPTOR AND ARCHITECT

Benedetto da Maiano, a sculptor of Florence, who was in his earliest years a wood-carver, was held the most able master of all who were then handling the tools of that profession; and he was particularly excellent as a craftsman in that form of work which, as has been said elsewhere, was introduced at the time of Filippo Brunelleschi and Paolo Uccello—namely, the inlaying of pieces of wood tinted with various colours, in order to make views in perspective, foliage, and many other diverse things of fancy. In this craft, then, Benedetto da Maiano was in his youth the best master that there was to be found, as is clearly demonstrated by many works of his that are to be seen in various parts of Florence, particularly by all the presses in the Sacristy of S. Maria del Fiore, the greater part of which he finished after the death of his uncle Giuliano; these are full of figures executed in inlaid work, foliage, and other devices, all wrought with great expense and craftsmanship. Having gained a very great name through the novelty of this art, he made many works, which were sent to diverse places and to various Princes; and among others King Alfonso of Naples had the furniture for a study, made under the direction of Giuliano, uncle of Benedetto, who was serving that King as architect. Benedetto himself went to join him there; but, being displeased with the position, he returned to Florence, where, no long time after, he made for Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, who had many Florentines in his Court and took delight in all rare works, a pair of coffers inlaid in wood with difficult and most beautiful craftsmanship. He then determined, being invited with great favour by that King, to consent to go thither at all costs; and so, having packed up his coffers and embarked with them on board ship, he set off for Hungary. There, after doing obeisance to that King, by whom he was received most graciously, he sent for the said coffers and had them unpacked in the presence of the monarch, who was very eager to see them; whereupon he saw that the damp from the water and the exhalations from the sea had so softened the glue, that, on the opening of the waxed cloths, almost all the pieces which had been attached to the coffers fell to the ground. Whether Benedetto, therefore, in the presence of so many nobles, stood in dumb amazement, everyone may judge for himself. However, putting the work together as well as he was able, he contrived to leave the King well enough satisfied; but in spite of this he took an aversion to that craft and could no longer endure it, through the shame that it had brought upon him.

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And so, casting off all timidity, he devoted himself to sculpture, in which art he had already worked at Loreto while living with his uncle Giuliano, making a lavatory with certain angels of marble for the sacristy. Labouring at this art, before he left Hungary he gave that King to know that if he had been put to shame at the beginning, the fault had lain with that craft, which was a mean one, and not with his intellect, which was rare and exalted. Having therefore made in those parts certain works both in clay and in marble, which gave great pleasure to that King, he returned to Florence; and he had no sooner arrived there than he was commissioned by the Signori to make the marble ornament for the door of their Audience Chamber. For this he made some boys supporting with their arms certain festoons, all very beautiful; but the most beautiful part of the work was the figure in the middle, two braccia in height, of a young S. John, which is held to be a thing of rare excellence. And to the end that the whole work might be by his own hand, he made by himself the wood-work that closes the said door, and executed a figure with inlaid woods on either part of it, that is, Dante on one and Petrarca on the other; which two figures are enough to show to any man who may have seen no other work of that kind by the hand of Benedetto, how rare and excellent a master he was of that craft. This Audience Chamber has been painted in our own day by Francesco Salviati at the command of the Lord Duke Cosimo, as will be told in the proper place.

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PULPIT IN S. CROCE, FLORENCE
(After Benedetto da Maiano. Florence)

Alinari

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In S. Maria Novella at Florence, where Filippino painted the chapel, Benedetto afterwards made a tomb of black marble, with a Madonna and certain angels in a medallion, with much diligence, for the elder Filippo Strozzi, whose portrait, which he made there in marble, is now in the Strozzi Palace. The same Benedetto was commissioned by the elder Lorenzo de' Medici to make in S. Maria del Fiore a portrait of the Florentine painter Giotto, which he placed over the epitaph, of which enough has been said above in the Life of Giotto himself. This piece of marble sculpture is held to be passing good. Having afterwards gone to Naples by reason of the death of his uncle Giuliano, whose heir he was, Benedetto, besides certain works that he executed for that King, made a marble panel for the Count of Terranuova in the Monastery of the Monks of Monte Oliveto, containing an Annunciation with certain saints, and surrounded by very beautiful boys, who are supporting some festoons; and in the predella of the said work he made many low-reliefs in a good manner. In Faenza he made a very beautiful tomb of marble for the body of S. Savino, and on this he wrought six scenes in low-relief from the life of that Saint, with much invention and design both in the buildings and in the figures; insomuch that both from this work and from others by his hand he was recognized as a man excellent in sculpture. Wherefore, before he left Romagna, he was commissioned to make a portrait of Galeotto Malatesta. He also made one, I know not whether before this or after, of Henry VII, King of England, after a drawing on paper that he had received from some Florentine merchants. The studies for these two portraits, together with many other things, were found in his house after his death.

Having finally returned to Florence, he made in S. Croce, for Pietro Mellini, a citizen of Florence and a very rich merchant at that time, the marble pulpit that is seen there, which is held to be a very rare thing and more beautiful than any other that has ever been executed in that manner, since the marble figures that are to be seen therein, in the stories of S. Francis, are wrought with so great excellence and diligence that nothing more could be looked for in marble. For with great art Benedetto carved there trees, rocks, houses, views in perspective, and certain things in marvellously bold relief; not to mention a projection on the ground below the said pulpit, which serves as a tombstone, wrought with so much design that it is not possible to praise it enough. It is said that in making this work he had some difficulty with the Wardens of Works of S. Croce, because, while he wished to erect the said pulpit against a column that sustains some of the arches which support the roof, and to perforate that column in order to accommodate the steps and the entrance to the pulpit, they would not consent, fearing lest it might be so weakened by the hollow required for the steps as to collapse under the weight above, with great damage to a part of that church. But Mellini having guaranteed that the work would be finished without any injury to the church, they finally consented. Having, therefore, bound the outer side of the column with bands of bronze (the part, namely, from the pulpit downwards, which is covered with hard stone), Benedetto made within it the steps for ascending to the pulpit, and in proportion as he hollowed it out within, so did he strengthen the outer side with the said hard stone, in the manner that is still to be seen. And he brought this work to perfection to the amazement of all who see it, showing in each part and in the whole together the utmost excellence that could be desired in such a work.

Many declare that the elder Filippo Strozzi, when intending to build his palace, sought the advice of Benedetto, who made him a model, according to which it was begun, although it was afterwards carried on and finished by Cronaca on the death of Benedetto. The latter, having acquired enough to live upon, would do no more works in marble after those described above, save that he finished in S. Trinita the S. Mary Magdalene begun by Desiderio da Settignano, and made the Crucifix that is over the altar of S. Maria del Fiore, with certain others like it.

As for architecture, although he put his hand to but few works, yet in these he showed no less judgment than in sculpture; particularly in three ceilings which were made at very great expense, under his guidance and direction, in the Palace of the Signoria at Florence. The first of these was the ceiling of the hall that is now called the Sala de' Dugento, over which it was proposed to make, not a similar hall, but two apartments, that is, a hall and an audience chamber, so that it was necessary to make a wall, and no light one either, containing a marble door of reasonable thickness; wherefore, for the execution of such a work, there was need of intelligence and judgment no less than those possessed by Benedetto.

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Benedetto, then, in order not to diminish the said hall and yet divide the space above into two, went to work in the following manner. On a beam one braccio in thickness, and as long as the whole breadth of the hall, he laid another consisting of two pieces, in such a manner that it projected with its thickness to the height of two-thirds of a braccio. At the ends, these two beams, bound and secured together very firmly, gave a height of two braccia at the edge of the wall on each side; and the said two ends were grooved with a claw-shaped cut, in such a way that there could be laid upon them an arch of half a braccio in thickness, made of two layers of bricks, with its flanks resting on the principal walls. These two beams, then, were dove-tailed together with tenon and mortise, and so firmly bound and united with good bands of iron, that out of two there was made one single beam. Besides this, having made the said arch, and wishing that these timbers of the ceiling should have nothing more to sustain than the wall under the arch, and that the arch itself should sustain the rest, he also attached to this arch two great supports of iron, which, being firmly bolted to the said beams below, upheld and still uphold them; while, even if they were not to suffice by themselves, the arch would be able—by means of the said supports which encircle the beams, one on one side of the marble door and one on the other—to support a weight much greater than that of the partition wall, which is made of bricks and half a braccio in thickness. What is more, he had the bricks in the said wall laid on edge and in the manner of an arch, so that the pressure came against the solid part, at the corners, and the whole was thus more stable. In this manner, by means of the good judgment of Benedetto, the said Sala de' Dugento remained as large as before, and over the same space, with a partition wall between, were made the hall that is called the Sala dell' Orivolo^[28] and the Audience Chamber wherein is the Triumph of Camillus, painted by the hand of Salviati. The soffit of this ceiling was richly wrought and carved by Marco del Tasso and his brothers, Domenico and Giuliano, who likewise executed that of the Sala dell' Orivolo and that of the Audience Chamber. And since the said marble door had been made double by Benedetto, on the arch of the inner door—we have already spoken of the outer one—he wrought a seated figure of Justice in marble, with the globe of the world in one hand and a sword in the other; and round the arch run the following words:

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DILIGITE JUSTITIAM QUI JUDICATIS TERRAM.

The whole of this work was executed with marvellous diligence and art.

For the Church of the Madonna delle Grazie, which is a little distance without the city of Arezzo, the same man made a portico with a flight of steps in front of the door. In making the portico he placed the arches on the columns, and right round alongside the roof he made an architrave, frieze, and great cornice; and in the latter, by way of drip, he placed a garland of rosettes carved in grey-stone, which jut out to the extent of one braccio and a third, insomuch that between the projection of the front of the cyma above to the dentils and ovoli below the drip there is a space of two braccia and a half, which, with the half braccio added by the tiles, makes a projecting roof all round of three braccia in width, beautiful, rich, useful, and ingenious. In this work there is a contrivance worthy to be well considered by craftsmen, for, wishing to give this roof all that projection without modillions or corbels to support it, he made the slabs, on which the rosettes are carved, so large that only the half of their length projected, and the other half was built into the solid wall; wherefore, being thus counterpoised, they were able to support the rest and all that was laid upon them, as they have done up to the present day, without any danger to that building. And since he did not wish this roof to appear to be made, as it was, of pieces, he surrounded it all, piece by piece, with a moulding made of sections well dove-tailed and let into one another, which served as a ground to the garland of rosettes; and this united the whole work together in such a manner that all who see it judge it to be of one piece. In the same place he had a flat ceiling made of gilded rosettes, which is much extolled.

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Now Benedetto had bought a farm without Prato, on the road from the Porta Fiorentina in the direction of Florence, and no more than half a mile from that place. On the main road, beside the gate, he built a most beautiful little chapel, with a niche wherein he placed a Madonna with the Child in her arms, so well wrought in terra-cotta, that even as it is, with no other colour, it is as beautiful as if it were of marble. So are two angels that are above by way of ornament, each with a candelabrum in his hand. On the predella of the altar there is a Pietà with Our Lady and S. John, made of marble and very beautiful. At his death he left in his house many things begun both in clay and in marble. Benedetto was a very good draughtsman, as may be seen in certain drawings in our book. Finally he died in 1498, at the age of fifty-four, and was honourably buried in S. Lorenzo; and he left directions that all his property, after the death of certain of his

relatives, should go to the Company of the Bigallo.

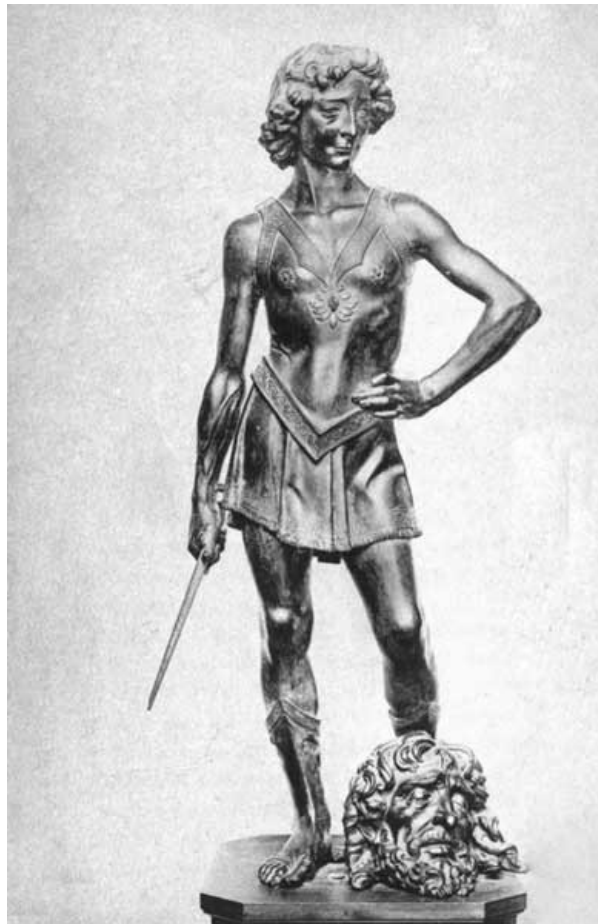
While Benedetto in his youth was working as a joiner and at the inlaying of wood, he had among his rivals Baccio Cellini, piper to the Signoria of Florence, who made many very beautiful inlaid works in ivory, and among others an octagon of figures in ivory, outlined in black and marvellously beautiful, which is in the guardaroba of the Duke. In like manner, Girolamo della Cecca, a pupil of Baccio and likewise piper to the Signoria, also executed many inlaid works at that same time. A contemporary of these was David Pistoiese, who made a S. John the Evangelist of inlaid work at the entrance to the choir of S. Giovanni Evangelista in Pistoia—a work more notable for great diligence in execution than for any great design. There was also Geri Aretino, who wrought the choir and the pulpit of S. Agostino at Arezzo with figures and views in perspective, likewise of inlaid wood. This Geri was a very fanciful man, and he made with wooden pipes an organ most perfect in sweetness and softness, which is still at the present day over the door of the Sacristy of the Vescovado at Arezzo, with its original goodness as sound as ever—a work worthy of marvel, and first put into execution by him. But not one of these men, nor any other, was as excellent by a great measure as was Benedetto; wherefore he deserves to be ever numbered with praise among the best craftsmen of his professions.

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ANDREA VERROCCHIO



DAVID
*(After the bronze by Andrea Verrocchio.
Florence: Bargello)*
Anderson
[View larger image](#)

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LIFE OF ANDREA VERROCCHIO

PAINTER, SCULPTOR, AND ARCHITECT OF FLORENCE

Andrea del Verrocchio, a Florentine, was in his day a goldsmith, a master of perspective, a sculptor, a wood-carver, a painter, and a musician; but in the arts of sculpture and painting, to tell the truth, he had a manner somewhat hard and crude, as one who acquired it rather by infinite study than by the facility of a natural gift. Even if he had been as poor in this facility as he

was rich in the study and diligence that exalted him, he would have been most excellent in those arts, which, for their highest perfection, require a union of study and natural power. If either of these is wanting, a man rarely attains to the first rank; but study will do a great deal, and thus Andrea, who had it in greater abundance than any other craftsman whatsoever, is counted among the rare and excellent masters of our arts.

In his youth he applied himself to the sciences, particularly to geometry. Among many other things that he made while working at the goldsmith's art were certain buttons for copes, which are in S. Maria del Fiore at Florence; and he also made larger works, particularly a cup, full of animals, foliage, and other bizarre fancies, which is known to all goldsmiths, and casts are taken of it; and likewise another, on which there is a very beautiful dance of little children. Having given a proof of his powers in these two works, he was commissioned by the Guild of Merchants to make two scenes in silver for the ends of the altar of S. Giovanni, from which, when put into execution, he acquired very great praise and fame.

There were wanting at this time in Rome some of those large figures of the Apostles which generally stood on the altar of the Chapel of the Pope, as well as certain other works in silver that had been destroyed; wherefore Pope Sixtus sent for Andrea and with great favour commissioned him to do all that was necessary in this matter, and he brought the whole to perfection with much diligence and judgment. Meanwhile, perceiving that the many antique statues and other things that were being found in Rome were held in very great esteem, insomuch that the famous bronze horse was set up by the Pope at S. Giovanni Laterano, and that even the fragments—not to speak of complete works—which were being discovered every day, were prized, Andrea determined to devote himself to sculpture. And so, completely abandoning the goldsmith's art, he set himself to cast some little figures in bronze, which were greatly extolled. Thereupon, growing in courage, he began to work in marble. Now in those days the wife of Francesco Tornabuoni had died in childbirth, and her husband, who had loved her much, and wished to honour her in death to the utmost of his power, entrusted the making of a tomb for her to Andrea, who carved on a slab over a sarcophagus of marble the lady herself, her delivery, and her passing to the other life; and beside this he made three figures of Virtues, which were held very beautiful, for the first work that he had executed in marble; and this tomb was set up in the Minerva.

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Having then returned to Florence with money, fame, and honour, he was commissioned to make a David of bronze, two braccia and a half in height, which, when finished, was placed in the Palace, with great credit to himself, at the head of the staircase, where the Catena was. The while that he was executing the said statue, he also made that Madonna of marble which is over the tomb of Messer Lionardo Bruni of Arezzo in S. Croce; this he wrought, when still quite young, for Bernardo Rossellino, architect and sculptor, who executed the whole of that work in marble, as has been said. The same Andrea made a half-length Madonna in half-relief, with the Child in her arms, in a marble panel, which was formerly in the house of the Medici, and is now placed, as a very beautiful thing, over a door in the apartment of the Duchess of Florence. He also made two heads of metal, likewise in half-relief; one of Alexander the Great, in profile, and the other a fanciful portrait of Darius; each being a separate work by itself, with variety in the crests, armour, and everything else. Both these heads were sent to Hungary by the elder Lorenzo de' Medici, the Magnificent, to King Matthias Corvinus, together with many other things, as will be told in the proper place.

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Having acquired the name of an excellent master by means of these works, above all through many works in metal, in which he took much delight, he made a tomb of bronze in S. Lorenzo, wholly in the round, for Giovanni and Pietro di Cosimo de' Medici, with a sarcophagus of porphyry supported by four corner-pieces of bronze, with twisted foliage very well wrought and finished with the greatest diligence. This tomb stands between the Chapel of the Sacrament and the Sacristy, and no work could be better done, whether wrought in bronze or cast; above all since at the same time he showed therein his talent in architecture, for he placed the said tomb within the embrasure of a window which is about five braccia in breadth and ten in height, and set it on a base that divides the said Chapel of the Sacrament from the old Sacristy. And over the sarcophagus, to fill up the embrasure right up to the vaulting, he made a grating of bronze ropes in a pattern of mandorle, most natural, and adorned in certain places with festoons and other beautiful things of fancy, all remarkable and executed with much mastery, judgment, and invention.

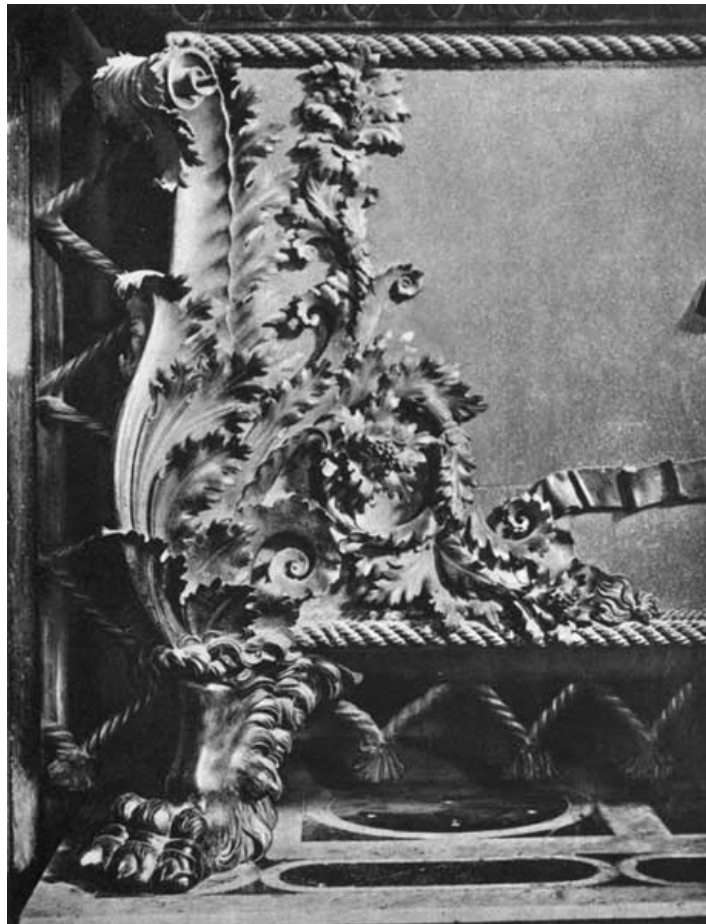
Now Donatello had made for the Tribunal of Six of the Mercanzia that marble shrine which is now opposite to S. Michael, in the Oratory of Orsanmichele, and for this there was to have been made a S. Thomas in bronze, feeling for the wound in the side of Christ; but at that time nothing more was done, for some of the men who had the charge of this wished to have it made by Donatello, and others favoured Lorenzo Ghiberti. Matters stood thus as long as Donatello and Ghiberti were alive; but finally the said two statues were entrusted to Andrea, who, having made the models and moulds, cast them; and they came out so solid, complete, and well made, that it was a most beautiful casting. Thereupon, setting himself to polish and finish them, he brought them to that perfection which is seen at the present day, which could not be greater than it is, for in S. Thomas we see incredulity and a too great anxiety to assure himself of the truth, and at the same time the love that makes him lay his hand in a most beautiful manner on the side of Christ; and in Christ Himself, who is raising one arm and opening His raiment with a most spontaneous gesture, and dispelling the doubts of His incredulous disciple, there are all the grace and divinity, so to speak, that art can give to any figure. Andrea clothed both these figures in most beautiful and well-arranged draperies, which give us to know that he understood that art no less than did

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Donato, Lorenzo, and the others who had lived before him; wherefore this work well deserved to be set up in a shrine made by Donatello, and to be ever afterwards held in the greatest price and esteem.

Now the fame of Andrea could not go further or grow greater in that profession, and he, as a man who was not content with being excellent in one thing only, but desired to become the same in others as well by means of study, turned his mind to painting, and so made the cartoons for a battle of nude figures, very well drawn with the pen, to be afterwards painted in colours on a wall. He also made the cartoons for some historical pictures, and afterwards began to put them into execution in colours; but for some reason, whatever it may have been, they remained unfinished. There are some drawings by his hand in our book, made with much patience and very great judgment, among which are certain heads of women, beautiful in expression and in the adornment of the hair, which Leonardo da Vinci was ever imitating for their beauty. In our book, also, are two horses with the due measures and protractors for reproducing them on a larger scale from a smaller, so that there may be no errors in their proportions; and there is in my possession a horse's head of terra-cotta in relief, copied from the antique, which is a rare work. The Very Reverend Don Vincenzio Borghini has some of his drawings in his book, of which we have spoken above; among others, a design for a tomb made by him in Venice for a Doge, a scene of the Adoration of Christ by the Magi, and the head of a woman painted on paper with the utmost delicacy. He also made for Lorenzo de' Medici, for the fountain of his Villa at Careggi, a boy of bronze squeezing a fish, which the Lord Duke Cosimo has caused to be placed, as may be seen at the present day, on the fountain that is in the courtyard of his Palace; which boy is truly marvellous.

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**CORNER AND FOOT OF THE MEDICI
SARCOPHAGUS**
*(Detail, after Andrea Verrocchio. Florence: S.
Lorenzo)
Alinari*

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Afterwards, the building of the Cupola of S. Maria del Fiore having been finished, it was resolved, after much discussion, that there should be made the copper ball which, according to the instructions left by Filippo Brunelleschi, was to be placed on the summit of that edifice. Whereupon the task was given to Andrea, who made the ball four braccia high, and, placing it on a knob, secured it in such a manner that afterwards the cross could be safely erected upon it; and the whole work, when finished, was put into position with very great rejoicing and delight among the people. Truly great were the ingenuity and diligence that had to be used in making it, to the end that it might be possible, as it is, to enter it from below, and also in securing it with good fastenings, lest the winds might do it damage.

Andrea was never at rest, but was ever labouring at some work either in painting or in sculpture;

and sometimes he would change from one to another, in order to avoid growing weary of working always at the same thing, as many do. Wherefore, although he did not put the aforesaid cartoons into execution, yet he did paint certain pictures; among others, a panel for the Nuns of S. Domenico in Florence, wherein it appeared to him that he had acquitted himself very well; whence, no long time after, he painted another in S. Salvi for the Monks of Vallombrosa, containing the Baptism of Christ by S. John. In this work he was assisted by Leonardo da Vinci, his disciple, then quite young, who painted therein an angel with his own hand, which was much better than the other parts of the work; and for that reason Andrea resolved never again to touch a brush, since Leonardo, young as he was, had acquitted himself in that art much better than he had done.

Now Cosimo de' Medici, having received many antiquities from Rome, had caused to be set up within the door of his garden, or rather, courtyard, which opens on the Via de' Ginori, a very beautiful Marsyas of white marble, bound to a tree-trunk and ready to be flayed; and his grandson Lorenzo, into whose hands there had come the torso and head of another Marsyas, made of red stone, very ancient, and much more beautiful than the first, wished to set it beside the other, but could not, because it was so imperfect. Thereupon he gave it to Andrea to be restored and completed, and he made the legs, thighs, and arms that were lacking in this figure out of pieces of red marble, so well that Lorenzo was highly satisfied and had it placed opposite to the other, on the other side of the door. This ancient torso, made to represent a flayed Marsyas, was wrought with such care and judgment that certain delicate white veins, which were in the red stone, were carved by the craftsman exactly in the right places, so as to appear to be little nerves, such as are seen in real bodies when they have been flayed; which must have given to that work, when it had its original finish, a most life-like appearance.

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The Venetians, meanwhile, wishing to honour the great valour of Bartolommeo da Bergamo, thanks to whom they had gained many victories, in order to encourage others, and having heard the fame of Andrea, summoned him to Venice, where he was commissioned to make an equestrian statue of that captain in bronze, to be placed on the Piazza di SS. Giovanni e Polo. Andrea, then, having made the model of the horse, had already begun to get it ready for casting in bronze, when, thanks to the favour of certain gentlemen, it was determined that Vellano da Padova should make the figure and Andrea the horse. Having heard this, Andrea broke the legs and head of his model and returned in great disdain to Florence, without saying a word. The Signoria, receiving news of this, gave him to understand that he should never be bold enough to return to Venice, for they would cut his head off; to which he wrote in answer that he would take good care not to, because, once they had cut a man's head off, it was not in their power to put it on again, and certainly not one like his own, whereas he could have replaced the head that he had knocked off his horse with one even more beautiful. After this answer, which did not displease those Signori, his payment was doubled and he was persuaded to return to Venice, where he restored his first model and cast it in bronze; but even then he did not finish it entirely, for he caught a chill by overheating himself during the casting, and died in that city within a few days; leaving unfinished not only that work (although there was only a little polishing to be done), which was set up in the place for which it was destined, but also another which he was making in Pistoia, that is, the tomb of Cardinal Forteguerra, with the three Theological Virtues, and a God the Father above; which work was afterwards finished by Lorenzetto, a sculptor of Florence.

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STATUE OF BARTOLOMMEO COLLEONI
*(After the bronze by Andrea Verrocchio. Venice: Campo SS.
Giovanni e Paolo)*
Anderson

Andrea was fifty-six years of age when he died. His death caused infinite grief to his friends and to his disciples, who were not few; above all to the sculptor Nanni Grosso, a most eccentric person both in his art and in his life. This man, it is said, would not have worked outside his shop, particularly for monks or friars, if he had not had free access to the door of the vault, or rather, wine-cellar, so that he might go and drink whenever he pleased, without having to ask leave. It is also told of him that once, having returned from S. Maria Nuova completely cured of some sickness, I know not what, he was visited by his friends, who asked him how it went with him. "Ill," he answered. "But thou art cured," they replied. "That is why it goes ill with me," said he, "for I would dearly love a little fever, so that I might lie there in the hospital, well attended and at my ease." As he lay dying, again in the hospital, there was placed before him a wooden Crucifix, very rude and clumsily wrought; whereupon he prayed them to take it out of his sight and to bring him one by the hand of Donato, declaring that if they did not take it away he would die in misery, so greatly did he detest badly wrought works in his own art.

Disciples of the same Andrea were Pietro Perugino and Leonardo da Vinci, of whom we will speak in the proper place, and Francesco di Simone of Florence, who made a tomb of marble in the Church of S. Domenico in Bologna, with many little figures, which appear from the manner to be by the hand of Andrea, for Messer Alessandro Tartaglia, a doctor of Imola, and another in S. Pancrazio at Florence, facing the sacristy and one of the chapels of the church, for the Chevalier Messer Pietro Minerbetti. Another pupil of Andrea was Agnolo di Polo, who worked with great mastery in clay, filling the city with works by his hand; and if he had deigned to apply himself properly to his art, he would have made very beautiful things. But the one whom he loved more than all the others was Lorenzo di Credi, who brought his remains from Venice and laid them in the Church of S. Ambrogio, in the tomb of Ser Michele di Cione, on the stone of which there are carved the following words:

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SER MICHÆLIS DE CIONIS, ET SUORUM.

And beside them:

HIC OSSA JACENT ANDREÆ VERROCHII, QUI OBIIT
VENETIIS, MCCCCLXXXVIII.

Andrea took much delight in casting in a kind of plaster which would set hard—that is, the kind that is made of a soft stone which is quarried in the districts of Volterra and of Siena and in many other parts of Italy. This stone, when burnt in the fire, and then pounded and mixed with tepid water, becomes so soft that men can make whatever they please with it; but afterwards it solidifies and becomes so hard, that it can be used for moulds for casting whole figures. Andrea, then, was wont to cast in moulds of this material such natural objects as hands, feet, knees, legs, arms, and torsi, in order to have them before him and imitate them with greater convenience. Afterwards, in his time, men began to cast the heads of those who died—a cheap method; wherefore there are seen in every house in Florence, over the chimney-pieces, doors, windows, and cornices, infinite numbers of such portraits, so well made and so natural that they appear alive. And from that time up to the present the said custom has been continued, and it still continues, with great convenience to ourselves, for it has given us portraits of many who have been included in the stories in the Palace of Duke Cosimo. And for this we should certainly acknowledge a very great obligation to the talent of Andrea, who was one of the first to begin to bring the custom into use.

From this men came to make more perfect images, not only in Florence, but in all the places in which there is devoutness, and to which people flock to offer votive images, or, as they are called, "miracoli," in return for some favour received. For whereas they were previously made small and of silver, or only in the form of little panels, or rather of wax, and very clumsy, in the time of Andrea they began to be made in a much better manner, since Andrea, having a very strait friendship with Orsino, a Florentine worker in wax, who had no little judgment in that art, began to show him how he could become excellent therein. Now the due occasion arrived in the form of the death of Giuliano de' Medici and the danger incurred by his brother Lorenzo, who was wounded in S. Maria del Fiore, when it was ordained by the friends and relatives of Lorenzo that images of him should be set up in many places, to render thanks to God for his deliverance. Wherefore Orsino, among others that he made, executed three life-size figures of wax with the aid and direction of Andrea, making the skeleton within of wood, after the method described elsewhere, interwoven with split reeds, which were then covered with waxed cloths folded and arranged so beautifully that nothing better or more true to nature could be seen. Then he made the heads, hands, and feet with wax of greater thickness, but hollow within, portrayed from life, and painted in oils with all the ornaments of hair and everything else that was necessary, so lifelike and so well wrought that they seemed no mere images of wax, but actual living men, as may be seen in each of the said three, one of which is in the Church of the Nuns of Chiarito in the Via di S. Gallo, opposite to the Crucifix that works miracles. This figure is clothed exactly as Lorenzo was, when, with his wounded throat bandaged, he showed himself at the window of his house before the eyes of the people, who had flocked thither to see whether he were alive, as they hoped, or to avenge him if he were dead. The second figure of the same man is in the lucco, the gown peculiar to the citizens of Florence; and it stands in the Servite Church of the Nunziata, over the lesser door, which is beside the counter where candles are sold. The third was sent to S. Maria degli Angeli at Assisi, and set up before the Madonna of that place, where the same Lorenzo de' Medici, as has been already related, caused the road to be paved with bricks all the

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way from S. Maria to that gate of Assisi which leads to S. Francesco, besides restoring the fountains that his grandfather Cosimo had caused to be made in that place. But to return to the images of wax: all those in the said Servite Church are by the hand of Orsino, which have a large O in the base as a mark, with an R within it and a cross above; and they are all so beautiful that there are few since his day who have equalled him. This art, although it has remained alive up to our own time, is nevertheless rather on the decline than otherwise, either because men's devoutness has diminished, or for some other reason, whatever it may be.

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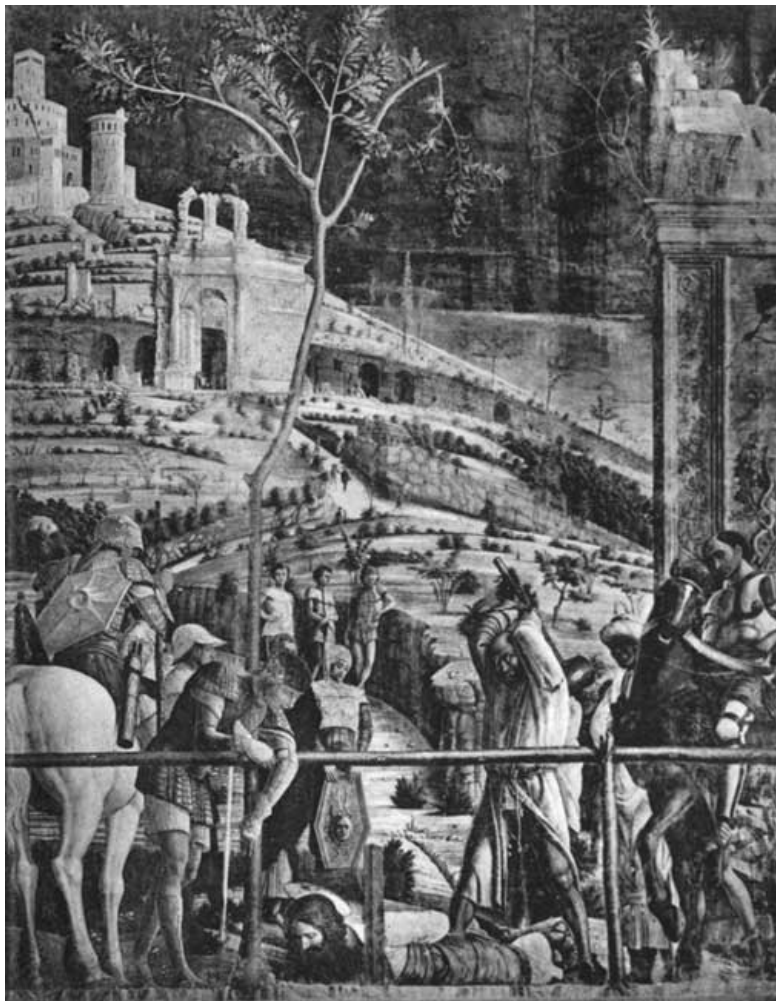
And to return to Verrocchio; besides the aforesaid works, he made Crucifixes of wood, with certain things of clay, in which he was excellent, as may be seen from the models for the scenes that he executed for the altar of S. Giovanni, from certain very beautiful boys, and from a head of S. Jerome, which is held to be marvellous. By the hand of the same man is the boy on the clock of the Mercato Nuovo, who has his arms working free, in such a manner that he can raise them to strike the hours with a hammer that he holds in his hands; which was held in those times to be something very beautiful and fanciful. And let this be the end of the Life of that most excellent sculptor, Andrea Verrocchio.

There lived in the time of Andrea one Benedetto Buglioni, who received the secret of glazed terra-cotta work from a woman related to the house of Andrea della Robbia; wherefore he made many works in that manner both in Florence and abroad, particularly a Christ rising from the dead, with certain angels, which, for a work in glazed terra-cotta, is beautiful enough, in the Church of the Servi, near the Chapel of S. Barbara. He made a Dead Christ in a chapel in S. Pancrazio, and the lunette that is seen over the principal door of the Church of S. Pietro Maggiore. From Benedetto the secret descended to Santi Buglioni, the only man who now knows how to work at this sort of sculpture.

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ANDREA MANTEGNA



THE MARTYRDOM OF S. JAMES
*(After the fresco by Andrea Mantegna. Padua:
Eremitani)*
Anderson

[View larger image](#)

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LIFE OF ANDREA MANTEGNA

PAINTER OF MANTUA

How great is the effect of reward on talent is known to him who labours valiantly and receives a certain measure of recompense, for he feels neither discomfort, nor hardship, nor fatigue, when he expects honour and reward for them; nay, what is more, they render his talent every day more renowned and illustrious. It is true, indeed, that there is not always found one to recognize, esteem, and remunerate it as that of Andrea Mantegna was recognized. This man was born from very humble stock in the district of Mantua; and, although as a boy he was occupied in grazing herds, he was so greatly exalted by destiny and by his merit that he attained to the honourable rank of Chevalier, as will be told in the proper place. When almost full grown he was taken to the city, where he applied himself to painting under Jacopo Squarcione, a painter of Padua, who—as it is written in a Latin letter from Messer Girolamo Campagnola to Messer Leonico Timeo, a Greek philosopher, wherein he gives him information about certain old painters who served the family of Carrara, Lords of Padua—took him into his house, and a little time afterwards, having recognized the beauty of his intelligence, adopted him as his son. Now this Squarcione knew that he himself was not the most able painter in the world; wherefore, to the end that Andrea might learn more than he himself knew, he made him practise much on casts taken from ancient statues and on pictures painted upon canvas which he caused to be brought from diverse places, particularly from Tuscany and from Rome. By these and other methods, therefore, Andrea learnt not a little in his youth; and the competition of Marco Zoppo of Bologna, Darlo da Treviso, and Niccolò Pizzolo of Padua, disciples of his master and adoptive father, was of no small assistance to him, and a stimulus to his studies.

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Now after Andrea, who was then no more than seventeen years of age, had painted the panel of the high-altar of S. Sofia in Padua, which appears wrought by a mature and well-practised master, and not by a youth, Squarcione was commissioned to paint the Chapel of S. Cristofano, which is in the Church of the Eremite Friars of S. Agostino in Padua; and he gave the work to the said Niccolò Pizzolo and to Andrea. Niccolò made therein a God the Father seated in Majesty between the Doctors of the Church, and these paintings were afterwards held to be in no way inferior to those that Andrea executed there. And in truth, if Niccolò, whose works were few, but all good, had taken as much delight in painting as he did in arms, he would have become excellent, and might perchance have lived much longer than he did; for he was ever under arms and had many enemies, and one day, when returning from work, he was attacked and slain by treachery. Niccolò left no other works that I know of, save another God the Father in the Chapel of Urbano Perfetto.^[29]



ANDREA MANTEGNA: THE MADONNA OF THE ROCKS

Andrea, thus left alone in the said chapel, painted the four Evangelists, which were held very beautiful. By reason of this and other works Andrea began to be watched with great expectation, and with hopes that he would attain to that success to which he actually did attain; wherefore Jacopo Bellini, the Venetian painter, father of Gentile and Giovanni, and rival of Squarcione, contrived to get him to marry his daughter, the sister of Gentile. Hearing this, Squarcione fell into such disdain against Andrea that they were enemies ever afterwards; and in proportion as Squarcione had formerly been ever praising the works of Andrea, so from that day onward did he ever decry them in public. Above all did he censure without reserve the pictures that Andrea had made in the said Chapel of S. Cristofano, saying that they were worthless, because in making them he had imitated the ancient works in marble, from which it is not possible to learn painting perfectly, for the reason that stone is ever from its very essence hard, and never has that tender softness that is found in flesh and in things of nature, which are pliant and move in various ways; adding that Andrea would have made those figures much better, and that they would have been more perfect, if he had given them the colour of marble and not such a quantity of colours, because his pictures resembled not living figures but ancient statues of marble or other suchlike things. This censure piqued the mind of Andrea; but, on the other hand, it was of great service to him, for, recognizing that Squarcione was in great measure speaking the truth, he set himself to portray living people, and made so much progress in this art, that, in a scene which still remained to be painted in the said chapel, he showed that he could wrest the good from living and natural objects no less than from those wrought by art. But for all this Andrea was ever of the opinion that the good ancient statues were more perfect and had greater beauty in their various parts than is shown by nature, since, as he judged and seemed to see from those statues, the excellent masters of old had wrested from living people all the perfection of nature, which rarely assembles and unites all possible beauty into one single body, so that it is necessary to take one part from one body and another part from another. In addition to this, it appeared to him that the statues were more complete and more thorough in the muscles, veins, nerves, and other particulars, which nature, covering their sharpness somewhat with the tenderness and softness of flesh, sometimes makes less evident, save perchance in the body of an old man or in one greatly emaciated; but such bodies, for other reasons, are avoided by craftsmen. And that he was greatly enamoured of this opinion is recognized from his works, in which, in truth, the manner is seen to be somewhat hard and sometimes suggesting stone rather than living flesh. Be this as it may, in this last scene, which gave infinite satisfaction, Andrea portrayed Squarcione in an ugly and corpulent figure, lance and sword in hand. In the same work he portrayed the Florentine Noferi, son of Messer Palla Strozzi, Messer Girolamo della Valle, a most excellent physician, Messer Bonifazio Fuzimeliga, Doctor of Laws, Niccolò, goldsmith to Pope Innocent VIII, and Baldassarre da Leccio, all very much his friends, whom he represented clad in white armour, burnished and resplendent, as real armour is, and truly with a beautiful manner. He also portrayed there the Chevalier Messer Bonramino, and a certain Bishop of Hungary, a man wholly witless, who would wander about Rome all day, and then at night would lie down to sleep like a beast in a stable; and he made a portrait of Marsilio Pazzo in the person of the executioner who is cutting off the head of S. James, together with one of himself. This work, in short, by reason of its excellence, brought him a very great name.

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The while that he was working on this chapel, he also painted a panel, which was placed on the altar of S. Luca in S. Justina, and afterwards he wrought in fresco the arch that is over the door of S. Antonino, on which he wrote his name. In Verona he painted a panel for the altar of S. Cristofano and S. Antonio, and he made some figures at the corner of the Piazza della Paglia. In S. Maria in Organo, for the Monks of Monte Oliveto, he painted the panel of the high-altar, which is most beautiful, and likewise that of S. Zeno. And among other things that he wrought while living in Verona and sent to various places, one, which came into the hands of an Abbot of the Abbey of Fiesole, his friend and relative, was a picture containing a half-length Madonna with the Child in her arms, and certain heads of angels singing, wrought with admirable grace; which picture, now to be seen in the library of that place, has been held from that time to our own to be a rare thing.

Now, the while that he lived in Mantua, he had laboured much in the service of the Marquis Lodovico Gonzaga, and that lord, who always showed no little esteem and favour towards the talent of Andrea, caused him to paint a little panel for the Chapel of the Castle of Mantua; in which panel there are scenes with figures not very large but most beautiful. In the same place are many figures foreshortened from below upwards, which are greatly extolled, for although his treatment of the draperies was somewhat hard and precise, and his manner rather dry, yet everything there is seen to have been wrought with much art and diligence. For the same Marquis, in a hall of the Palace of S. Sebastiano in Mantua, he painted the Triumph of Cæsar, which is the best thing that he ever executed. In this work we see, grouped with most beautiful design in the triumph, the ornate and lovely car, the man who is vituperating the triumphant Cæsar, and the relatives, the perfumes, the incense, the sacrifices, the priests, the bulls crowned for the sacrifice, the prisoners, the booty won by the soldiers, the ranks of the squadrons, the elephants, the spoils, the victories, the cities and fortresses counterfeited in various cars, with an infinity of trophies borne on spears, and a variety of helmets and body-armour, head-dresses, and ornaments and vases innumerable; and in the multitude of spectators is a woman holding the hand of a boy, who, having pierced his foot with a thorn, is showing it, weeping, to his mother, in a graceful and very lifelike manner. Andrea, as I may have pointed out elsewhere, had a good and beautiful idea in this scene, for, having set the plane on which the figures stood higher than the

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level of the eye, he placed the feet of the foremost on the outer edge and outline of that plane, making the others recede inwards little by little, so that their feet and legs were lost to sight in the proportion required by the point of view; and so, too, with the spoils, vases, and other instruments and ornaments, of which he showed only the lower part, concealing the upper, as was required by the rules of perspective; which same consideration was also observed with much diligence by Andrea degli Impiccati^[30] in the Last Supper, which is in the Refectory of S. Maria Nuova. Wherefore it is seen that in that age these able masters set about investigating with much subtlety, and imitating with great labour, the true properties of natural objects. And this whole work, to put it briefly, is as beautiful and as well wrought as it could be; so that if the Marquis loved Andrea before, he loved and honoured him much more ever afterwards.



MADONNA AND ANGELS
(After the panel by Andrea Mantegna. Milan: Brera, 198)

Alinari

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What is more, he became so famous thereby that Pope Innocent VIII, hearing of his excellence in painting and of the other good qualities wherewith he was so marvellously endowed, sent for him, even as he was sending for many others, to the end that he might adorn with his pictures the walls of the Belvedere, the building of which had just been finished. Having gone to Rome, then, greatly favoured and recommended by the Marquis, who made him a Chevalier in order to honour him the more, he was received lovingly by that Pontiff and straightway commissioned to paint a little chapel that is in the said place. This he executed with diligence and love, and with such minuteness that the vaulting and the walls appear rather illuminated than painted; and the largest figures that are therein, which he painted in fresco like the others, are over the altar, representing the Baptism of Christ by S. John, with many people around, who are showing by taking off their clothes that they wish to be baptized. Among these is one who, seeking to draw off a stocking that has stuck to his leg through sweat, has crossed that leg over the other and is drawing the stocking off inside out, with such great effort and difficulty, that both are seen clearly in his face; which bizarre fancy caused marvel to all who saw it in those times. It is said that this Pope, by reason of his many affairs, did not pay Mantegna as often as he would have liked, and that therefore, while painting certain Virtues in terretta in that work, he made a figure of Discretion among the rest, whereupon the Pope, having gone one day to see the work, asked Andrea what figure that was; to which Andrea answered that it was Discretion; and the Pope added: "If thou wouldst have her suitably accompanied, put Patience beside her." The painter understood what the meaning of the Holy Father was, and he never said another word. The work finished, the Pope sent him back to the Duke with much favour and honourable rewards.

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The while that Andrea was working in Rome, he painted, besides the said chapel, a little picture of the Madonna with the Child sleeping in her arms; and within certain caverns in the landscape, which is a mountain, he made some stone-cutters quarrying stone for various purposes, all

wrought with such delicacy and such great patience, that it does not seem possible for such good work to be done with the thin point of a brush. This picture is now in the possession of the most Illustrious Lord, Don Francesco Medici, Prince of Florence, who holds it among his dearest treasures.

In our book is a drawing by the hand of Andrea on a half-sheet of royal folio, finished in chiaroscuro, wherein is a Judith who is putting the head of Holofernes into the wallet of her Moorish slave-girl; which chiaroscuro is executed in a manner no longer used, for he left the paper white to serve for the light in place of white lead, and that so delicately that the separate hairs and other minute details are seen therein, no less than if they had been wrought with much diligence by the brush; wherefore in a certain sense this may be called rather a work in colour than a drawing. The same man, like Pollaiuolo, delighted in engraving on copper; and, among other things, he made engravings of his own Triumphs, which were then held in great account, since nothing better had been seen.

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One of the last works that he executed was a panel-picture for S. Maria della Vittoria, a church built after the direction and design of Andrea by the Marquis Francesco, in memory of the victory that he gained on the River Taro, when he was General of the Venetian forces against the French. In this panel, which was wrought in distemper and placed on the high-altar, there is painted the Madonna with the Child seated on a pedestal; and below are S. Michelagnolo, S. Anna, and Joachim, who are presenting the Marquis—who is portrayed from life so well that he appears alive—to the Madonna, who is offering him her hand. Which picture, even as it gave and still continues to give universal pleasure, also satisfied the Marquis so well that he rewarded most liberally the talent and labour of Andrea, who, having been remunerated by Princes for all his works, was able to maintain his rank of Chevalier most honourably up to the end of his life.

Andrea had competitors in Lorenzo da Lendinara—who was held in Padua to be an excellent painter, and who also wrought some things in terra-cotta for the Church of S. Antonio—and in certain others of no great worth. He was ever the friend of Dario da Treviso and Marco Zoppo of Bologna, since he had been brought up with them under the discipline of Squarcione. For the Friars Minor of Padua this Marco painted a loggia which serves as their chapter-house; and at Pesaro he painted a panel that is now in the new Church of S. Giovanni Evangelista; besides portraying in a picture Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, at the time when he was Captain of the Florentines. A friend of Mantegna's, likewise, was Stefano, a painter of Ferrara, whose works were few but passing good; and by his hand is the adornment of the sarcophagus of S. Anthony to be seen in Padua, with the Virgin Mary, that is called the Vergine del Pilastro.

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But to return to Andrea himself; he built a very beautiful house in Mantua for his own use, which he adorned with paintings and enjoyed while he lived. Finally he died in 1517, at the age of sixty-six, and was buried with honourable obsequies in S. Andrea; and on his tomb, over which stands his portrait in bronze, there was placed the following epitaph:

ESSE PAREM HUNC NORIS, SI NON PRÆPONIS, APELLI;
ÆNEA MANTINEÆ QUI SIMULACRA VIDES.

Andrea was so kindly and praiseworthy in all his actions, that his memory will ever live, not only in his own country, but in the whole world; wherefore he well deserved, no less for the sweetness of his ways than for his excellence in painting, to be celebrated by Ariosto at the beginning of his thirty-third canto, where he numbers him among the most illustrious painters of his time, saying:

Leonardo, Andrea Mantegna, Gian Bellino.

This master showed painters a much better method of foreshortening figures from below upwards, which was truly a difficult and ingenious invention; and he also took delight, as has been said, in engraving figures on copper for printing, a method of truly rare value, by means of which the world has been able to see not only the Bacchanalia, the Battle of Marine Monsters, the Deposition from the Cross, the Burial of Christ, and His Resurrection, with Longinus and S. Andrew, works by Mantegna himself, but also the manners of all the craftsmen who have ever lived.



JUDITH WITH THE HEAD OF HOLOFERNES
(After the painting by Andrea Mantegna. Dublin:
National Gallery)
Mansell
[View larger image](#)

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FOOTNOTES:

- [1] Literally, Hospice for God's poor.
- [2] Inlaying with various kinds of coloured wood.
- [3] Luca Signorelli.
- [4] Pietro Perugino.
- [5] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [6] This seems to be a mistake for Benedict XI.
- [7] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [8] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [9] Guglielmo da Marcilla.
- [10] Jan van Eyck.
- [11] It is reasonable to suppose that this stands for Hans (Memling).
- [12] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [13] *I.e.*, hung up.
- [14] It has recently been shown that Pisanello's name was not Vittore but Antonio; see article by G. F. Hill, on p. 288, vol. xiii. of the *Burlington Magazine*. In the translation, however, Vittore, the name given by Vasari, will be kept.
- [15] In the heading to the Life Vasari calls him simply Benozzo.
- [16] The officials of the Mercanzia.
- [17] This Life appears only in Vasari's first edition.
- [18] Poplar.
- [19] White poplar.
- [20] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.

- [21] The word in the Italian text is not "carro" but "cero," which is obviously an error.
- [22] The words in brackets have been added to correct an obvious omission in the text. The account of Attavante is to be found at the end of the Life of Fra Giovanni Angelico.
- [23] Garlands.
- [24] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [25] See note on p. 57, Vol. I.
- [26] See note on p. 57, Vol. 1.
- [27] Mourner, or Weeper.
- [28] *I.e.*, clock.
- [29] This seems to be a printer's or copyist's error for Prefetto.
- [30] Andrea dal Castagno.

END OF VOL. III.

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