
WARBURG LIBRARY COMMONS | SCHOOL OF ADVANCED STUDY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

[https://commons.warburg.sas.ac.uk/downloads/zp38wc617]

Yashiro, Yukio.. *Sandro Botticelli and the Florentine Renaissance / by Yukio Yashiro..*

1929

Book

To cite this version:

Yashiro, Y. (1929). *Sandro Botticelli and the Florentine Renaissance / by Yukio Yashiro.* (pp. xlvii, 261 p., 7 : mounted col. front., plates (part mounted, col.).). Hale, Cushman & Flint.

License: Creative Commons BY-NC Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International

Available at: https://commons.warburg.sas.ac.uk/concern/published_works/5138jd87r

Publisher: Hale, Cushman & Flint, The Medici Society, ltd.

Date submitted: 2021-03-10

Copyright is retained by the author. Terms and conditions for use of this material are defined in the User Deposit Agreement.

WARBURG INSTITUTE
CNA 700

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
WARBURG INSTITUTE

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

MADONNA AND CHILD
(Milan, Poldi Pezzoli Museum)

30/536
c
n
a
700

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

AND THE FLORENTINE RENAISSANCE

BY

YUKIO YASHIRO

PROFESSOR OF THE HISTORY OF ART IN THE
IMPERIAL ACADEMY OF ART, TOKIO
DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE
OF ART RESEARCH
TOKIO

REVISED EDITION

LONDON: THE MEDICI SOCIETY LTD.
BOSTON: HALE, CUSHMAN & FLINT

MCMXXIX

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

THE AUTHOR

EXPRESSES HIS GRATITUDE TO

THE FOUNDERS AND TRUSTEES

OF

THE KEIMEI KWAI

BY WHOSE HELP AND ENCOURAGE-

MENT HE WAS ENABLED TO REVISIT

THE BOTTICELLI COLLECTIONS

ABROAD AND TO PREPARE THIS

SECOND EDITION OF SANDRO

BOTTICELLI

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS is a book of Art. Its appeal is to the human heart.

In the appreciation of Art there is no such thing as authority. Scholarship adorns, even dignifies criticism, but does not authorize it. A critic should not pose as a judge: he is a friend. My wish is to deliver Art from the guidance of specialists and return it to the simple desire of man.

I loved Botticelli and studied him; that is all. I have written down my joy that others may share it, or rather that others may open their eyes and get greater delight from Art in their own way. I long to see my book reach congenial hearts that love beauty, rather than brains of pure scholarship.

In the course of my study I have continually found that the thorough examination of the school-works is very useful in our approach to Botticelli. They are like the treasure-house, where lost knowledge and love of Botticelli lie buried. It is not only to distinguish different hands among his pupils, but also to read the sympathies which his genius called forth in the world around him, that I have made an extensive study of the numerous school-works scattered all over the world. As it makes a special subject, I propose to prepare a separate book for it, and devote the present volumes to genuine Botticellis. I give in the Appendix only one list, which treats of the school-pieces to a certain extent, the 'Contemporary Copies and Versions'. With this list I wish to show in what way he was appreciated and practically imitated in his own time. One may gather some idea of the spiritual and artistic influence Botticelli exercised in the late Quattrocento.[1]

I think scholars will understand me, when I say that I am sometimes in doubt where to draw the line between genuine Botticellis and the best of school-works. There are several works on which I do not like to make hasty decisions. I have put aside all these for my book on the school-works and confined the present volumes to Botticellis of which I feel quite sure.

In the denomination of Italian names, such as names of saints, churches, or of pictures, convenience, not systematization, always has been my guide. As the book is written in English, I have generally followed the English denomination, but when the Italian name is more familiar, I have not hesitated to use it.

My greatest gratitude is due to Herbert Horne and to Mr. Berenson. The more my attitude towards Art is different from theirs, the more I feel indebted to those great scholars. They taught me in what I had otherwise little aptitude for. Horne's exhaustive history of Botticelli enabled me to turn to the æsthetic aspect of his art without being encumbered by

[1] 'Contemporary Copies and Versions' is taken out from the present edition, which is in a smaller form than the first and original edition of 1925.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

documentary researches. Botticelli is fortunate to have had the devotion of such a conscientious scholar. Mr. Berenson's studies always inspired me with the thoroughness of stylistic analysis. By the influence of Horne and Mr. Berenson I hope I have been prevented from joining the host of romantic writers on Botticelli. Moreover, Mr. and Mrs. Berenson treated me with such a hospitality as goes deeply to a lonely traveller such as I was. But for their excellent Art library, which I was allowed to use, the completion of my work by this time is inconceivable.

I owe the publication of the book to the encouragement and help of Dr. Osvald Sirèn and Mr. Edward Hutton, to whom I chanced to show some part of my study. That the Medici Society gave me every facility to complete the work under the difficult circumstances unexpectedly created by the earthquake in Japan, is what I could scarcely hope for from publishers, and shall ever appreciate.

In the long course of my study I was helped by friends in various ways. Mr. Laurence Binyon and Mr. Arthur Waley, of the British Museum, were the first to know and encourage my 'Oriental' enthusiasm for Botticelli. Prof. Richard Offner, of the New York University, in our daily company in Italy, gave me sound influence by his seriousness of study in Florentine masters. Conte Gamba, of the Uffizi Gallery, made my work in various galleries in Florence, both open and closed to the public, very easy. It was by the recommendation of Dr. de Nicola, of the Museo Nazionale of Florence, that I could see, to my heart's content, what I consider the perfect gem of old Botticelli, hitherto strangely unnoticed, the *Transfiguration* of the Pallavicini Collection. Prof. Toesca, of the Institut degli Studi Superiori, Florence, besides his amiable friendship, helped me in deciphering the autographic inscription of Botticelli in the Church of Ognissanti. Prof. A. Venturi, of the University of Rome, to whom the simultaneous recognition of the authenticity of the small *Annunciation* of the Corsini Gallery, Florence, made me known, has treated me ever since affectionately as an 'amico della bella Italia'. I am indebted to the kindness of Sir Charles Holmes and Mr. Collins Baker, of the National Gallery, London, for allowing the official photographer to work for me in the Gallery. By the help of Dr. Kurth Glaser, of the Kupferstich Kabinet, Berlin, I could study the Dante Drawings in a most favourable way. Sir Robert Witt's collection of photographs was invaluable to me for learning numerous school-works. I also express my gratitude to Signor Poggi, Signor Giglioli, of the Uffizi Gallery, Mon. Grammatica, of the Ambrosiana, Milan, Mr. Maclagan, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Mr. Edward Forbes, of the Fogg Museum, Cambridge, U.S.A., Mr. Cockerell, of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and other directors and keepers of museums and galleries to whom I occasionally applied for help and advice.

For visiting private collections I enjoyed the generosity of many people. Mr. Robert Benson facilitated my way to various English collections. I express my gratitude to Principe Pallavicini, Viscount Lee of Fareham, Sir Herbert Cook, Sir George Holford, Mr. Leverton Harris, Mr. Vernon Watney, M. Spiridon, and others. I particularly troubled Viscount Lee of Fareham in taking special photographs of his new acquisition, Botticelli's *Trinity—with two Saints*, which was a great discovery for me. As regards the whereabouts of pictures which have changed owners in recent years, I asked advice from Mr. and Mrs. Berenson, Sir Robert Witt, Mr. Brockwell, M. S. Reinach, and M. Seymour de Ricci.

I wish to acknowledge here the valuable work which Signor Laurati, of the photographers Brogi, of Florence, did for me. The detail-photographs which he made according to my instructions are, to my mind, perfect both for artistic and scholarly purposes.

In preparing this book my worst struggle was with the English language. I was often desperate how to express the delicate nuances of artistic psychology in other language than my own. Harry Lawrence went through the whole manuscript with infinite care. I especially appreciate his solicitude in correcting its numerous mistakes, and preserving my peculiarity even in style. But for his help I do not know how I could have brought my work ready for printing. Mr. Arthur Waley also went through the manuscript and gave me suggestions, which were precious, not only for language, but also for scholarship.

Thus looking through my work, each page seems to convey some memory of kindness bestowed on me. This gives me a warm feeling of life. I am anxious to express my gratitude to those friends not mentioned in the above. Their service to me was not of a nature to be specially cited, therefore all the deeper. In my sad days, which were frequent, especially after the earthquake which destroyed nearly all that were dear to me, it was their silent affection which kept me from despondency.

Indeed, having finished my work and sailing finally away in a few days from the European coast to distant seas, I cannot help repeating in my memory the painful events which occurred during these four years of my absence from Japan. The earthquake buried my father, together with my ruined house and many friends besides. To show the result of my work and to see father's glad face was the greatest ambition of mine. Now he cannot see it. Alone, old mother waits my return. My devotion to Botticelli was a cruelty to her old soul. I know that scholarly discussions admit no private excuse: sadly conscious that the historical side of my work is still premature, I must sail away. For in a desolate town old mother is waiting for her only child.

YUKIO YASHIRO

London, *December* 1924.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THREE years have passed quickly, since I sailed away to the East, after completing the First Edition of my Botticelli. I came back—to adore Botticelli all the more. In life it is sometimes perilous to return to an old love. Disillusionment follows young enthusiasm. While plodding slowly through Europe, I felt myself oppressed by a sort of fear of approaching Florence again. What should I do if Botticelli looked different from his cherished image in my memory? So I delayed my arrival in my favourite Tuscan capital till the last days. One sunny morning early this Spring, I came back to the Uffizi Gallery and found Botticelli even greater.

It now seems that in my character study of Botticelli I have too strongly emphasized his sentimental side. Of course it was my purpose, seeing that the 'aria virile' theory had gone too far and had almost banished, as unworthy of scholars, the right enjoyment of the sentimental beauty which abundantly exists in Botticelli. But was not I carried too far by a reactionary spirit? Coming back to the Botticelli Room in the Uffizi Gallery, I was astonished—because Beauty is always a wonder, even when you are familiar with it—I was astonished to find what a sound artist Botticelli was. In the plastic construction of his paintings, there is no fundamental vacillation, no collapse. You can trust him, you can safely live in his world, where the law of gravitation and balance rules with stability, in spite of lively, scintillating movements of nymphs and of flowers. Although I have nothing essential to take away from my delineation of his sentimental and mystic psychology, yet I must point out that it should be understood in true proportion to the essential soundness of his plastic genius, which sets him among the greatest artists of that grand epoch called the Renaissance.

To the many distinguished writers, who reviewed my book, both in Europe and in America, I express my heart-felt gratitude for their appreciation of my 'Oriental' study of the Florentine master. I feel both abashed and thankful to notice that they have treated me with indulgence for the many small errors contained in my historical studies, such as malicious critics are fond of pouncing upon, and have welcomed me for my artistic appreciation, which was the main point of my study. My special respect is due to the critic of *The Times Literary Supplement*, November 12th, 1925, who understood me perfectly and criticized me exactly on the essential points of my argument. It is not so much his enthusiastic welcome as his true grasp of my meaning that went deep into my heart. In this world, one is too frequently approved or disapproved without being understood.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

To do justice to the real reception of my book, I should not omit to mention that a long article of depreciatory character appeared in the *Burlington Magazine*, April 1926, written by no less a critic than Mr. Roger Fry. This is a serious matter for a writer on Art. Although it is a little late to answer a criticism after the lapse of three years, and although I dislike to enter into dispute with so excellent a writer as Mr. Fry, who, however, perhaps because of his very strength as a good writer, may perchance become somewhat careless, yet I am bound at least to make my points clear, so far as they were represented in the review in the *Burlington Magazine*. Moreover, it gives one a chance to study the interesting question as to what a critic should do and what he should not do.

All through his article Mr. Fry is carried away by his anger at my disagreement with the authority of Herbert Horne, who was a personal friend of his. What Mr. Fry emphatically says at the beginning explains his attitude all through his article. He seems to be impatient with me for describing Horne's big volume as 'an admirable encyclopædia of Botticelli.' To be quite frank, however, that incomparable book leaves me cold, and I doubt if Horne did not take more genuine interest in documentary research among archives than in the æsthetic contemplation of Botticelli's works. Mr. Fry points out, as 'one who knew him', that Horne was 'a poet who, out of a kind of Quixotic bravado, posed as dryasdust. He even, I think, gained a fresh secret pleasure from seeing how many people were taken in by the pose', and I am pitied as 'the latest and most evident victim of Horne's mystification'. I think I am quite right in being a victim of Horne's mystification, if there is any such thing. Horne's personality as remembered by Mr. Fry has little to do with me. Horne exists for me and for all future students of Botticelli in his admirable book, and I took him seriously. If I was wrong to characterize his book as 'cold' in æsthetic appreciation and marvellous as documentary research, Mr. Fry is quite welcome to correct me. On that point, however, he more than agreed with me, calling Horne in his 'pose' even 'dryasdust'.

And then have I ever said anything disrespectful of that veteran scholar of Botticelli? All through my book I have paid the greatest homage to Horne. Anyone with a fair mind can see it. Of course, I disagreed with him, when I thought I had grounds for disagreement, and I did so after studying him with care. The greatest respect we can pay to a scholar is not the question of agreement or disagreement. I should feel immensely flattered if any scholar should ever study any of my works as conscientiously as I did Horne. Should such scholar disagree with me after sufficient study, he would be all the more welcome as having contributed something to scholarship. Mr. Fry seems to take Horne as if he were an authority for all time. Let us remember that his monumental work was published in 1908, and it was in the following twenty years that an immense amount of discoveries

have been made in Florentine history. Horne himself at the time of his death wanted to correct his book. One can see it clearly from the many manuscript notes in the volume, contained now, I think, in the Fondazione Horne at Florence. And this is no wonder, seeing how conscientious a scholar he was. Did Mr. Fry take the trouble to go to the original sources to examine Horne's treatment of them and his deductions therefrom, before he accepted their authority without doubt, and before he denounced my frequent disagreement with them as a mere impertinence of an Oriental dreamer?

Putting my book in close comparison with Horne's, Mr. Fry accuses me of the 'absence of any scholarly or clear statement of Botticelli's œuvre'. And he continues: 'One surmises that he has arranged the illustrations in what he believes to be chronological order; but as far as I have discovered he gives no reasons for his frequent inversions of the sequence of the pictures, which Horne had worked out with such thoroughness that he was able to follow Botticelli's activity almost month by month throughout his career.' This is an admirable picture which tells how miserable a figure I cut as a scholar, which I freely admit to my shame, as I know too well what a scholar *should* be, pursuing the austere way to Truth. Only it is not a little disconcerting to be told so by Mr. Fry. Horne's arrangement of Botticelli's works 'almost month by month throughout his career' does not impress me so much as it does Mr. Fry. I do not belong to the group of scholars who can declare the precise date of a painting, to the immense admiration and use of dealers and collectors. That I did not follow Horne's 'almost month by month' method is the outcome of my intention. Does Mr. Fry believe that the works of a painter, buried in oblivion for more than four hundred years, of whose earthly existence of about sixty-six years so few documents are preserved as to be neatly put into less than twenty-nine pages of the Appendix of Horne's book, could possibly be arranged in monthly sequence and with objective truth? I do not.

Without transgressing this historically established vagueness, I have made my own attempt at chronology on pages 227–231 of the First Edition. It has a definite title, 'Botticelli Chronology'. That Mr. Fry could say I gave 'no reasons for' my 'frequent inversions of the sequence of the pictures' worked out by Horne, simply proves that the critic's 'as far as I have discovered' did not go very far. Whether Mr. Fry would find my reasons, distributed in various places throughout the book, adequate or inadequate is another question. I merely warn him that he at least cannot publicly accuse me for the imagined absence of what I have actually stated and with a specially studied purpose.

It is too true, my Botticelli Chronology in the First Edition was very inadequate. That I realized sooner than anybody. Living in my distant country, it was impossible for me to see the printer's proofs, and the

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

chronological list, constructed as mine was, became something apart from what I had intended, as it was printed without my personal supervision. A name printed a few lines too high or too low makes a vast difference in the calculation of a period. This is one reason why I am happy in being able to publish my Second Edition. With all the errors contained in the First Edition, however, I know of some serious scholars of the Florentine Quattrocento who have found my chronology useful and are actually using it, with modifications. Careful students of Botticelli would know that, in spite of the defects, my chronology was the most serious attempt of the kind till the year of its publication in 1925. After this year Prof. A. Venturi's monograph on Botticelli (Rome, 1926) appeared, and contained a good documented chronology.

Concerning the characteristics of my chronology, I may point out that my utmost effort is to distinguish standard works dated indubitably with documentary evidence from attributions which can only be dated vaguely by stylistic reference to the former. I never consider documentary evidence everything, but I maintain that when documentary evidence is beyond any doubt, the work so documented becomes the fundamental guide, and it is when dependent upon such historical guide that chronological attributions with what one imagines to be the stylistic evolution of a painter partake more or less of objective trustworthiness. Attributions are at most, in my view, the grouping together of the works stylistically related. They can only approach historical chronology when they are associated with standard works historically dated. I know that such reasoning does not satisfy Mr. Fry's taste for precision. I stop short where reasoning ends and am not ashamed to remain vague where vagueness exists.

Seeing my book published with profuse illustrations, Mr. Fry deplored that the monumental work of Horne was not republished instead, with annotations and with a similar profusion of photographs. Although this remark was well calculated to humiliate me, yet I sincerely wish, together with Mr. Fry, for the reappearance, in a new form, of Horne's work, long out of print. At the same time, does Mr. Fry know that my book was purposely meant as an æsthetic appreciation of Botticelli, which purpose is expressly put in the Preface and kept up all through the book, both in the text and in the illustrations? My detail photographs are so peculiarly my own that one would find it difficult to imagine why Mr. Fry, looking at them, thought of Horne and deplored the lot of his scholarly work, except by a simple association of one big book on Botticelli with another. One can see at once that I never intended my book to be put in the same category with Horne's, except in the Botticelli Bibliography, nor did I consider the historical research work in Horne's line the only way to write on Art. Mr. Fry was obviously most annoyed because I did not fill every page of my book with stylistic and historical reasoning of attributions and

chronology. Read my Introduction, where I have put my idea as to what is the ultimate merit of historical and stylistic studies in Art. They are useful preliminary fundamental studies from which the real love of Art starts in its freedom. I hope I have not neglected those preliminary inquiries, but I have taken great care not to allow them more than their due in what I meant to be a book on Art. My book and Horne's are different in essential traits. They are not meant to be compared, but rather to be contrasted.

Mr. Fry seems also to have determined to annihilate me as an expert on Botticelli. All I did was to love Botticelli and study his works. This does not prove that I know the subject more than others, and Mr. Fry is entirely free to denounce me as much as he pleases. And, indeed, he went very far in his denunciation, while the question is really open to individual taste, study, and judgment. I quote an example, and that is about my acceptance of the *St. Thomas Aquinas*, formerly in Sir George Holford's Collection: 'He boldly includes the head of *St. Thomas Aquinas*. . . . By no stretch of imagination is it conceivable to me that this work should be by Botticelli. The inclusion of this at once undermines our confidence in Mr. Yashiro's understanding of Botticelli's style, and some other additions have only the advantage over this that they at least belong to the Florentine school.' Readers of this condemnation should know that the *St. Thomas Aquinas* is a much-discussed enigma, and Mr. Fry's suggestion is an old one known to every student of the Quattrocento. I dislike quoting authorities, but it amuses me to think that, if 'the inclusion of this at once undermines our confidence in Mr. Yashiro's understanding', the same inclusion is undermining Mr. Fry's confidence in Prof. A. Venturi, in Mr. Berenson and others. I am flattered to be distrusted in connoisseurship in company with Mr. Berenson. As a matter of fact, I have taken out this *St. Thomas Aquinas* from the Second Edition. Mr. Fry is welcome to think that this was the effect of his formidable attack. Those who remember how I had accepted it in the First Edition after much doubt will not wonder at my change. I confess, however, that the adverse opinions of Dr. Borenius in *Apollo*, of Mr. Maclagan in the *New Statesman*, had some influence on me. It was when I saw the photograph in the series of Botticelli's works arranged in the First Edition of my book that I found the work too far apart from other Botticellis. Now I do not take it as a Florentine work, although I still recognize and am puzzled by the Botticellesque characteristics apparent in it.

The portion of Mr. Fry's article which somewhat embarrassed me was that in which he regarded my work in a more favourable light. He says, 'perhaps, after all, Mr. Yashiro, whose outlook is essentially literary, who seeks above all for the overtones and symbolic suggestions of painting, is better fitted to enter into the spirit of Botticelli's art than Horne'. Horne,

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

starting from the Paterian tradition, 'became more and more responsive to purely plastic impressions, so that he unconsciously emphasized that which Botticelli owed to his Florentine training. . . . Horne ended by regarding the *St. Augustine* of the Ognissanti, with its "*aria virile*", as the culminating point of Botticelli's art. Mr. Yashiro, on the other hand, welcomes most Botticelli's personal deviations into the realm of poetic and mystic'. Is this really the true aspect of my study of Botticelli? Is not this rather what Mr. Fry imagined an Oriental would write on Botticelli, than what I actually wrote? Even at the risk of losing the one precious concession reluctantly given to me by Mr. Fry that 'perhaps after all' I am 'better fitted to enter into the spirit of Botticelli's art than Horne', I must point out that the reasons he adduced are a little too remote from what I essentially meant. Do not hastily conclude, because I gave profuse photographs of beautiful details, that I appreciated Botticelli in pretty ornamental fragments alone. Just because I liked those paintings of Botticelli which have literary sources and studied them at some length, it does not follow that I valued them only for poetic or mystic associations. I can challenge anyone who has read my book in its entirety to point out whether I have not paid due attention to the plastic element in Art, which, I take it, constitutes the essential merit of a painter. It is true my book has commanded attention chiefly because of large detail photographs and of my textual divisions devoted to minute studies of human figures and of nature. I purposely did so, because these tiny hidden beauties are too grossly neglected in modern criticism preoccupied with rough-hewn problems of plastic construction, and Botticelli's art was just the material, rich in such particular charms, suitable to point out the modern negligence. Just the same thing must be noticed in my exertion in bringing out in strong light the sentimental and mystic aspects of Botticelli's art. As they have been too slightly treated in Art-criticism, as if they were gratuitous deviations from the proper field of Art, I have tried hard to present them as equally worthy of human appreciation. Does Mr. Fry know that along with my sentimental, decorative and mystic appreciation of Botticelli's late years, I have actually written as a parallel train of thought a depreciation of Botticelli's decline in realism and plastic solidity? I know many readers of my book who liked it for the novelty of my detailed descriptions and comparisons, and who neglected my main discussions altogether. I did not wish, however, that a discerning critic should follow their example, being likewise deluded by superficialities and losing the essential arguments in my book. It is, of course, quite possible that my want of confidence as a writer of English has accounted for the failure of Mr. Fry to grasp my meaning. I cannot, however, help recalling with pleasure that my book has produced a different meaning to the critic of *The Times Literary Supplement*, exactly on the point under discussion. He noticed the essential importance I attached to the plastic value in the

estimation of Art, and observed that it was somewhat contrary to his expectation from an Oriental mind. Now the object, which the critics of the *Burlington Magazine* and of *The Times* were engaged in reviewing, was a book, not a painting or a sculpture, free to produce any impression or interpretation on the critics. Putting aside the question of appreciation or depreciation, one would have expected the same understanding to have been produced upon the two reviewers. Their difference on this main point is most strange.

To sum up my protest against Mr. Fry's misunderstanding of my attitude to Art, as if it were 'essentially literary', seeking 'above all for the overtones and symbolic suggestions of painting', I wish to establish the due recognition I have expressly made of the plastic value, which constitutes the essence of plastic art. Perhaps I differ from Mr. Fry, and other modern critics, in that I try to recognize as well poetic sentiments, 'overtones and symbolic suggestions', in the appreciation of Art, which is, after all, a human affair. I should expect to be opposed for not attaching the exclusive importance to the purely plastic, but on this subject I am fully prepared to maintain my ground. All those passages written by Mr. Fry about the plastic tradition of Florentine Art, with Masaccio and Andrea del Castagno soaring in it, passages written as if they were outside the scope of my appreciation, are not applicable to me.

I have written the foregoing because I wish my book to be rightly understood and approved or disapproved on account of its merit or demerit. Generally an author, unless he is blinded by conceit, knows best the defects of his own book. That I have made numerous corrections in the second edition, even at the expense of my pride, would show that I am conscious of my deficiencies and that I am open to suggestions, if they be reasonable. In Mr. Fry's attacks, however, there were few which hit me on the points where I am really weak, and many which did not hit me at all. He says, concluding his views on my book: 'Indeed, Mr. Yashiro would seem to have mistaken his own fitness for the task. He undoubtedly has experienced many acute emotions in front of Botticelli's works, and he is able to communicate these with a certain flowery Oriental rhetoric, which may be stimulating to certain temperaments; but his experiences are of so subjective and often of so capricious a nature that they cannot be taken as a guide to anything like a temperate and objective critical estimate of Botticelli's art.' Did I ever flourish 'my own fitness for the task'? Mr. Fry should not imagine from his own experience that all writers on Art pretend to be a 'guide' or a judge or even a dictator of public taste. I notice many critics do so—let it be understood that I am an exception to the rule, and that I really cannot bear, and have not the least desire to assume, the guidance in matters of Art. Do I not know that I am terribly subjective? Who is not subjective, after all, in Art-criticism? In order that

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

a dictatorial critic should not project his own pretensions into my innocence and demand from me what I have purposely refrained from doing, let me repeat a part of the opening sentences of the Preface to the First Edition, which is of vital importance in explaining my standpoint, just as it appeared to the critic of the *Scribner's Magazine* in America: 'I love Botticelli and studied him; that is all. I have written down my joy that others may share it, or rather that others may open their eyes and get greater delight from Art in their own way.'

Coming abroad and visiting Botticelli collections again after an interval of several years, I have had to change my opinion about some works. That I have taken out *St. Thomas Aquinas*, formerly in Sir George Holford's Collection, I have already discussed. Another picture I have withdrawn is the *Portrait of a Man*, in the collection of Messrs. Duveen, New York. I am now inclined to consider this portrait much nearer to Botticini than to Botticelli. Generally speaking, I think I have become far more tolerant and ready to accept than I used to be. It seems to me that formerly I had been too much impressed by the severity of some stylistic critics, who seem to prove the unmistakable keenness of their eyes by refusing to acknowledge those works which appear at all inconsistent. Man is not a simple thing, much less his reflection in Art, for the formation of which a complication of influences and of circumstances works. Stylistic criticism, if pushed too far, as it is in these days, makes the human phenomena arranged too simply in one train of formal development. Human unity may exist between works somewhat irrelevant in style. Tolerance seems especially necessary for understanding the early works of Botticelli, which were formed under various and deep-lying influences. I have come to admit several Filippesque Madonnas of the type of the *Corbignano Fresco Madonna* illustrated in the First Edition, and this admission is an attempt of mine to see Botticelli's earliest career under the sole influence of Fra Filippo Lippi.

Then I have included some works, once given to Amico di Sandro by Mr. Berenson, to Botticelli's early years, when he was being educated by the Florentine realism, notably of Verrocchio and of Pollajuolo. There is still one more important work of this group, which I am inclined to accept, the *Portrait of a Man*, formerly in Mr. E. Simon's Collection, Berlin, which I expressly went to see, only to find the picture recently transported to the Collection of Mr. Cambō at Barcelona.

Among this group attention should be drawn to my acceptance of the *Portrait of a Woman* in Dr. Noah's Collection, and of the *Portrait of Giuliano de Medici* at Bergamo as companion pieces painted by Botticelli, or possibly as contemporary replicas by him, which I have fully discussed in connection with the question of 'La Bella Simonetta'. Putting aside the historical discussion how to identify Simonetta, the extent of my stylistic admission

is that these two beautiful portraits were painted by Botticelli not far from the time of the *Primavera*, probably soon after it. A friend of mine has suggested that although the *Giuliano* at Bergamo is admissible as a genuine Botticelli, it lacks that severe grasp of Physiognomy, which necessarily appears in a portrait painted from life, and so it must be an ideal portrait made after his death in the Pazzi conspiracy. I take this as a very good suggestion, and really the Bergamo *Giuliano* looks a little too much generalized in technique to be a delineation from a living model. It is quite possible that either it is a replica from a lost original portrait from life or an ideal portrait painted after his death. Although I have placed these two companion portraits in my chronology next to the *Primavera* and before the *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi Gallery, yet the foregoing suggestions are well within my stylistic admission, which only maintains that they are painted by Botticelli at a time not far from the *Primavera*.

Concerning other works which I have newly admitted as genuine, only the following need here be mentioned as materials of some importance, whether they are accepted by other scholars or not. In the first place comes the *Christ*, which Dr. Valentiner found and acquired for the Detroit Museum. It is a vigorous work of Botticelli's middle period, not far in style from the *Madonna and Child with St. Barnabas and other Saints and Angels*, now in the Uffizi Gallery. I published an article on this new picture in the *Art in America*, August–September 1927.

Of the standing *Venus* in Signor Gualino's Collection, Turin, I could only see the picture in a dark room under artificial light. The impression produced on me was good, and in technique this picture seemed to be much nearer to the *Birth of Venus*, than the Berlin *Venus*, which I take to be a good contemporary copy. I wish I could have seen the Turin *Venus* in a better light, and for the present I have accepted it on the authority of Prof. A. Venturi, who has studied it minutely.

The small panel, *Two Infants*, taken to be Infant Christ and St. John, recently sent to Canada, I take to be a Botticelli of the period of the Lemmi Frescoes or of the *Madonna della Melagrana*. I saw the small panel in Rome many years ago, and Prof. A. Venturi has published it in his book on Botticelli in 1926.

I do not know if other scholars will be in agreement for my acceptance of the fragments of the unfinished *Adoration of the Magi*, one in the Morgan Library, New York, three in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Horne published them, except the one in New York, in the *Burlington Magazine*, but he took them to be a copy of a lost Botticelli. To me they look genuine, especially the important fragment with horses in the Morgan Library. The somewhat awkward type of the Madonna in a fragment of the Fitzwilliam Museum might be an obstacle, but I think Botticelli quite capable of drawing a figure in that position, as is exemplified in the late

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Annunciation in the Hermitage, published by M. Lazareff in the *Burlington*, which I have come likewise to accept as authentic. Moreover, the figure of old Joseph leaning on his staff is similar to that in the unfinished and repainted *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi, which similarity also gives me ground for assigning to the Uffizi picture a much earlier date than that I gave in the First Edition. The brushwork apparent in the unfinished state of the *Adoration* fragments is crisp and vigorous, worthy of the genius of Botticelli.

Of the drawing on silk, a saint resuscitating two youths, in the Louvre Collection, due consideration should be taken to the fact that it is on silk. The brushwork could not proceed so sharply on this soft and sticky material as is usual in Botticelli's drawings. One may find some heads in the drawing somewhat irrelevant to the ordinary type represented in his well-known paintings. In the Dante Illustrations, however, which is the treasure-house for Botticelli students, are found a number of faces, which look very similar to those in the Louvre drawing.

Other works newly represented in the Second Edition may be left alone, as they are mostly well-known pictures contained in various books on Botticelli, notably of Dr. Bode and of Prof. A. Venturi. My acceptance is due only to my reconsideration of old and well-known attributions.

As regards the illustrations in my book, although I endeavoured to make a corpus of Botticelli's works, space did not allow it. It will be taken, however, nearly as such, containing all important works necessary for the study of his art. Their arrangement is mainly chronological, not always strictly, as economy of space has again interfered. The stylistically related works are grouped together as near to each other as possible. Therefore my attributions and their chronological order are principally to be gathered from the list contained in the Botticelli Chronology.

In preparing the Second Edition, I have visited nearly all Botticelli Collections in the world, and I am bound to express my gratitude to all who helped me in facilitating my studies. To those who were mentioned in the Preface to the First Edition, I must add Mr. W. G. Constable of the National Gallery; Mr. Hind and Mr. Popham of the British Museum; Dr. Friedlander of the Kupferstich Kabinet, Herr E. Simon, Herr Huldschinsky, Dr. Noah, all in Berlin; Monsieur Paul Vitry, Monsieur J. Guiffrey, Monsieur George Salle, of the Louvre; Monsieur and Madame van Buren, Paris; Prof. Lionello Venturi and Signor Riccardo Gualino in Turin; Dr. Valentiner at Detroit; Mr. H. G. Marceau of the Johnson Collection, Philadelphia; Mr. K. Hamilton, New York, to all of whom I pay my best regard.

Specially grateful I am to Signor Giovanni Poggi, now Superintendent of Tuscan Antiquities, for his permission to make new photographs from the *Annunciation* fresco from S. Martino, which is still in the hands of the

restorer. I am happy to publish for the first time the beautiful details of this dated fresco, whose original outlines were fortunately preserved under the thick repainting, and are now slowly coming out in their purity as the restorer's work goes on.

Mr. Laurence Binyon has kindly translated Dante's verses contained in my book into English. This is an unexpected joy to me. It is not only for the pleasure of replacing the clumsy prose translations in the First Edition with a beautiful and faithful rendering by a famous English poet, but also for the happiness of seeing my dear friend participate in my favourite work, that I eagerly accepted his offer. I am sure that the readers of my book will share my joy.

Mr. Kenneth Clark, in whose scholarship I have such a trust, kindly looked through my Botticelli Chronology, when it was in manuscript. I am grateful to him for his suggestions and corrections.

Just as at the time when I was engaged on the First Edition, there are friends of mine surrounding me with sympathy and encouragement. It is they who have supported me through moral discouragements, who support me still in my lonely days abroad, far from home. I give them again my silent and deepest gratitude, which they more than deserve.

YUKIO YASHIRO

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For permission to publish the reproduction of *The Mystic Crucifixion* the Publishers are indebted to Mr. Forbes, of the Fogg Art Museum, Boston, U.S.A.

The pictures, *The Madonna and Child with an Angel* and *The Story of Lucretia*, in the Collection of the late Mrs. Gardner, have been reproduced by permission of Messrs. Thomas E. Marr & Son, Boston, U.S.A.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, have given permission to reproduce *The Last Communion of St. Jerome* and *The Story of St. Zenobius*.

Certain other photographs are reproduced by permission of Messrs. Anderson & Alinari, Brogi, Braun and Bruckmann.

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION ix

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION xiii

INTRODUCTION The Universality of Art. – East and West. – Methods of Art Study. – Historical Studies and Their Limitations. – Art as Religion xxxvii

PART I. THE REALISTIC BOTTICELLI

CHAPTER I Botticelli's Education. – Art of the Quattrocento. – Fra Filippo Lippi. – Linear and Tonal Realism. – Masaccio's Place in Florentine Art. – Verrocchio and Pollajuolo. – Influence of Andrea del Castagno 3

CHAPTER II Botticelli as a Realist. – Realistic Standard of Criticism in Europe. – Vasari as an Art Critic. – Problem of the 'Aria Virile'. – Botticelli's Weakness in Realism 37

CHAPTER III Botticelli's Portraits. – Portraiture as Art. – Characteristic and Symbolic Portraits. – Botticelli's Development as a Portrait Painter 44

CHAPTER IV Botticelli's Landscape. – Botticelli's Idea of Landscape. – His Perspective. – Gothic Landscape in Botticelli's Pictures and in School Works. – 'Spiritual-Decorative' Landscape. – Japanese Landscape compared with Chinese. – Quattrocento Landscape. – Botticelli's Nature Poems 50

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

PART II. THE SENSUOUS BOTTICELLI

CHAPTER V — Botticelli's Treatment of Flowers. – Appreciation of Flowers. – Flower-painters of the Quattrocento. – Realistic Flowers. – Botticelli's and Ghirlandajo's Flowers compared. – Decorative Flowers. – Botticelli and Fra Angelico. – Flowers of the Japanese Painters: Yamato-ye and Kōrin Schools. – Sensuous Flowers. – Fra Filippo Lippi's Flowers. – Utamaro's Flowers. – Sensitive Flowers. – Flowers in Buddhistic Paintings.– Oriental Influences in Flower Painting in Italy 75

CHAPTER VI — Botticelli's Treatment of the Human Body. – Botticelli's Venuses. – 'Ethical' and 'Pathetic' Art. – Botticelli's Ethereal Sensuousness. – Botticelli and Leonardo. – Utamaro and Kiyonaga 93

CHAPTER VII — Botticelli's Treatment of Hands and Feet. – General Indifference to the Beauty of Hands and Feet. – Symbolic Hands in Indian Art and Literature. – Development of Hands in Botticelli's Art. – Linear Treatment of Hands. – Expressive Hands 105

CHAPTER VIII — Botticelli's Treatment of the Hair. – Æsthetics of the Hair. – Realistic Treatment; Linear Treatment of the Hair by Dürer; Tonal Treatment by Titian; Sensuous and Decorative Treatment by Leonardo and Bartolomeo Veneto. – The Yamato-ye School. – Utamaro and Botticelli. – Botticelli's Nymphs 118

CHAPTER IX — Botticelli's Treatment of Draperies. – Æsthetics of Draperies. – Realism in Draperies. – Greek and Gothic Draperies. – Transparent Garments.– Beauty of Texture. – 'Flat' and 'Linear' Conceptions of Draperies. – Botticelli and Agostino di Duccio 126

CHAPTER X — The Music of Line. – 'Presentation' and 'Representation' in Plastic Art. – Botticelli's Linear Sensitiveness in Relation to Realism and the Grand Style. – Botticelli as a Fresco Painter. – The Dante Drawings. – Arched Composition. – Tondo Composition 134

PART III. THE SENTIMENTAL BOTTICELLI

CHAPTER XI — Ruskinian Principle of Art and Impressionism. – Botticelli's 'Self-Portraits'. – Botticelli's Intellectuality. – Poliziano and Botticelli. – Psychology of Sentimentalism. – 'La Bella Simonetta.' – Botticelli's Madonnas. – Sentimentalism and Linear Art 167

PART IV. THE MYSTIC BOTTICELLI

CHAPTER XII — Religion and Art. – Catholic Art. – Savonarola. – Emotional Development of Botticelli. – His Mystic Colours. – Discordant Use of Colour. – Sentimentalism and Mysticism. – The Mystic Nativity. – Botticelli's Later Life 199

APPENDIX

BIBLIOGRAPHY 227

BOTTICELLI CHRONOLOGY 237

INDEX 249

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

IN COLOUR

MADONNA AND CHILD *Milan, Poldi Pezzoli Museum.*	*Frontispiece*
	Facing Page
JUDITH WITH THE HEAD OF HOLOFERNES *Florence, Uffizi Gallery.*	4
ST. SEBASTIAN *Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum.*	14
LA PRIMAVERA *Florence, Uffizi Gallery.*	28
ADORATION OF THE MAGI *Florence, Uffizi Gallery.*	52
PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR *Florence, Uffizi Gallery.*	66
MADONNA DEL MAGNIFICAT *Florence, Uffizi Gallery.*	78
PORTRAIT OF A YOUTH *London, National Gallery.*	92
THE VISION OF ST. AUGUSTINE *Florence, Uffizi Gallery.*	106
MARS AND VENUS *London, National Gallery.*	120
THE BIRTH OF VENUS *Florence, Uffizi Gallery.*	134
MADONNA AND CHILD WITH TWO ST. JOHNS *Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum.*	150
GIOVANNA TORNABUONI AND THE GRACES *Paris, Louvre.*	164
MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ANGEL *Milan, Ambrosiana Library.*	178
LA CALUNNIA *Florence, Uffizi Gallery.*	192
THE MYSTIC NATIVITY *London, National Gallery.*	206

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS
IN MONOCHROME

PLATE I
1. Madonna and Child. *Schlichting Collection, The Louvre, Paris.*

PLATE II
2. Madonna and Child. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATES III–IV
3. Adoration of the Magi. *National Gallery, London.*

PLATE V
4. Judith. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE VI
5. Holofernes Found Dead. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE VII
6. Madonna and Child. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATES VIII–X
7. La Fortezza. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATES XI–XII
8. Madonna and Child with Six Saints. *Accademia, Florence.*

PLATE XIII
9. Portrait of a Man. *The Louvre, Paris.*

PLATE XIV
10. Madonna and Child with an Angel. *Gardner Collection, Boston.*

PLATES XV–XVI
11. St. Sebastian. *Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin.*

PLATES XVII–XVIII
12. The Trinity with St. John and Mary Magdalene. *Collection Viscount Lee of Fareham, London.*

PLATES XIX–XX
13. Predella to the Trinity with St. John and Mary Magdalene (1). *Johnson Collection, Philadelphia.*

PLATES XXI–XXII
14. Predella to the Trinity with St. John and Mary Magdalene (2). *Johnson Collection, Philadelphia.*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

PLATE XXIII
15. The Annunciation. *Collection Mr. Louis Hyde, Glen Falls, U.S.A.*

PLATE XXIV
16. The Annunciation. *Collection Herr Huldschinsky, Berlin.*

PLATE XXV
17. Portrait of a Man with a Medal. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE XXVI
18. Adoration of the Magi. *National Gallery, London.*

PLATES XXVII–XLI
19. La Primavera. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE XLII
20. 'La Bella Simonetta.' *Collection Dr. Noah, Berlin.*

PLATE XLIII
21. Giuliano de Medici. *Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin.*

PLATES XLIV–XLVII
22. Adoration of the Magi. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATES XLVIII–XLIX
23. St. Augustine. *Ognissanti, Florence.*

PLATES L–LIII
24. Pallas and the Centaur. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATES LIV–LVI
25. The Annunciation. *S. Martino, Florence.*

PLATES LVII–LVIII
26. Madonna del Magnificat. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE LIX
27. Madonna and Child. *Poldi-Pezzoli Museum, Milan.*

PLATES LX–LXIII
28. Purification of the Leper. *Cappella Sistina, Rome.*

PLATE LXIV
29. Chastisement of the Company of Korah. *Cappella Sistina, Rome.*

PLATES LXV–LXVII
30. The Life of Moses. *Cappella Sistina, Rome.*

PLATES LXVIII–LXXIV
31. Popes' Portraits. *Cappella Sistina, Rome.*

PLATE LXXV
32. Adoration of the Magi. *Hermitage Gallery, Petrograd.*

PLATES LXXVI–LXXVIII
33. Adoration of the Magi (Unfinished). (a) *Morgan Library, New York.* (b and c) *Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.*

PLATE LXXIX
34. Adoration of the Magi (unfinished and repainted). *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE LXXX
35. Portrait of a Youth. *National Gallery, London.*

PLATE LXXXI
36. Portrait of a Youth. *Collection Mr. C. Mackay, New York.*

PLATE LXXXII
37. Portrait of Lorenzo Lorenzano. *Johnson Collection, Philadelphia.*

PLATE LXXXIII
38. Christ. *Detroit Museum.*

PLATES LXXXIV–XCIII
39. Madonna and Child with St. Barnabas and Other Saints and Angels. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATES XCIV–XCV
40. The Annunciation. *Corsini Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE XCVI
41. 'La Derelitta.' *Collection Principe Pallavicini, Rome.*

PLATES XCVII–XCVIII
42. Mars and Venus. *National Gallery, London.*

PLATE XCIX
43. Venus. *Collection Signor Gualino, Turin.*

PLATES C–CIV
44. Birth of Venus. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE CV
45. Madonna and Child with Two St. Johns. *Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin.*

PLATES CVI–CVII
46. Frescoes from Villa Lemmi. *The Louvre, Paris.*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

PLATE CVIII
47. Infant Christ and St. John. *National Gallery, Ottawa.*

PLATES CIX–CXI
48. Madonna della Melagrana. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATES CXII–CXIII
49. Annunciation. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE CXIV
50. La Pietà. *Alte Pinakothek, Munich.*

PLATES CXV–CXXVI
51. Coronation of the Virgin. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE CXXVII
52. Madonna and Child with St. John. *Collection Mr. Rockefeller, New York.*

PLATE CXXVIII
53. Madonna and Child with Angels. *Ambrosiana, Milan.*

PLATES CXXIX—CXXX
54. La Calunnia. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE CXXXI
55. Story of Virginia. *Accademia Carrara, Bergamo.*

PLATE CXXXII
56. Story of Lucrezia. *Gardner Collection, Boston.*

PLATE CXXXIII
57. Judith. *Formerly Kaufmann Collection, Berlin.*

PLATE CXXXIV
58. Annunciation. *Hermitage Gallery, Petrograd.*

PLATE CXXXV
59. St. Augustine. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE CXXXVI
60. Last Commission of St. Jerome. *Metropolitan Museum, New York.*

PLATE CXXXVII
61. Transfiguration. *Collection Principe Pallavicini, Rome.*

PLATE CXXXVIII
62. Agony in the Garden. *Royal Chapel, Granada.*

PLATES CXXXIX–CXLIII
63. The Mystic Nativity. *National Gallery, London.*

PLATES CXLIV–CXLV
64. The Mystic Crucifixion. *Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, U.S.A.*

PLATES CXLVI–CXLVII
65. The Story of St. Zenobius. *National Gallery, Mond Collection, London.*

PLATES CXLVIII–CXLIX
65a. The Story of St. Zenobius. c. *Metropolitan Museum, New York.* d. *Dresden Gallery.*

PLATE CL
66. The Abundance. *British Museum, London.*

PLATE CLI
67. Angel of the Annunciation. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE CLII
68. Pallas. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE CLIII
69. Study for an Angel. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE CLIV
70. Study for St. Thomas. *Ambrosiana, Milan.*

PLATE CLV
71. Singing Angels. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE CLVI
72. Unidentified Subject. *Darmstadt Museum.*

PLATE CLVII
73. Story of a Saint. *The Louvre, Paris.*

PLATE CLVIII
74. St. Jerome. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE CLIX
75. Pallas. *Ambrosiana, Milan.*

PLATE CLX
76. Story of the Feet of a Saint. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE CLXI
77. Study for Nativity. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

PLATE CLXII
78. St. John the Baptist. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence.*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

PLATE CLXIII
79. Inferno XV. *Vatican Library, Rome.*

PLATE CLXIV
80. Purgatorio XIII. *Kupferstichkabinet, Berlin.*

PLATE CLXV
81. Purgatorio XXVIII. *Kupferstichkabinet, Berlin.*

PLATE CLXVI
82. Purgatorio XXXIII. *Kupferstichkabinet, Berlin.*

PLATE CLXVII
83. Paradiso I. *Kupferstichkabinet, Berlin.*

PLATE CLXVIII
84. Paradiso III. *Kupferstichkabinet, Berlin.*

PLATE CLXIX
85. Paradiso VI. *Kupferstichkabinet, Berlin.*

PLATE CLXX
86. Paradiso XXI. *Kupferstichkabinet, Berlin.*

PLATE CLXXI
87. Assumption of the Virgin. *Uffizi Gallery, Florence, and elsewhere.*

PLATE CLXXII
88. Madonna and Child with Two Saints. *British Museum, London.*

PLATE CLXXIII
89. Inferno V. *Illustration to Landino's Edition of Dante, British Museum and elsewhere.*

PLATE CLXXIV
90. Inferno XIX. *Illustration to Landino's Edition of Dante, British Museum and elsewhere.*

INTRODUCTION

THE UNIVERSALITY OF ART · EAST AND WEST · METHODS OF ART STUDY · HISTORICAL STUDIES AND THEIR LIMITATIONS · ART AS RELIGION

THERE is a civilization in the East; there is a civilization in the West. Much has been said of the differences between them. That there are apparent differences, in material, in technique, and convention, no one can deny. Search deeper, and the same human soul will be discovered, palpitating with the universal sense of Beauty. It is the one symphony, though with ever new variations, of an eternal theme: the same great symphony, whereon rests the hope of all mankind.

'A Chinese critic of the sixth century, who was also an artist, published a theory of æsthetic principles which became classic and received universal acceptance, expressing as it did the deeply rooted instincts of the race. In his theory it is rhythm that holds the paramount place; not, be it observed, imitation of Nature, or fidelity to Nature, which the general instinct of the Western races makes the root-concern of Art. In this theory every work of art is thought of as an incarnation of the genius of the rhythm, manifesting the living spirit of things with a clearer beauty and intenser power than the gross impediments of complex matter allow to be transmitted to our senses in the visible world around us. A picture is conceived as a sort of apparition from a more real world of essential life.' (Laurence Binyon, *Painting of the Far East*, p. 9.)

I quote this passage from Mr. Laurence Binyon, whom I consider one of the best of appreciative critics of Oriental Art. His remarks express the central idea of nearly all writers on the subject. But there is one thing specially noticeable in Mr. Binyon: he maintains as the fundamental idea the identity of all arts, Eastern and Western, in their climax. The above quotation is really interesting as applicable to the art of any country and of any time. It is a rare merit in Mr. Binyon that he has set forth this proposition of similarity. And yet I regret to observe that he did not advance this fundamental idea so far as I could wish. When he came to discuss individual works of Oriental Art, he, too, thought more of the differences between Eastern and Western Art, and explains it thus: 'the difference is rooted in philosophy of life, in mental habit and character.' The great sameness is obliterated in the enumeration of the differences, which are, as usual, put in too much contrast. The West is, in a word, the apotheosis of Man. In the East there is 'no barrier set up between the life

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

of man and the life of the rest of God's creatures. The continuity of the universe, the perpetual stream of change through its matter, are accepted as things of nature felt in the heart and not merely learnt as the conclusions of delving science. And these ways of thought are reflected in Eastern Art. . . .' (L. Binyon, *op. cit.*, p. 21 ff.)

These are just the things we are told so frequently of Oriental Art that they are now accepted as matters of fact. Let me frankly say, I can hardly understand it. I can understand it in a literal sense and find it beautiful; only I do not feel it. It is foreign to actual æsthetic experience in the East, which should form the basis of all theoretical discussion on Oriental Art. Critics are so busily occupied with the research for suitable quotations from literature that they do not examine, as they should, the difference between theory and practice, between verbal expression and non-verbal expression. It is a great mistake to imagine that the artist follows the theorist, even when they both dwell in one person. Moreover, we know too well that theorists are bad artists.

It is natural that scholars of Oriental literature should go farther than Mr. Binyon in the generalized differentiation of Oriental and Occidental Art. With suitable phrases, which are not at all difficult to find among religious and literary writings of Asia, they easily succeed in establishing a sharp antithesis between the two Arts. This is exactly the characteristic of the late Kakuzo Okakura as the writer on Eastern Art, to whose memory the Japanese can never be too grateful, if only for his initiative in preserving their national Art at the time when it was in jeopardy. He worked up all his 'Ideals of the Far East' in sharp contrast to those of the West, and I know of many young scholars in Japan who are following the same idea, not from any motive of imitation, but because they think they accept it as true. Generally speaking, Eastern writers hold very sharply contrasted views and consider that Western Art is the apotheosis of material welfare and Oriental of spiritual.

East and West are antipodes in words: in reality are there such fundamental differences? The same principle rules the whole of Nature and Man. From the dual, relative activities of Man and Nature Art is born, no matter in what part of the world. Flowers may differ in form, men in colour, in costume: the fundamental unity remains. Art is precious, precisely because it is born from out that depth where all superficial differences melt and become one. Scholars, in discussing the differences between East and West, should not fail to remember that similar differences exist between North and South, between every country, and so, logically, between every man. If the same principle of Art-criticism can be applied to arts so widely different in nature as those of Germany and of Italy, there is no reason why it should not likewise be applied to those of the two hemispheres. It is true that, owing to physical distance, both the East

and the West have been able to maintain their individual characteristics. But this does not, and should not, affect the fundamental rule of unity. It is a pity that writers on the arts of distant lands are nearly always either linguists or historians, who look on Art chiefly as documentary evidence.

Then let us not too hastily trust criticisms of Art which look dignified, being supported by literary authorities. I repeat, there is no lack of Oriental philosophy, full of spiritual parable and rhetoric, which favours the preconceived idea of the difference between East and West. Only it is questionable how far such philosophy really represents the psychology of artistic creation, which alone should form the basis of Art-criticism. I protest, with my experience as an Oriental artist, that theory is remote from practice in the Orient as well as in the West; especially so, I am inclined to say, as theory is there formulated as a part of Oriental philosophy, which is highly spiritualistic. Art is not the illustration of theory: artists are guided by their artistic instincts and by Nature. There is nothing which so militates against a genuine understanding of Oriental Art as the presumption that a special attitude is necessary in approaching it. Why are so many 'Introductions' written for beginners? To begin to study Art from books is to begin at the wrong end. Art is complete in itself. To make it noisy with verbal, to make it complex with metaphysical explanations, is not the way to make it clearer, neither is it the way to make the deaf hear. Go to Art, Eastern or Western, with open eyes, with a feeling heart. Like it or dislike it.

Leaving geographical distinction behind, Art is universal. Beyond the limits of time and space, an artist may be waiting for a friend from a distant land. Examples of this sort are not far to seek. Only think how Japanese colour-prints came to be appreciated. Utamaro can hail no truer friend than Edmond de Goncourt. And the whole Impressionist School, from Whistler onwards, discovered the subtle, evanescent beauties of those Japanese masters for the first time, and received from them artistic inspirations for the nourishment of their own art, while the Japanese public were more than blind to them. It is difficult to imagine the whole efflorescence of the Impressionist movement in the nineteenth century without thinking of the Japanese artists. It was not only the question of influence, much less of mere imitation: far more important it is to know for certain that their ways of thinking, their artistic attitudes, were so similar that the French artists could not but hail their brothers from the Far East, brothers hitherto utterly unknown; therefore, small wonder at the pleasurable surprise of the French painters in finding the now precious prints used as waste paper for packing tea. It is needless to say that this European appreciation opened the eyes of Japan to the beauty of the Ukiyoye masters, whom the Japanese had actually been taught by academic art to despise.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

This is one of the many examples of artists better appreciated in foreign countries than in their own; in this case only made more remarkable by the distance, the great appreciation of Europe and America, and the absolute indifference of Japan. Why should not the same thing occur in the opposite direction?

Far be it from me to acclaim myself the discoverer of Botticelli, who has been so artistically appreciated by Walter Pater and studied in so scholarly a manner by Herbert Horne. I only claim to be a friend. The discovery of unknown facts, so important in the eyes of Art historians, is not what principally concerns me, but the heart-felt intimacy with Botticelli's great works, the love for him, the organic sympathy, as the æsthetes would say, by the instinctive guidance of which I hope to penetrate a kindred soul.

How vividly I remember my first encounter with Botticelli in the National Gallery in London! That mystic *Nativity*—the gem of all Botticellis in the world—I simply loved it. Then I went to Paris. There are no important Botticellis there except the Lemmi frescoes, and in fresco Botticelli was never wholly in his element. I must go to Florence. As if I had heard a distant call of a dear one, dead four hundred years ago, I went hot-haste to the land of his memory. Four years elapsed, and Florence never saw me away for long.

Love for Botticelli alone gives me courage to publish this book, after so many have been written about him. Horne's big volume is an admirable encyclopedia of Botticelli. To be frank, however, this incomparable book leaves me cold, and I doubt if Horne did not take more genuine interest in documentary research among archives than in the æsthetic contemplation of Botticelli's works. In my view the main motive of Art study should be love for Art itself.

Here I will turn aside for a little, to see from my point of view what European and American writers are doing in the field of Art-criticism. Since I arrived in Europe I have been more and more surprised in observing how completely Art-criticism is under the tyranny of historical studies. The mania for attribution, chronology and 'discoveries' has gone so far as seemingly to preclude all other interests. Although I am far from blind to the great service done by connoisseurs and historical critics, and have been trained in the same way, yet my inmost nature cannot help revolting against this exclusive fashion of historical research.

Historical research divides itself into two groups: connoisseurship, and Art-history treated as illustration to the history of civilization. I will first discuss connoisseurship, its merits and limitations.

The present day has witnessed the complete victory of Morelli's method, Mr. Bernard Berenson, whose keen eye even his opponents admit, being its chief upholder. Even those scholars who stood against Morelli could

not but follow his example, for it is the method of scientific accuracy pushed to its logical conclusion. It is not merely because Morelli was great in his own line that his method of 'Stilkritik' triumphed, but chiefly because he represented in the field of Art-criticism that scientific spirit which ruled everything in the nineteenth century and revolutionized thought. And it did such service in the cause of truth, especially as before his time Art-criticism was mostly imaginative and full of rhetorical sentimentality. Cheap sentimentality, ready to fall into ecstasy at the first glance at a picture, is a great obstacle to æsthetic observation. Literary associations and gratuitous fantasies too readily prevent the spectator from seeing the real picture. Whistler can never be called a charlatan when he declared, attacking the Ruskinian principle then dominant, that a picture should be seen with eyes, not be merely read with brains as a book. Morelli said no less than the very final word on this modern idea of direct observation in the field of connoisseurship, and succeeded by his exemplary attempts in turning the critic's eye, before all, to the real picture. That true connoisseurship began with him can easily be understood from the great progress accomplished after him in historical criticism.

But with all my admiration for his work I cannot lose sight of the limitations of his method. We must not forget that his method was for the progress of science. His main interest lay in the establishment of the artistic personalities from scientific analysis of existing works. It would be a mistake to imagine it possible to grasp the essence of Art in such a way. The technical characteristics of artists, the chronology, yes, but not Art. Indeed, Morelli presupposed my objection, when he said that a critic 'must never neglect the study of nature. To understand a work of Art thoroughly he must be an artist himself—that is to say, he must learn to look at all around him with an artist's eye'. (Morelli: trans. by Ffoulkes, *Italian Painters*, vol. I, p. 11.) Exactly! Only the too predominant interest in a detective's work on the part of Morelli seems to have swamped the artist's mind, which he might have possessed. He studied the detail of pictures very carefully, because in unnoticed corners, the more unnoticed the better, the artist reveals himself without ceremony, all his characteristics, more particularly all his weaknesses, coming out unguardedly, which, if remembered well, would give the best key for attributions of unknown pictures. A true art-lover may likewise scrutinize a picture with as much care, but his aim would be something different.

Mr. Berenson, who is the chief exponent of the Morellian method, is, I imagine, of dual nature, which does great credit to him as an Art critic. He is very remarkable in his appreciative faculty. If I am to give examples without deviating from the subject of Botticelli, Mr. Berenson's appreciation of some phases of Botticelli, contained in the *Florentine Painters of the Renaissance*, and in the large volumes of the *Florentine Drawings*, are by

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

far the best things written on him in modern criticism. And still his chief strength lies in the fulfilment of Morelli's ideas. He formulated the 'Rudiments of Connoisseurship' (B. Berenson: *Studies and Criticisms of Italian Paintings*, vol. I), which are more clearly put than in Morelli's *Principles and Method*, and all Mr. Berenson's works show how indefatigable he is in following the same scientific path. His studies in this respect are the most conscientious of the kind. Even if he is misled, he has his reasons, which do more credit to him as a scholar than arriving by chance upon a happy idea, which is too frequent in careless critics and is boasted of as instinct. Artistic interpretation may be guided by artistic instinct, but connoisseurship and historical identification should be strictly scientific. I will refer to this question of unscientific attribution more fully when I come to Botticelli's so-called 'Self-portraits', especially because those critics who are attracted by Botticelli at all are mostly of a sentimental type, and yet they dare to approach questions of connoisseurship, because it is the fashion, and try to conclude historical facts from sentiment. Although my temperament revolts against the present tyranny of connoisseurship, as covering almost the whole field of Art-study, yet I have not the slightest doubt as to the efficiency of Morelli's and Berenson's method in the field of historical studies. But the main question still remains: What is the ultimate merit of connoisseurship after all?

Before discussing this question, let me point out what I think is its hidden weakness, considered as a method, which, in spite of its approximately objective observation and deduction, undermines its accuracy at a vital point. Connoisseurship, as I understand it in modern criticism, is the attempt to construct the true history of Art by comparative studies of technical development, the *Stilentwicklung*. For instance, one may detect a certain analogy between an elderly artist, A, and a younger artist, B. If it can be proved historically possible to presuppose certain communications between them, the conclusion is immediately arrived at that B received influence from A, and was perhaps his pupil. This way of tracing influences throughout the whole field of Art is the chief business of the modern critic, and the entire history is woven from these threads of 'influences' with such certainty that one almost imagines it possible to predict the advent of, say, Botticelli in the Quattrocento from the artistic elements already in existence, first putting into the crucible of historical alchemy the archaism and mystic voluptuousness of Fra Filippo Lippi, the anatomical studies of Antonio Pollajuolo, and the 'aria virile' of Andrea del Castagno, and so on. Such a systematization of history is possible solely because science makes no allowance for accidental elements. But is Art actually carried on with a precision like this? Rather the contrary. The rise and fall of Art surprises. There is the sudden leap of genius. One obstacle to the scientific systematization of the development of Art

usually put forward is the subjective element of the artist's individuality, which forms the essence of Art. But there is another obstacle. Critics are apt to disregard Nature, and it is Nature which intervenes.

For every artist, after the dawn of Renaissance, Nature was, and is, ever the paramount model and inspiration. Above all historical influences, Nature rules. This is such a self-evident fact that it almost sounds absurd to repeat it. In reality, however, it is exactly this fundamental truth which scholars forget, being too busily occupied with questions of detail. In discussing artists' characteristics, it is to the profit of critics to ignore the influence of Nature, common to all artists, because it obliterates their architecture of 'influences' to a great extent. In distinguishing artists we should not think of the human relations between them alone, but also of those with Nature, which are of more importance in their creative psychology. This becomes apparent when one tries to attribute portraits to different artists. In painting ideal figures a painter can be absolutely himself; in portraits his first duty is to study Nature. A man whose physiognomy is more suited to the taste of Pollajuolo may come to Botticelli and ask him to paint his portrait. The *Portrait of a Young Man holding a ring*, in the Corsini Gallery at Florence, can be seen as an example, where Nature baffles the overmuch discrimination of stylistic criticism. Critics have assigned this portrait to Pollajuolo, because it resembles the head of his *David* in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin. I would restore it to its former attribution to the School of Botticelli.

Although modern connoisseurship is the nearest approach to scientific accuracy, we have thus found an element of objective inaccuracy contained in its very core. When we come to think of the subjective idea, which even a stylistic critic cannot entirely eliminate, underlying the whole system, we must learn not to trust modern connoisseurship beyond its due. And what is most tragic is that, Art being completely a human affair, whenever a stylistic critic succeeds in eliminating the subjective element, he is in danger of losing the key of human psychology. I have mentioned already how, among all writers on Botticelli, Horne was a conscientious student. His very conscientiousness, however, brought out clearly this insecurity of method, which is usually hidden in less thorough works. To give an example, it is interesting to read Horne's theory that it was Leonardo da Vinci who was influenced by Botticelli, not Botticelli by Leonardo, as regards the two unfinished *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi Gallery by both artists. Starting from his definite statement that Botticelli's unfinished and much repainted *Adoration* dates from the early part of 1481, he proceeds to the minute comparative chronology of Botticelli and Leonardo, proving finally how Leonardo, when painting his unfinished *Adoration* in the same Gallery, must have seen and been influenced by Botticelli's picture of the same subject. All this sounds objectively reliable, but when

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

looked into more closely it proves to be improbable. I agree with Horne in giving the unfinished *Adoration* of Botticelli rather to his earlier career, although not necessarily so early as 1481. It may be later, although certainly not so late as Wilson, Uhlmann, and Prof. A. Venturi would have it, thinking to find Savonarola's portrait in the picture. I do not take as entirely impossible Horne's theory that Leonardo saw the picture when he was painting his own unfinished *Adoration*. But then could Leonardo, working on that grandest of artistic conceptions, have possibly been influenced by that insignificant unfinished work of Botticelli? For those who contemplate the two paintings in the Florentine rooms of the Uffizi Gallery, it seems almost an outrage to the æsthetic activity of the human mind to imagine that Leonardo, who was capable of so great an achievement, imitated such an uninspired work. Moreover, we may take into consideration Botticelli's impressionable character, put side by side with Leonardo's independence. It was Leonardo who strongly expressed the contempt of imitation in his notebooks. Besides being chronologically admissible, it is infinitely more natural to solve the unmistakable affinity between the two unfinished *Adorations* in the direction contrary to that arrived at by Horne.

Though dealing with the same subject, artist and critic, child of instinct and child of learning, belong, essentially speaking, to two different worlds opposed to each other. Supposing that after all these precautions the chronologies and attributions are fairly well established, the main doubt remains: what, after all, are their merits? The final aim of modern connoisseurship, I take it, is to establish a chart of artists, in order to trace with approximate accuracy the evolution of Art. This is history, and is not the aim in our aspiration for Art.

Do not let it be supposed that I have not gained much from stylistic studies. Till connoisseurship is firmly established and we know genuine works from false ones, the true study of Art cannot so much as begin. Only there is too much talk about dates, repaintings, and attributions. The great cause of Art is all but forgotten. The result is sufficiently curious: minor masters with little artistic merit, forgotten masters who deserve to be forgotten, are studied with more zeal, solely because there are greater chances for 'discoveries' and new histories of Art are encumbered with obscure names. To take examples from the contemporary painters of Botticelli, one would never be taken as a specialist unless one talked much about Jacopo del Sellajo, Raffaellino del Garbo, Carli, or even Utili da Faenza, and so on. Historical names are not sufficient for stylistic analysis, and there are whole series of invented names: Amico di Sandro, Alunno di Domenico, Compagno di Pesellino (these three are due to Mr. Berenson), Master of Gothic Buildings, Master of the Oriental Sash (these two to Dr. Osvald Sirèn), and so on. I am not wholly opposed to this attempt at reconstructing artistic personalities. If only in reference to the important

picture, *The Story of Esther*, at Chantilly, Mr. Berenson is justified in giving it a new name, as it is too beautiful to be left unnoticed, and it has a character of its own, different either from Botticelli or Filippino Lippi, with which it is associated. I hope at some future time to discuss the question of 'Amico' fully. Here I only mention that, although it is a very clever suggestion, I cannot see a unified personality in the pictures ascribed to 'Amico'. That Alunno di Domenico was identified with the historical name Bartolommeo di Giovanni does great credit to Mr. Berenson's judgment. But on the whole I do not care about attempts at inventing new names, as they increase the chaos of history, instead of lessening it. Still that does not matter much: what matters is that, with few exceptions, critics who make 'discoveries' have a tendency to appreciate the discovered master too much. I can sympathize with it as a human weakness: it cannot, however, be excused. Thus connoisseurship, with its usefulness, is doing much to divert our artistic interest from its main course. Art journals are full of new material and names, and flourish historical value in the face of artistic value, and scatter confusion over the genuine appreciation of Art.

We must not forget that the business of connoisseurship is to purge the history of Art of untruths, and to systematize it. In this sense and no other is it of value; and in this sense connoisseurship has done great service, as the Art-study of the pre-Morelli period was too full of untruths. It was really after the establishment of modern connoisseurship that people began to see pictures with their own eyes; the true history of Art began with this, while formerly it was more a biography of artists. None the less, let us clearly understand its limitation: connoisseurship is not the study of Art proper—however useful, it is the preliminary course for it.

Having discussed modern connoisseurship, its merits and limitations, I now turn to the other phase of historical criticism: Art as seen in the light of the history of civilization. This is also an interesting study. Art is surely a child of the age. It is both possible and profitable to reconstruct the spirit of the time from its influence on Art, as Conte de Gobineau successfully did in his *Renaissance*, in which he revived that most exciting of ages from the inspirations of the Art of the time. But even these historical considerations, however interesting, should not affect us in our appreciation.

Primarily, the critic is a man of letters. His difficulty lies in the fact that he deals with plastic art, which is outside verbal expression. Fortunate he is if he does not commit some essential mistake, as the barrier between the world of articulate expression and that of the inarticulate is an essential one, and thus mistakes in this can scarcely fail to be essential. Criticism of music in words is very arbitrary, and gives you a very poor idea of what music is, although the criticism may be beautiful as a piece of literature.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

A literary critic has a tendency to over-estimate literary evidence, which can, after all, have but little weight on the æsthetic estimation of a picture. Historical documents appear important in our eyes: we are too quickly impressed by their time-honoured dignity. But they should not impede our direct contact with Art.

I will give a remarkable example with reference to Botticelli, of how critics are fond of historical sources which, although of scholarly importance, are outside artistic estimation. When Horne's volume on Botticelli appeared, Mr. Roger Fry wrote a review of the book in the *Burlington Magazine* (vol. XIII, p. 83), which grasped the scholarly nature of Horne's work thus: 'There is little, indeed, in his [Horne's] appreciation of Botticelli which is not taken from the criticism of Botticelli's own contemporaries, most of all from a certain agent of the Duke of Milan, who mentioned the characteristics of Botticelli as the *aria virile*, the virile air of his figures. . . . Mr. Horne endeavours to get his artist seen in true perspective and is content to leave it there.' The question of the *aria virile* was what Horne most impressed on scholars of the Renaissance, and there is a fashion among subsequent writers on Botticelli to spend much eloquence on this newly discovered phase of his art. I will discuss it fully later on, where I shall show how even good historians are misled in their happy moment of documentary discovery, not only in artistic judgment, but in historical consideration. The famous *aria virile* of a contemporary criticism, if properly considered, will be found something different from what Mr. Roger Fry called the 'true perspective' to see Botticelli. Here I have only to point out in a general way that in æsthetic appreciation it is not right to make too much of 'contemporary' criticisms. Divest them of the respect we willingly pay to laborious scholars who discover obscure documents from out the chaos of Italian archives, and then consider what is the importance of a fragment of contemporary criticism in *our* æsthetic appreciation. It is very interesting to know the taste of the time. For the purpose of appreciating Botticelli, however, it is of no more value than an opinion of any man at any time.

We must always admit that Horne was a rare case of scholarly erudition. Even if we are disposed to consider his work somewhat lacking in appreciation, that does not detract from its merits as a work of superb historical research. So with Horne it is excusable that he was apt to make too much of documentary evidence. Other writers on the Art of the Renaissance, especially on Botticelli, are not merely as scholarly, and their chief business in writing historical criticisms appears little more than to cover their inefficiency of appreciation by references to the time. A spectator may find Botticelli's *Fortezza* stiff in pose and hard in execution. The critic tells him that Botticelli at that time was under the influence of the Pollajuoli and that the art of the goldsmith influenced painting. The simple spectator is

glad to have been so edified, and will conclude that it is a sign of ignorance and mistaken taste to find fault with the stiffness of the *Fortezza*. One writes of Botticelli in a general way that 'it was an age of affectation, when poets delighted in fanciful conceits and far-fetched images and Botticelli was not strong enough to escape its influence'. (George Rose, *Renaissance Masters*.) When a man remembers such a general description, and if he finds in the pose of the *Fortezza* or in other figures of Botticelli some shade of 'affectation', he is in danger of taking this 'affectation' as an excusable attribute, even though he does not like it. So the genuine reaction of the human soul to Art is about to be lost. If one loves the *Fortezza* and finds strength in what may appear stiff and severe, so much the better. History merely explains, but does not alter facts. M. Rosenthal, lecturing in the Sorbonne in 1897 on 'Sandro Botticelli et sa réputation à l'heure présente', recommended historical studies, in order to do away with 'ces repugnances naturelles', the better to appreciate Botticelli. My view is just the opposite.

After objecting to the fashion now in vogue of historical studies, the merit of which I recognize, but the limitations of which I have attempted to demonstrate, it remains to me only to draw attention to the other attitude to Art, the essential one, Art as Religion. That this is the *raison d'être* of Art is so obvious a fact that I am afraid what I am going to say about it may sound like a truism. It is sad to think that contemporary criticism has deviated from its right course so much that I am obliged to consider this elementary matter at the outset of my study.

Art from the sociological point of view does not concern me here. As a personal matter, Art is religious. Of course, I do not mean that Art should conform to any established religion. It may or it may not, that is not the point. What I mean is that Art in itself is Religion, the Religion of the Beautiful, to which you resort with a spiritual longing and thereby receive inspiration and consolation. Very rarely Art can attain to such a height, but that does not alter the main aim. You are quite free to study Art sociologically, archæologically, and in other ways, just as you may treat Religion as material for scientific investigation. Only do not lose sight of its inner, spiritual significance, or Art is nothing. In the true cause of Art, these intellectual pursuits are of value in so far as they make preparations for the essential appreciation. In the temple of Art you stand alone. Divested of all acquired knowledge, your soul speaks alone with Art. In this sacred silence, where soul communes alone with soul, no intermediaries should enter.

This I believe to be the right attitude towards Art.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

PART I

THE REALISTIC BOTTICELLI

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

CHAPTER I. BOTTICELLI'S EDUCATION · ART OF THE QUATTROCENTO · FRA FILIPPO LIPPI · LINEAR AND TONAL REALISM · MASACCIO'S PLACE IN FLORENTINE ART · VERROCCHIO AND POLLAJUOLO · INFLUENCE OF ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO

WHEN Botticelli was born in the year 1444, Florentine Art was in full swing towards Realism. It was a wonderful age when Man, as if he were Adam newly awakened, saw the world for the first time, and found it beautiful; saw himself, and found his body beautiful. There was an irresistible desire and curiosity for Nature in the air, and painters, under whatever pretext, gazed at Nature and lost themselves in intimate and whole-hearted studies of her.

The beginning of the Renaissance movement in Cimabue from the crude and mysterious Byzantinism is wonderful as the first dawn. Giotto's bold advance is still more wonderful, like the first actual ray of the sun suddenly brightening the whole obscure world. Thenceforth at each upward step the sun illuminated one more corner of the earth. Progress was so steady: almost without exception, the pupil knew more than the master; every new artist discovered more new aspects in Nature. It was a wonderful age. Writers on the Renaissance, blindly following Vasari's stories, refer too exclusively to Paolo Uccello's studies of perspective. But it was not only he who felt and practised perspective at that time. The new tendency was in the air. It is a mistake to value Paolo Uccello's art only for its perspective, as if his paintings were mere experiments in that particular science. Though he might have been intellectually immersed in the problem, as related by Vasari, his real works are more remarkable for a sense of decorative design, for grand architectonic composition, the primitive qualities of which are not yet limited by geometrical systematization of the visual world, called perspective. Other masters soon went ahead of him: Alesso Baldovinetti and Piero della Francesca, but more especially their master and contemporary of Uccello, Domenico Veneziano, who painted, miraculously for that time, landscapes with aerial perspective and even with the colour-scheme of modern 'plein-airists'. Even Fra Angelico, who is commonly taken to be a return to medieval pietism, in reality contributed much to the progress of the Art of the Renaissance. His sense of Nature was so fresh and sensitive that he stood as the foremost in painting real flowers, flowers that sparkle and smell. Botticelli was born in this age of ever-progressing Realism and was educated in the most modern manner.

There is no reason to doubt Vasari's story that Fra Filippo Lippi was the

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

first master of young Botticelli, though there are some theories against it. J. P. Richter suggested Francesco Pesellino, but this theory is untenable, as Horne pointed out, both chronologically, because Pesellino died in 1457, when Botticelli was a boy of thirteen, and stylistically, because the similarities between Botticelli's early works and Pesellino's are not very remarkable and can be reduced to the common inspiration of Fra Filippo Lippi. But more important than refuting these theories is it to see as an incontestible fact the intimate inseparable relation between Fra Filippo and Botticelli. Indeed, I can think of no other master who was so essentially adapted for the early education of Botticelli's genius, no other pupil than Botticelli in whom Fra Filippo could have seen his own self rejuvenated and amplified. They were related to each other, as it were, by spiritual blood. The story preserved by Vasari of how Fra Filippo loved Botticelli and taught him all he knew, and how the latter learned so excellently that it was impossible to distinguish their works from each other, carries much weight in the analysis of the character of the two artists. In the whole history of the Renaissance there is no such affinity of character as that which existed between Fra Filippo and his beloved pupil.

To my mind the important position Fra Filippo occupied in the Quattrocento is not yet fully recognized. The main current of the Quattrocento was, as I have said, the eager pursuit of Realism, and Fra Filippo is usually considered, not as a vigorous fighter in this main stream, but as representing a retrogressive side-current.

It is not at all difficult to understand why this opinion was conceived if we compare the frate with his master Masaccio. But we must remember that it was Masaccio who was a chronological anomaly: he outstripped his time, and in the beginning of the Quattrocento became the direct father of the Cinquecento and of all modern paintings. What painter of the Quattrocento does not appear antiquated when compared with him? Not only his pupil Fra Filippo, Fra Filippo's pupil Botticelli, even Botticelli's pupil Filippino, with all his Cinquecento technique, looks miserably archaic in the Brancacci Chapel! I hope I am not deluded by the composition of Masolino which Filippino there was obliged to follow. From this comparison with Masaccio it is usual for writers on Botticelli to deduce the 'archaism' in him from his master Fra Filippo, and thus to imagine that the young Botticelli, with a more modern desire for Nature, was dissatisfied with his first master, who, they say, belonged to the old monastic school. This is an ingenious suggestion which apparently explains why Botticelli did not follow Fra Filippo to Spoleto in 1469, and sanctions the popular theory that Botticelli soon after joined the bottega of Antonio Pollajuolo, the great realist. It is a question which requires further sifting.

Horne summarizes the position Fra Filippo occupied in the Renaissance and his relation to Botticelli, thus: 'Unlike Masaccio and Paolo Uccello,

JUDITH WITH THE HEAD OF HOLOFERNES
(Florence, Uffizi Gallery)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

who break away from this linear Giottesque tradition of draughtsmanship in their attempt to render the mass of a figure entirely by its relief, Fra Filippo remains, in the middle of the fifteenth century, a painter of the Giottesque descent, not only in his method of draughtsmanship, but also in many of his forms, such as his hands and draperies, the rocky backgrounds of his pictures, the convention of his trees; and these, precisely, are among the characters of his art which Botticelli seized upon and imitated in his own works.' (Horne, *Sandro Botticelli*, p. 12.)

Only a scholar unfamiliar with any but European Art would make such a broad generalization, that linear painting is archaic and that true Realism comes only from Masaccio's method of 'relief'. To the Oriental mind, which is used to examples of 'linear' Realism, this distinction does not at all suffice to explain the evolution of painting. It is better to think there are two kinds of artistic attitudes toward Nature, one linear and the other tonal. These are distinct attitudes which come from the artist's temperament, and so they may, but do not necessarily, indicate the developed and undeveloped degrees of technique. Both can be ways of approaching the essential aspect of Nature. It is not only in Oriental Art that great works of linear representation were accomplished: in Europe, too, there was no lack of artists with this 'Oriental' trait. Studying the Quattrocento from a wider view of the world's Art, one may see in Fra Filippo Lippi, not an altogether archaic master, but one of the most daringly progressive artists of his time.

One artist conceives the visual world as architecture of rhythmic line; another as a bas-relief of changing tone. You will notice this fundamental difference among young students in Art schools. It is true, as modern impressionists have asserted, more by their work than by their theory, that there exists no such thing as line in Nature, line being only the limit of intersecting planes or masses; theoretically, the tonal view of Nature must be said to be truer to reality than the linear. In the Art of the Renaissance, where the main motive was to advance deeper and deeper towards Nature, the progress of Art was, roughly speaking, along the way from the linear to the tonal. The main contrast between the Quattrocento and the Cinquecento was exactly this. But this general law must not be expected to rule in its entirety in individual cases, where an artist's genius presents infinite varieties.

Art is not a theoretical business. It is strictly an affair of human experience. In actual human experience a man sees Nature as consisting of lines or tones, according to his temperament, which mainly comes from some physiological basis. A man may have eyes with very sensitive retinas, and he may be preoccupied with chiaroscuro more than with anything else. Another may have a keen perception for delicate linear intricacies in Nature, owing to the unusual sensitiveness of his ocular muscles. It is true that line and rhythm, which do not exist objectively, are not so efficacious in representing cubic Nature as tonal values, and they have other powerful

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

functions, decorative and symbolic. Hence artists greatly endowed with linear sensibility do not as a rule follow the art which merely 'represents': they stray into other, more ethereal spheres which are beyond the reach of Realism. The linear tendency frequently weakens the artist in natural representation, as may be observed in minor masters of the Sienese and Central-Italian painting. But all these are temptations which do not necessarily prevent an artist from advancing to naturalistic representation in terms of line. Proofs of this may easily be obtained from Oriental Art, which usually conceived Nature in linear ways. As I am afraid, however, that examples from Oriental Art might be taken here as contrary to what I intend, viz. as examples of the decorative function of line, for which Oriental Art is considered in Europe chiefly remarkable, I will more readily illustrate my views by means of European Art. Take Dürer and Titian, the former the greatest master of the linear view of Nature, which as Nature-study can easily stand side by side with the great Titian, the marvel of tonal art. I think I am not very wrong if I call the linear view the Gothic and the tonal one the Classic: the former sees Nature in detail, marking out tiny fragments with gem-like precision, while the latter embraces Nature as a whole, bringing out the grand planes and volumes, even if at the expense of precision in detail. The Gothic temperament can be explained to a certain extent by the severe and sombre northern climate, and the Classic by the easy, bounteous southern; and they divide European civilization into two.

Tuscan Italy is an interesting country, in which these two contrasts of Nature may be said to meet and mingle harmoniously, just as the severe Gothic sense of linear architecture has become amalgamated with the classic sense of masses in the genius of Brunelleschi, who built the marvellous cupola of the Duomo at Florence. Lovers of Florence know well that it is in some respects very northern in character. No wonder that there, in contrast to the southern Italians, who are entirely classic in conception, was born a long line of artists with a linear conception of Nature. True, Florentine artists are exempt from a too pronounced severity, and are generally endowed with the unmistakable Italian sweetness, but they also retain that tenacious analytical view of Nature, peculiar to the Gothic. Rodin was right in calling Donatello a Gothic master. It is a symbolic event that the greatest masterpiece of Hugo van der Goes was brought to Florence in 1481 and was greatly admired by Florentine masters.

Discussing the art education which young Botticelli received, I prefer to regard his first master, Fra Filippo, in this Gothic light, and point out that he, too, with all his linear preponderance, which looks antiquated by the side of Masaccio, must be accounted as one of the most progressive of the age in Nature-study. One should see the first lesson in Realism, instead of the archaic training, which Botticelli received from Fra Filippo.

It is not that Horne did not notice something similar. He says: 'Fra Filippo became one of the masters of the new "Naturalistic" school of Florence, but unlike Masaccio, who so transmutes the old methods of the Giottesque painters that they become for him a new form of pictorial expression, Fra Filippo elaborates and refines upon them till they grow perfectly expressive of his ideas. For him, this new "Naturalism" is but a graft on the old Giottesque stock.' (*Horne*, p. 11.) It seems to me that this assertion contains more than one untruth. For historians, Giotto is the name which invariably represents the old school of painting, but I would prefer, say, that Giotto is old in date but not archaic. In my view, Giotto was, together with Masaccio, one of those rare geniuses who broke away from the ordinary course of development and could see Nature in perfect tonal values, while the world was still under the rule of linear Byzantinism. Who would not hail Giotto, together with Masaccio, as another direct forbear of modern Art? Although line is conspicuous in his paintings, Horne and others should have observed the essential difference of its function in Giotto from that in genuine masters of line, for instance, in Fra Filippo Lippi. Giotto's lines are the architectonic, constructive skeleton of Nature which only the undeveloped technique of the time could not dispense with. They are not lines in conception: they are foreshortened planes. Therefore Giotto's figures can look so sculpture-like with such primitive technique. Giotto's lines were of a nature to disappear as unnecessary when the tonal representation of different planes became technically possible, and that was what Masaccio accomplished. In this sense there is no painter who conjectures Masaccio's art more than Giotto. Contrary to Horne's idea, I would rather say it was Masaccio who perfected Giotto's methods, and their grand, broad conceptions of Nature, enveloped in all-pervading tonal value, formed the technical basis of the Cinquecento and all subsequent Art.

So in my view of the development of the painter's technique in the fifteenth-century Florence, the Giotto-Masaccio current flows apart, while the main stream was in the other channel, the analytical study of Nature, which in the way of precise detail brought about the accentuation of linear elements in painting. This main current of the Quattrocento was destined to meet the other at the juncture of the Quattro- and Cinquecento and to produce that greatest synthetic painter in the whole field of pictorial Art, Leonardo da Vinci.

There is one more reason for encouraging the minute detail-study of Nature in the Quattrocento. In those first days of wakening to the beauty of Nature, artists had their whole attention absorbed by the fragments of Nature immediately before their eyes, so that they had little time or energy left for contemplating them in their tonal unity. Nearly all Nature-studies of the Quattrocento had to be linear and analytical. Even now beginners

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

in Art do the same, jotting down every detail with nervous solicitude, and losing the feeling of mass. If one paints a flower, one observes that flower and nothing else, tracing its outlines with eager curiosity, and so, forgetting its value in the whole system of Nature, represents it with exaggerated detail. If one studies a hand, one gets lost in the obstinate scrutiny of the curious ramifications of the veins and muscles, and draws them as if they were the final aim of Art to grasp. I mention this, recalling to my mind what Verrocchio did in the picture of the *Baptism of Christ* in the Uffizi Gallery, especially in the arm and hand of John the Baptist. Indeed, Verrocchio and Pollajuolo were just those who pushed this Quattrocento tendency to the extreme, and their art was often little more than a display of their wonderfully accurate knowledge of Nature and the human body. You can also see the insatiable curiosity for Nature in a Quattrocento painter, from Benozzo Gozzoli's paintings, which are so overloaded with unnecessary detail, each bit claiming the spectator's attention with equal insistence, that he does not know which to look at. I will refer to Verrocchio and Pollajuolo, their merits and their limitations, later on, when Botticelli fell under their influence. Let us here understand that Fra Filippo should be accounted, not as an opponent, but a most daring promoter of this Quattrocento tendency. In his paintings rich lines were not the remnants of Giotto's conventions, but the necessary inventions of Fra Filippo's interest in every tiny detail of Nature.

That he was a Carmelite monk should not bias us in reading into his pictures too much of religious ideas. We should not mention Don Lorenzo Monaco, Fra Angelico, and Fra Filippo Lippi in the same breath. No one can deny that there is a strong mystic element in Fra Filippo's art, but that was more the outcome of his temperament than the mere influence of monastic life, which could not have been very sincere with this child of pleasure. The scandal of the frate's marriage with Lucretia Buti is well known. How much truth is contained in the legend may be challenged, but that he was the first to see a real woman of flesh and blood in the Madonna is so glaringly true in his pictures that this alone places him among the most advanced of realistic painters. The beautiful *Madonna and Child* in the Palazzo Riccardi in Florence is one of the masterpieces of the world, representing a young mother caressing her child, or more probably being caressed by the child. The child presses his cheek against the mother's, and the curious distortion of the flesh on both cheeks, warm as with the sense of touch, is depicted with a sensuous sympathy. He not only translated the Madonna-cult into the cult of Motherhood, entirely human, but, farther on, into the cult of Womanhood. This 'apettito della bellezza', so adequately attributed to him by the poetic insight of Lorenzo il Magnifico, was not limited to the delineation of the flesh: everything Fra Filippo painted was observed with the same naturalistic curiosity and

love. Of his draperies, too, one should not admire only the flowing lines, but more the really rational construction of fold upon fold. For those who are accustomed to take Masacciesque or Leonardesque draperies as the standard of realistic representation, Fra Filippo's draperies would at first sight look as if they consisted of lines, arbitrary and decorative. But it is not so. Fra Filippo had a fine sense of line, but it was strictly subservient to his main purpose, which was realism, although peculiar to himself. How this phase of Fra Filippo's art differed from that of Botticelli we shall more clearly see when we come to study the latter. Here my point is to see how Fra Filippo could be, and was, a good master for Botticelli's realistic education.

All this I have explained, because the true understanding of the position Fra Filippo occupied in the main current of the Quattrocento is indispensable in the study of Botticelli, in the formation of whose genius Fra Filippo took so great a part. Horne says: 'Technically Botticelli always remained his disciple.' This is not enough: rather, he technically differed and later evolved his own style. In nature Botticelli was ever near to his first master.

While Botticelli was with the master, or a little later on, Masaccio had some effect on him, which, however, quickly disappeared. As this throws no little light on the proper understanding of Botticelli's artistic temperament, let me indicate the event with more emphasis than may be thought due to the slightness of this influence.

Vasari tells how the Capella Brancacci, of the Church of Carmine, was a kind of school for young Florentine artists, among whom he counted Botticelli. Masaccio's greatness was at the time in every one's mouth, and in addition he was the master of Botticelli's master. Considered from these circumstances, there are reasons enough to imagine that Masaccio greatly influenced young Botticelli, whose nature was very impressionable. And yet, why in reality was Masaccio's influence on Botticelli so very slight? I can see it with some clearness only in the predella of the story of Mary Magdalene, designed by Botticelli and mainly executed by a clever assistant of his, called 'Amico di Sandro' by Mr. Berenson, in the Johnson Collection in Philadelphia: all other Masacciesque traits in Botticelli's early pictures, such as in the early *Adoration of the Magi* in the National Gallery, can be attributed indirectly to Fra Filippo Lippi, who, although he failed to grasp the tonal grandeur, yet retained many detailed characteristics of his master, Masaccio. In one of the four panels of *Mary Magdalene*, the scene where Christ preaches, a more direct influence of Masaccio on Botticelli is obvious, the figures being very dignified in bearing and solid in balance, which could scarcely have been inherited from Fra Filippo, and could not have been produced by Botticelli alone. And yet I must say that this influence of Masaccio is shown more in individual types, as in the case of Fra Filippo, in the imitation of detail rather than in the general con-

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

ception of Nature, which with its grand distribution of chiaroscuro gives to Masaccio's art a unique place. That even such fragmentary influence of Masaccio made these Magdalene panels conspicuous for their grand feeling among Botticelli's designs, and that Botticelli could not retain this feeling for long, is a proof that between Masaccio and Botticelli there lay a fundamental dissimilarity of character which, because of its very difference, made the influence of Masaccio very advantageous, but transient.

Thus, putting the grandeur of Masaccio as their contrast, we can best see the essential closeness of character between Fra Filippo and Botticelli. The art of Fra Filippo Lippi also stands so far from Masaccio that one is almost tempted to contest the immediate relationship of master and pupil. Like Botticelli, Fra Filippo retained Masacciesque character only in fragmentary detail. Rarely was he as grand in tone and conception as in the small predella in the Berlin Museum, which is remarkable as an exception. The general impression of Fra Filippo's art, laboured in detail, lovely rather than grand, is remote from that of Masaccio. Even in the frescoes in the Cathedral at Prato, in which one can feel an immediate inspiration from the Brancacci frescoes, and where, floating over all, is that dark-olive shadow of Masaccio, yet the entire difference in character gave quite another effect. In the Prato frescoes you are almost forced to scrutinize details: profiles with remarkable individualities peep out from every corner, beautiful studies of draperies flutter scintillating from the limbs of women in quick movement. There you cannot be immersed in a large silent shadow as in the Cappella Brancacci, where figures stand immense as Greek statues and simply overpower you.

We must well understand the complex position which Fra Filippo occupied in the Quattrocento. He was primarily guided by his analytic and linear conception of Nature, and although he must be called less modern, compared with that most modern of painters, Masaccio, yet in his own way, and that was the general trend of the time, he was both daring and progressive. Botticelli eagerly imbibed this leading characteristic of the master. Botticelli received his first lesson in Nature-study from Fra Filippo, and this was excellent for the future expansion of his genius.

Why so? Because, coming in contact with Fra Filippo in his early days of Nature-study, Botticelli began it with love, instead of with science. This was the important thing. The study of Nature in Art must ever be guided by love: science, however valuable, must take a secondary place. In the Florentine Quattrocento, the artist's interest in Nature was so keen that the scientific attitude, which is excellent for acquiring knowledge of Nature, was destined to assume a position beyond its due in relation to Art. When man discovered Nature for the first time and found her beautiful, he loved her and studied her with a lover's instinct. Fra Filippo was a man who all through his life did not lose this lover's instinct. Of course there are defects

in it, and Fra Filippo could not prosecute his Nature-study with the method and thoroughness of scientific masters. But what is necessary was obtained with simplicity and directness, and not spoiled by pedantic precision. Fra Filippo's pictures are realistic, with a strange power of insinuation; although there are many unrealities inconceivable to our modern sense, we believe them. We shall see that Nature, in Botticelli's pictures, belonged to the same category. Botticelli was of a younger generation: he could not be satisfied with his master for long; he had to enrich his knowledge from scientific sources which, after Fra Filippo's time, progressed with amazing swiftness. But still, Botticelli never ceased to move in the spirit of his master toward Nature. Fra Filippo was the one painter suitable to implant in the young soul of Botticelli that all-powerful seed, the love of Nature, which was to germinate in its own way.

Fra Filippo's relation to Botticelli was not only intimate, but complicated. He had sown in the young man's soul vigorous seeds which were to rule his future; but the seed fell on fertile soil and its growth could not be limited to the domain of the mother-plant. More precisely, it was then a great time of progress, each day making a step farther towards Nature; Fra Filippo's inheritance had to flower with a vigour in the young artist who, as it were, was born when spring was more advanced. Fra Filippo sowed the seed; others cultivated it.

Even while Botticelli was under the direct guidance of his old master, his genius of a younger generation had to force its own way. It is interesting to see how distinct Botticelli was in his independent way from other pupils of Fra Filippo, Fra Diamante, for instance, who did little except imitate the master in a servile manner. The almost boyish interest in Nature awakened in the youthful soul of Botticelli leaps out in mischievous whims, as in two stags running with uncontrollable activity into a wood in the tondo *Adoration of the Magi* in the London National Gallery. In this picture the landscape is infinitely more natural than that of Fra Filippo. Gothic buildings are studied with loving care, and they recede, moreover, into atmospheric distance through a bluish haze, which not only never occurs in Fra Filippo Lippi, but also is very beautiful, even if placed among the more advanced landscapes of the late Quattrocento. Although this tondo *Adoration of the Magi* is not a suitable example, being painted after Botticelli had left his first master, yet it serves my point so far as to explain as natural that a young artist, endowed with such a fine sense of Nature, must have wished to study her in a more systematic way than that of Fra Filippo. Just at the time there were in Florence two great masters who were exactly suitable for furthering the education of young Botticelli, Pollajuolo and Verrocchio.

There exists little historical ground to assign a definite date as to when Botticelli left Fra Filippo Lippi. The conjecture that Botticelli, living with

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Fra Filippo at Prato, must have come to Florence to frequent the bottega of the Pollajuoli is entirely without foundation. Though this suggestion, adorned with a dramatic description, appeals to our imagination, presenting the young and restless Botticelli, pushed on by artistic ardour for a newer Art, traversing the flowery fields of the Valley of the Arno, from the old provincial town towards the Tuscan capital, where Brunelleschi's cupola towered to the heavens, yet it seems to be incompatible with the character of Botticelli, which was easy-going and content with the ordinary course of events, reluctant even to establish an independent workshop out of the paternal, and later fraternal, home where he lived. I cannot imagine that Botticelli was really dissatisfied with Fra Filippo. Fra Filippo's departure for Spoleto in 1467, where he died two years later, in all probability marks the date when Botticelli had to leave his first master. There is no evidence to show whether Botticelli followed Fra Filippo to Spoleto, and I agree with other critics in thinking that he did not. There is no indication of Botticelli's hand in Fra Filippo's work in Spoleto, but we must not forget that even at Prato there exists no trace of Botticelli—Prato, where Botticelli must have lived, first as apprentice then as assistant, for about seven years, and where we might expect to find some evidence of his collaboration in Fra Filippo's great labours, Botticelli being meanwhile skilled enough to paint such beautiful Filippesque panels as the oblong *Adoration of the Magi* in the National Gallery.

Where Botticelli went after Fra Filippo left for Spoleto is a question on which specialists have exhausted learning and speculation. Was it to Pollajuolo or to Verrocchio? Uhlmann, the first genuine scholar to study Botticelli, started the question by ascribing Botticelli's after-education entirely to Verrocchio. Horne attacked Uhlmann vehemently and attempted to put forward Antonio Pollajulo in place of Verrocchio. Indeed, the best part of Horne's energy as a stylistic critic seems to have been spent in pointing out Pollajuolesque details in Botticelli's works. Recently a book has appeared on Botticelli, by Dr. Bode, in which the German scholar once more puts forward the view in favour of Verrocchio as sharply as Horne was against it. But why could it not have been Pollajuolo *and* Verrocchio, instead of Pollajuolo *or* Verrocchio?

Certainly Horne pleaded a forcible argument when he pointed out that many pictures of Verrocchio's descent, such as Botticini's and those which are grouped under the name of 'Amico di Sandro', according to Mr. Berenson, had hitherto been taken as Botticelli's own, and formed the basis of Uhlmann's preference for Verrocchio. But I would like to ask as the important question, can the problem really be solved from data in our possession? I must confess that many of the examples given by Horne, to prove the 'indubitable influence' of Antonio Pollajulo on Botticelli, are

not only unable to convince me, but have even made me distrustful of him and other historians who could draw such definite conclusions from comparisons so subjective and from material so insufficient. For instance, Horne dates the small *Judith* panel in the Uffizi Gallery a little after 1470. The date cannot be far wrong. But what grounds has he for being so precise? Because the figure of Judith resembles the 'figure of Salome, to whom a soldier offers the head of the Baptist on a charger in the embroidery after the design of Antonio Pollajuolo, of the feast of Herod,' now in the Opera del Duomo at Florence, executed in 1470, as we know from documentary evidence. Where is the resemblance? 'Not only in the attitude, but in the whole conception of the form, proportions and movement of the tall, alert figure, in the way in which the head is set upon the slender neck, the shoulders and elbows thrown back, the draperies caught by the drooping torso in its rapid motion, is Sandro clearly imitating Antonio.' (*Horne*, p. 25.) All this sounds well. But when I compare the two, the Uffizi *Judith* with the figure of what Horne called 'Salome', which I could only approximately identify, there being some mistake in Horne's description, his conclusion was anything but 'clear' to me. To my mind, Botticelli appears in the *Judith* panel more than ever Verrocchiesque, especially in the face. The figure which, according to Horne, imitates Pollajuolo seems to me still to retain Fra Filippo's manner in dancing figures, represented here more easily, showing how Botticelli had already come under the influence of Florentine training, not particularly of the Pollajuolo school. To give a fixed date sounds scholarly, but if the grounds are so vague it is better to leave it alone.

After all, the only fact which may support the Pollajuolo theory is that Botticelli painted the *Fortezza* in the Uffizi Gallery, which formed the last of the seven series of allegorical figures painted by the Pollajuoli for the Hall of the Mercanzia. This may mean that Botticelli was in close connection with the Pollajuoli, perhaps was in their workshop. But not necessarily. We know from 'Deliberazioni dell' ufficiale e dei sei di Mercanzia', published by Mesnil (*Miscellanea d'Arte*, 1903), that it was through Botticelli's patron, Tommaso Soderini, newly elected one of the consuls of the Mercanzia, that Botticelli was given the commission, and that because the Pollajuoli failed to proceed with the work as quickly as had been stipulated in the contract. Indeed, this circumstance favours the suggestion that Botticelli might have joined the Pollajuolo bottega and painted this figure from the design of Antonio; but it only favours, it does not decide. The real decision depends upon the picture itself, which, if examined carefully, rather suggests an opposite conclusion. In my view the *Fortezza* cannot have been designed by anyone but Botticelli.

In the first place the throne is bad in perspective. All the other six thrones are well drawn and give a correct feeling of depth, while in the

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Fortezza you cannot understand how the figure is able to sit. The two large supports on each side of the throne bulge outwardly instead of projecting forward, as they should, and as they do in the other panels of the series. So thoroughly an intellectual painter as Antonio Pollajuolo would not have perpetrated such a realistic mistake. It is true, in Antonio's admirable drawing of the *Carità*, on the back of the panel, painted by Piero, the throne and the background are only slightly indicated. It is possible to suggest that, even if we assume that Botticelli followed Antonio in the figure, the throne itself might have been painted by Botticelli from his own design.

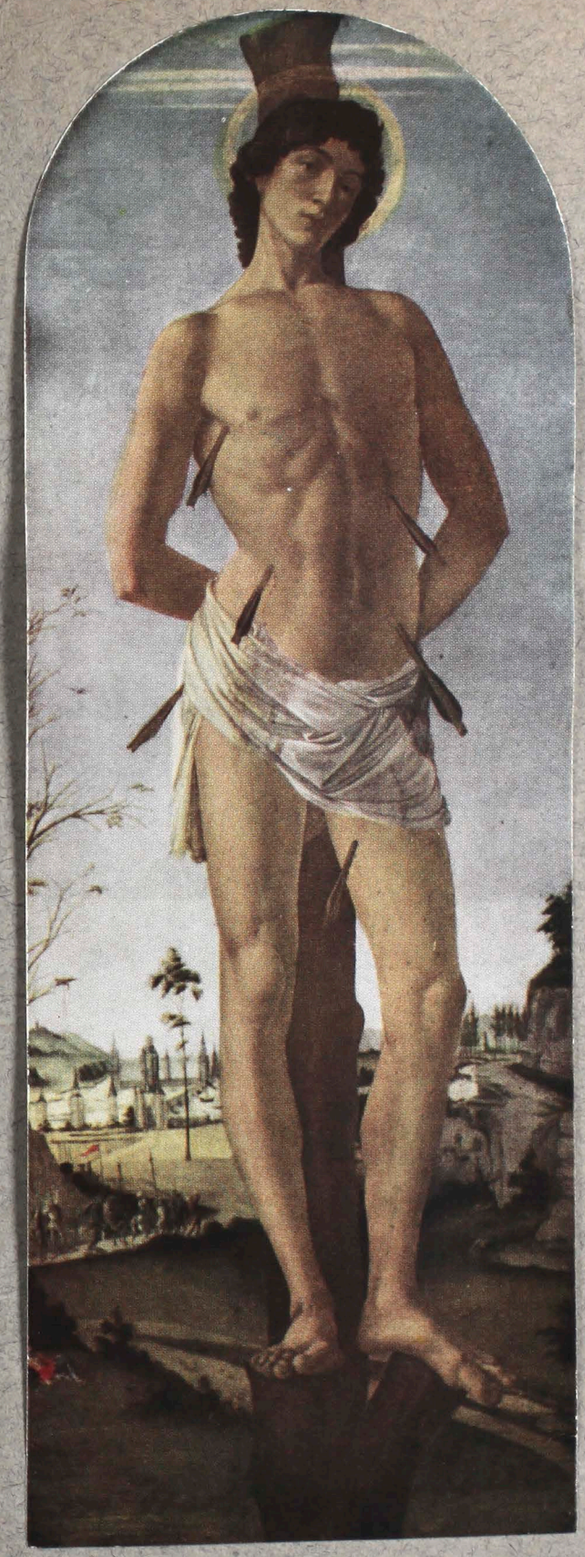
On this point I am prepared for the objection that Botticelli was famous for his perspective, and that it is wrong to ascribe the design of the throne to him because of its bad perspective. Later on I will discuss fully this tradition regarding Botticelli's perspective. It seems to me that he was not an artist who could be strictly bound down by an abstract law of Nature, such as perspective. He did not mind violating it when he was guided by a law much more essential to the artistic effect of a picture. It is just in this artistic way that the throne of the *Fortezza* is designed. If you look on the throne as real and trace out the geometrical lines hidden in the picture, you will find it is wrong. In the picture itself, however, those curved lines bulging out from each side of the figure are as effective as two symmetrical wings spread out to maintain the stable feeling of the whole. Antonio's way of thinking was otherwise: he was always strictly rational, never sacrificing scientific laws for artistic. Botticelli, with all his faithful studies of Nature, ever remained an artist.

But the main point of the question rests on the figure, which I call entirely Botticellesque. Paradoxical though it may sound, I can well understand how Morelli, with his keen vision, failed to see Botticelli in the *Fortezza*. At his time the study of Botticelli was in its infancy, and he had to form his ideas from late works of the artist, which are very assertive of Botticelli's fully pronounced characteristics and are very different from the works of his early student days when his impressionable nature was imbibing much of exterior influences. In this sense the *Fortezza* is remote from the ordinary Botticelli. For us, who know Botticelli better than in Morelli's days, this un-Botticellesque trait seems to exist only in the superficial and does not affect the essential design.

The general outlook of the figure is something like Pollajuolo's. Why should not Botticelli, adding the last to the series to be hung side by side in the Hall of Mercanzia, design his piece intentionally in the Pollajuolesque manner, so as to harmonize it with the others? I can admit Pollajuolo's influence to this extent, but no farther. I wonder what ground scholars had for easily concluding that Antonio gave the design to Botticelli. There is one reason which, I consider, negatives this assumption. It is the

ST. SEBASTIAN
(Berlin, Kaiser-Friedrich Museum)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

arrangement of the draperies round Fortezza's feet. I have pointed out, as the main characteristic of Pollajuolo, the thoroughly maintained rationality throughout his pictures which made him admired in this most intellectual of ages. His works are constructed with so much reason that no incongruity might be observed were the picture suddenly to come to life. When he drew a figure sitting on a throne, he considered the way it sat of first importance. He was great because his visual realism never failed to carry this evident sanction of intellect with it. When painting draperies, however gorgeous they were, he never added superfluous length or fold as a mere means for decorative exuberance. The folds he painted were scientific architecture, in which you can discern an undoubted rule of constructive principle. This rationality is unflinchingly kept in all the six allegorical figures by Pollajuolo, and then, suddenly, you are astonished to find in the *Fortezza* a conspicuous violation, and that in such a way as no one save Botticelli could produce. In all the six figures there is no instance of draperies so profusely falling to the ground, and even when they do to some slight extent, it is only the robe falling from the knee, which is quite natural. In the *Fortezza*, however, it is not only the robe on the knee, but the whole garment, which trails on the ground, so much so that if the warlike Fortezza suddenly came to life she would have difficulty in walking. Here I seem to find another instance of Botticelli's predilection for linear composition, which made him oblivious of reality, and constructed a picture principally from æsthetic necessities.

It is scarcely necessary to point out that the draperies of the *Fortezza* are realistic elaborations of Fra Filippo's formula. Even Horne, who is among the foremost in maintaining the theory that Antonio Pollajuolo gave the design to Botticelli, could not fail to observe this Filippesque trait, but contented himself in understanding them as variations introduced by Botticelli on a Pollajuolesque theme. Horne may say this of the *Fortezza's* head-ornaments, or of the fantastic carvings on the armour, which, having little connection with the general design of the picture, could be altered without interference. As for the large drapery which falls on the ground so as to make a pedestal for the whole statue-like figure, which, but for this pedestal, would have appeared unstable with too many intersecting lines, it is too vital to the whole pictorial scheme to be easily changed.

Botticelli appears in the *Fortezza* as an artist already quite independent, an artist who knew his own power. As he was completing the Pollajuolo series he endeavoured to appear Pollajuolesque, and succeeded well, using, however, his own artistic instinct as his principal guidance. Who can really support the pure Pollajuolo-theory when in this most Pollajuolesque of all Botticelli's pictures the most important feature of all, the face, is undoubtedly of the Verrocchio type? For me the problem whether Botticelli joined Pollajuolo's bottega or not, is not an artistic but a documentary

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

one, which can only be solved by some new discovery among old archives. When Fra Filippo left for Spoleto, Botticelli was already twenty-three years old. If he had acquired so much skill as to have been able to paint the oblong *Adoration of the Magi* while with his old master, why should he not have taken his stand as an ambitious young painter, sucking nourishment for his art from those sources he liked best? Considering what he lacked in Art-education while studying from Fra Filippo, I can well imagine that he found what he wanted in each of the most progressive of Florentine 'naturalists', Verrocchio and Pollajuolo. But there is still another thing which makes me lean more to the side of Verrocchio.

Among critics of to-day, the enthroned *Madonna and Child with Six Saints* in the Accademia in Florence is usually excluded from Botticelli's genuine works,[1] and this exclusion has given great support to the Pollajuolo-theory, as the picture is decidedly Verrocchiesque in character. After a prolonged study I decided to ascribe the picture to Botticelli, and this made me, though not altogether agreeing with the Verrocchio-theory, at least distrustful of the Pollajuolo-theory now in vogue. The Accademia picture, in its present condition, gives a very doubtful impression, as the central group of *Madonna and Child*, which with the fine sense of concentrated composition attracts the spectator's attention, has been so thickly repainted in oil that almost nothing remains of the original, except the general outline and the draperies. Other figures, however, having escaped this evil, are beautiful and fairly well preserved, especially the two female saints at each end of the work. Mary Magdalene has profuse hair, painted through the transparent gauze, peculiar to Botticelli, predicting the advent of the superb figures in the *Primavera*. St. Catherine of Alexandria, looking out from the other corner, has that type of face which Botticelli refined upon Verrocchio, and is direct sister to the *Judith* and the *Fortezza* of the Uffizi Gallery.

This picture in the Accademia more than anything else reconstructs for me the career of Botticelli, when he was struggling to shake off Fra Filippo's manner and to evolve a style, more modern and his own, by the help of those realistic masters of Florence. The hands of St. Cosmos kneeling on the right of the Madonna are very short in formation. Their shortness is partly the result of an unsuccessful attempt at foreshortening, but it is also due to the influence of Fra Filippo, which has not yet altogether disappeared. Fra Filippo's hands are always short and fleshy. Here Botticelli kept to Fra Filippo's manner in the length, but made them bony after his own style. The right hand of St. Francis, placed on the breast, however, became so

[1] Just as I was working on the subject, Mr. Berenson published an excellent article on this painting with a suitable title, 'Un Botticelli dimenticato' (*Daedalo*, June 1924, and now contained in his *Three Essays on Method*), which, I am glad to say, drew the attention of students again to this important but neglected painting.

peculiarly Botticelli's that the specimen hand of Botticelli in Morelli's comparative diagrams of hands by Renaissance painters applies well to this, although the hand in the diagram was copied presumably from that of the *Salvator Mundi* in Morelli's own Collection at Bergamo, which he believed to be a genuine Botticelli. St. Francis's face belongs to Fra Filippo's type, while St. John the Baptist, together with St. Catherine of Alexandria, prove that Verrocchio's influence was strongly felt by the painter. St. John is reminiscent of Verrocchio's Baptist in the famous *Baptism* in the Uffizi Gallery: the naked arm of the former, where young Botticelli attempted to trace not only muscles, but even veins, is indicative of Verrocchio's original, in which these anatomical details are grasped with grim pertinacity.

I should not have entered into all this discussion of 'influences' but for the abundant arguments on Botticelli's career after he left Fra Filippo, which seem to be vain. Whether Botticelli joined Pollajuolo's bottega or Verrocchio's is really a social question, for the definite solution of which documentary evidence is necessary, and does not exist. Then, lacking such documentary evidence, if an approximate solution is to be attempted, I dare say, we must approach the question also by trying rightly to understand Botticelli's desires at that critical moment in his artistic development. I really wonder if the existing theories propounded solely by extraneous proofs would solve the question. My aim is not to establish Verrocchio's influence on Botticelli at the expense of Pollajuolo's, but to recognize both. I cannot see why Botticelli, being sensitive to the one, should not have been equally so to the other, their art being essentially the same. The most advanced realism of the age, common to both painters, was what Botticelli wanted after his Filippesque days. If one tried to measure the relationship between Botticelli and Pollajuolo and Verrocchio, in proportion to the sum total of what one takes as Pollajuolesque or Verrocchiesque fragments in the existing pictures of Botticelli, one could go on wavering for ever.

Horne himself complained of the difficulty of the task of distinguishing between Pollajuolo's and Verrocchio's influences on Botticelli. Their art came from their common master, Alesso Baldovinetti, and was akin one to the other. It seems to me that it is not sufficient to see in this common origin only the difficulty of distinguishing their influences on Botticelli. We must understand that it is not only difficult, but impossible and useless, to distinguish between the two. As they influenced, by reason of characteristics common to each, their distinction had to disappear in their effects upon the young painter. To my mind, it is not enough to point out the similarity of Verrocchio's and Pollajuolo's art, because they were both pupils of Alesso Baldovinetti. They eventually evolved their own types, which are not at all difficult to distinguish from each other on ordinary

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

occasions. Their aim in Art, however, was one, scientific realism, the spirit of which was just what Botticelli longed for. We have seen how he obtained through Fra Filippo a strong love for Nature. The continuation of Fra Filippo's teaching in a younger soul was to consolidate and systematize with science what had been instinctively felt from Nature. Verrocchio and Pollajuolo were the guiding spirit of the time in this sense. Botticelli had little reason to prefer one to the other, so long as they gave him what he wanted.

When I examine the artistic characteristics of these two masters, I am astonished to see how well they were provided with what Botticelli most desired, and that in a manner which he could assume with sympathy. I am not absolutely sure if Verrocchio and Pollajuolo had so linear a view of Nature as Fra Filippo and Botticelli: perhaps not. In Pollajuolo's pictures there is no lack of enveloping atmosphere, and as for Verrocchio, there are ample reasons for his being a true teacher for Leonardo da Vinci, the greatest artist in the art of chiaroscuro. They may not belong to the group of artists so strictly linear as Fra Filippo and Botticelli, and yet the spirit of the time which guided them was such that they were destined to appear in the history of Art as the perfection of the linear and analytical students of Nature.

The close relation between goldsmith and painter in Quattrocento Florence seems to have further increased the analytical tendency of its Art. Anyone who has studied the beautiful silver altar in the Opera del Duomo at Florence, where Antonio Pollajuolo and Verrocchio worked together, cannot fail to understand that artists, accustomed to work in precious metals such elaboration of details, had to work very minutely and severely if they turned to painting. True, among metal-workers of the Quattrocento there was no lack of artists, such as Ghiberti or Jacopo della Quercia, who could express, to some extent, the feeling of tone-value and atmosphere in bas-relief. Generally speaking, however, goldsmith's work required precision to the most minute detail and accustomed the artist more to analytic precision than to synthetic sense of tone. Botticelli himself, who underwent an apprenticeship to goldsmith's work for some time before he began painting, seemed to retain this severe habit throughout his life. In his case, however, his real nature, entirely linear-analytic, was so well in conformity with this technical habit that it would be better to say that, not his goldsmith's career, but his real nature accentuated by such experience, was what gave to his pictures the gem-like precision of detailed delineation. With Verrocchio and Pollajuolo, their experiences as goldsmiths seems to have worked out in a way more remarkable: first, because they were goldsmiths rather than painters, and their wider experience influenced them as painters more strongly than in the case of Botticelli; second, because these great students of Nature, although still working in the spirit of the

Quattrocento, had susceptible natures, as close observers of Nature should have, to tonal atmosphere, and so their skill as goldsmiths influenced them in matters of precise detail more noticeably than Botticelli, who entirely lacked the tonal sense. The interpretation may differ: at all events it is clear from their work that Verrocchio and Pollajuolo were just those who perfected the analytic study of Nature. In this essential the stylistic difference between the two disappears and they stand together at the very height of the Quattrocento Art on the threshold of the Cinquecento. It is nothing more or less than this quality that binds Botticelli to them. He followed them, or, rather, he followed his own course in them, for all were on the same track, starting from the simple interest in newly discovered Nature, aiming towards the scientific consolidation of that interest. It is not too much to say that Pollajuolo-Verrocchio realism formed the technical basis of Botticelli's art all through his life, but that realism must be regarded as the natural result of Botticelli's own advance in Nature-study. I do not say for other purposes, but for the sole purpose of appreciating Botticelli's art, I wish to accentuate his own development strongly. For the evolution of a true artist there is a law of his own, apart from extraneous influences, which are only felt keenly when they are in essential accord with that law of genius. The problem of Art could never be entirely solved by researches, however elaborate, into influences exercised from outside.

I think I have made clear Botticelli's progress in Florence after Fra Filippo's departure for Spoleto. Though I have sought to disprove the popular 'influence' theory, I do not imply that Botticelli did not learn much from Verrocchio and Pollajuolo. On the contrary, my reluctance in seeking for Verrocchiesque or Pollajuolesque fragments in Botticelli's pictures as the sole proofs of their influence is the result of my interpretation of their relationship in a deeper sense. Botticelli was a fortunate student who found in his masters, first Fra Filippo and then Verrocchio and Pollajuolo, the realization of the various qualities of his own genius, and under their guidance he expanded all the artistic faculties of which he was possessed. Thus equipped, Botticelli could boldly enter the independent course of his art.

Here I will deviate somewhat and weigh the importance of this realistic education in the formation of Botticelli's art. One may consider the importance too obvious, but it is not so. I see an extraordinary idea becoming prevalent in the more advanced artistic circles in Europe, and as Oriental Art is often taken as the reason, I wish to protest against this fashionable view. There is a modern tendency to discredit the due importance of realistic representation in plastic art. European Art pursued the same course of realism from the time of the great Greek period down to the nineteenth century and then seems to have tired of it. You can see various attempts, more or less vigorous, to break away in the second half of the

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Antonio, Botticelli appears almost helpless. This does not mean that Botticelli drew badly, as we are here judging him by the very highest of realistic standards. Compared with Antonio's, Botticelli's figure looks angular and stiff. Can this sufficiently be explained by the suggestion of Emile Gebhart and others, that Botticelli might have employed as his model the usually emaciated and severe type of young Tuscan whom we see daily digging gravel under the Ponte Vecchio? No, it is not a question of the model, or of such accidental factor: it comes from the deeper source of Botticelli's view of Nature. He had been following the Pollajuolesque method of modelling with severity; he wished to delineate every change of curved outline of light and shade, which, if properly grasped, as by Antonio in his *St. Sebastian*, would result in a suave and vigorous body of a young man. Botticelli, however, with his eyes not so completely realistic, was apt to be led away by abstract rhythm of line, even while he was engaged in the observation of the figure immediately before his eyes, and frequently failed to see the general formation of the human body, without a due grasp of which the detailed faithfulness detracts from, rather than contributes to, the truthful representation of it as a whole. Considered from the realistic point of view, Botticelli's figure in Berlin cannot be said to be very satisfactory: it is stiff and flat, in spite of, or rather because of, the analytical fidelity to detail. Still, this does not prevent it from being a wonderful masterpiece. The inferiority I have pointed out was only by comparison with Antonio, which means that even in naturalistic draughtsmanship Botticelli stood only next to the very highest standard of the Quattrocento. But what is important, is that Botticelli's picture is permeated with a spiritual atmosphere which pervades it like some rare fragrance, for which you will look in vain in Antonio. In Antonio's *St. Sebastian* your interest is concentrated on the structural beauty of the youth, or, if you mention its spiritual significance at all, in that superb upturned face, which is painted with a psychological interest which observes how the pain and hope of martyrdom can be translated into facial expression. All this is scientific treatment and leaves us cold at the finish. In Botticelli, floating over all is a spiritual manifestation, symbolic rather than illustrative, which tells you of higher things in a deeper way. I cannot admit as sufficient the explanation usually given for understanding this strange feeling, that Botticelli might have illustrated another phase of the martyr's psychology. What is clear to me is that Botticelli's own mysticism, which, like a beautiful rainbow, was to shine clearer and clearer as the tempestuous cloud of spiritual emotion enveloped him, even here loomed out, preventing him from being entirely realistic, and amply recompensed for the defective realism with something infinitely more precious.

From the *St. Sebastian* let us turn to the greatest of Botticelli's works, that climax of the art of the Quattrocento, the *Primavera*. In my view it

was painted about the time when Botticelli's art was developed to its fullest with the aid of the Verrocchio-Pollajuolo realism. Looking at the picture, I am more than ever impressed by the essential importance of Nature-study in the sphere of plastic art. Botticelli's nature, poetic and mystic, is destined to come out more accentuated and more direct in future, and to produce purer gems of human imagination. The *Primavera*, however, remains the greatest. If plastic art is the realization of spiritual significance in terms of visual image, the *Primavera* supports this to perfection.

In the Uffizi Gallery, almost side by side, as if to exhibit the whole measure of human melody in line and colour, hang the *Primavera* and the *Birth of Venus*. I do not know which of the two I really prefer. Looking at the *Birth of Venus*, my fancy is never checked: as the zephyr it flows smoothly along the gull-like pattern of waves on the green sea, along the facile lines of Venus's golden hair. You will soon forget the actual picture, and you do not notice it: it is so evanescent and shy—a rare dream. In the *Primavera*, however, who would not believe the real existence of a poetic world? It is hope realized. The picture convinces you of it by its dignified actuality.

Botticelli was at the height of his realistic power; thus he could create a poetic world in real life. The *Primavera* is the happy proof that realism is not a vital check to imagination. Horne endeavours to see Pollajuolesque characteristics in the picture, but I am more than ever sceptical regarding his conclusions. Botticelli was by this time observing Nature with his own eyes, as I shall demonstrate when I come to compare the treatment of flowers by various Quattrocento artists. Having attained to this high degree of natural representation with the help of the Verrocchio-Pollajuolo method, and seeing Nature with his own eyes, Botticelli may be said to have completed his art-education.

A curious event caused Botticelli to come under the influence of another powerful master, which greatly affected him for a time, but, being alien to his real nature, quickly disappeared. The result in the long run was only to accentuate the realistic tendency already existing. In the history of Florence the year 1478 stands out. It was the year of the Pazzi Conspiracy. Giuliano de' Medici, a beautiful youth, famous in tournament and in love, was stabbed in the Duomo while hearing Mass; stern retaliation followed. It was April; blue Spring held court in the City of Flowers and seemed to increase the sombre aspect of the gloomy municipal buildings. Excited citizens thronged in the Piazza, when suddenly more than twenty illustrious conspirators were thrown out of the high windows of the Palazzo Vecchio and other palaces, with ropes round their necks; eyes started from the sockets of the Archbishop of Pisa; the halter tightened as he fixed his teeth in the dead body of Francesco de' Pazzi, who was hanging from the same

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

window. But soon all was silent, and Spring was smiling in Florence, smiling at the prosperity of the Medici and at the dead bodies dangling from high windows.

According to the custom of the time, these terrible spectacles were recorded by frescoes, to perpetuate the memory of the event and teach a severe lesson of punishment to rebellious folk. It seems strange that the painter of the *Primavera* should have been selected for this sort of work. Botticelli stood high as 'seruitore & obligato alla casa de' Medici'. I do not know if he relished the work. Perhaps he did. Although he had by that time painted that greatest of poetic achievements, it does not mean that his whole poetic genius was fully awakened. Pushed on by his curiosity for Nature, which he was just learning to pursue in a methodical way, it is not improbable that he welcomed that which gave him full opportunity for technical display. Moreover, it was a great public work, certain to gain fame and more patronage from the all-powerful Medici. He was young and ambitious.

It was a work of great magnitude and technical difficulty. The figures were, according to usage, painted larger than life and in extraordinary poses. Those who were already hanged were represented thus; and those who escaped were seen as hanging by one foot, head downward. That Botticelli was selected is a proof that his ability in realistic representation was by this time well recognized. But was he as a realist strong enough for such a work? I am doubtful, not because I think him weak in ordinary realistic capability, but because of the extraordinary character of the work. From what one can judge from the *St. Sebastian* in Berlin, all the scientific representation Botticelli was capable of was just enough, and no more, to realize his poetic dreams in visual images. After trying hard to grasp the muscular and bony structure of a robust youth, Botticelli's beautiful soul nevertheless peeps out, and makes of the martyr a fair Adonis. If Botticelli had painted the criminals with all the artistic qualities he had acquired, I think he would have ended in arousing compassion for them instead of hate. Indeed, there was in him a certain interest in strange, sanguinary scenes, as was exemplified in early years in the *Judith and Holofernes* panels, a favourite subject, which he was to repeat many times, which was to culminate in that most entrancing of blood-mystic pictures, two men cutting out the heart of St. Ignatius, in the predella of the *Madonna enthroned with many Saints*, in the Uffizi. But this very mystic trait which connects the blood with mysticism must have been an impediment to the success of the frescoes of the Pazzi Conspiracy. They were to be exhibited in the open air; they had to be painted in such a way as to be strongly impressive when seen from a distance. The main motive was to stamp on onlookers an indelible impression of hate for criminals, of cruel punishment, and of terror. In every way the work was unsuitable to the genius of Botticelli.

Though the frescoes were destroyed at a comparatively early date, that is, after the flight of Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici from Florence in 1494, yet it seems significant that there is no praise for them in old chronicles usually so full of eulogies. Considering the unsuitability of the work for Botticelli, we can infer two very probable things: the frescoes were not a great success, and Botticelli must have undergone some change in accomplishing so large a work for which he was ill-fitted.

If in the whole Quattrocento we look for an artist suited for this kind of accomplishment, the name of Andrea del Castagno immediately suggests itself. His art was so inseparable from the impression of cruelty and force, that the whole story of his assassination of Domenico Veneziano, which we know to be absolutely false, was believed in. Horne, while disproving by documentary authority the story of the murder as 'without the least foundation', says, nevertheless, that 'we still think, as we look at his pictures, that one who drew as he drew could not have done less.' (*Horne*, p. 69.) I am against this interpretation, which renders Art the immediate illustration of the moral character of the artist. The real relation between Art and artist is more complex and mysterious. But here let me take Horne's impression as a proof of how well Andrea's art was adapted to the monumental portrayal of the agony and death of criminals. When Botticelli was ordered to paint the Pazzi criminals, upon the Palazzo del Podestà were still hanging the famous frescoes of the Albizzi and other conspirators, which, painted in his strenuous manner by Andrea del Castagno, were impressing people so much that the painter came to be popularly called Andrea degli Impiccati (Andrea of the Hanged). In Vasari's day these frescoes were already destroyed, but we can well believe him as transmitting the true appreciation of the time when he says, though confusing the Albizzi traitors with the Pazzi conspirators (cf. *Horne*, p. 65), that those figures, 'hanging by the feet in strange attitudes', were accomplished with such art and judgment 'che fu uno stupore'. This is a great eulogy. Botticelli, taking up similar work with youthful ardour, but feeling the difficulty, must have studied those marvellous works by Andrea. True, he was already a master at the time, but he was not far from his student days, and his soul may still have been receptive. But, above all, Castagno's art was so tremendous that had Botticelli been put in touch with it in such circumstances he would never have been able to resist its overwhelming influence. It is a pity that these particular works of Castagno have entirely perished, but there is an admirable drawing of his—a study of a criminal hanging from a rope—which was sold at the sale of the Heseltine Collection in 1920. What lifeless feet! It is a real triumph of severe, powerful draughtsmanship.

The work painted by Botticelli soon after the Pazzi frescoes is the fresco of *St. Augustine* in the Church of Ognissanti in Florence. In it Botticelli

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

appears quite another man, grand and impressive, as he had never been and was never again to be. It is difficult to consider the continuation of his career unless one admits a sudden and powerful influence coming to him sometime before he painted the Ognissanti fresco. Look at the Verrocchiesque or Pollajuolesque pictures of Botticelli on the one hand, this *St. Augustine* fresco on the other, and interpose the event of the Pazzi Conspiracy. A sudden, vigorous injection of Andrea del Castagno's blood will possibly explain the striking difference.

There are two qualities which make the *St. Augustine* fresco remarkable, and these are the very two qualities which Andrea so superbly possessed, which were just those we imagine Botticelli to have learned ardently, when he was thrown under the direct influence of Andrea. One is that severest of realism, which among all the Quattrocento masters of realism gives Andrea a unique place. His brush-work is like the knife of a skilful butcher, which with one stroke divides the joints. Compared with Andrea, Verrocchio and Pollajuolo appear mild, their severity being at most that of the precise, even refined, anatomy of the scientist. It seems that Botticelli added this extreme severity of Andrea del Castagno to what realism he had learned from Verrocchio and Pollajuolo, and hereafter we shall come across this unexpected trait in some of his pictures, which are remarkable for sentiment and beauty.

Intimately combined with this severest of analytic realism in the genius of Andrea del Castagno, is another characteristic of his art which must have impressed Botticelli immensely when he undertook to paint the Pazzi frescoes, and that is Andrea's monumental grandeur. The severe realism, giving an ugly reality of strangled bodies, did not suffice for the work Botticelli was ordered to execute. It had to be impressive and to fill the mind of observers with fear. Was not this monumental grandeur just what Botticelli's genius lacked and had hitherto no opportunity for acquiring?

It is interesting to recall here how Masaccio, with all his greatness, could exercise on the young artist but a transient influence. I have tried to explain this from that definite difference of artistic temperament between the two, Masaccio's grandeur, technically considered, depending so entirely upon the tonal view of Nature that Botticelli did not know how to grasp it with his linear sensitiveness. Andrea del Castagno is a rarity in the history of Art, in combining these two artistic qualities usually incongruous. Botticelli, just because of his temperament, which prevented his associating himself with Masaccio, had points in common with Andrea, and with his help Botticelli was able to acquire what we may term the grand style, only, alas, soon to lose it.

Save for those happy ones who believe that nothing is impossible in Nature, linear analysis and the sense of grandeur go seldom together. The whole Quattrocento, lovely and subtle, serious, and possibly profound,

presented little of what we can call the grand style. Conscientious study of Nature, too entirely concentrated on detail, made the Quattrocento artist neglect, as I have already said, the grand outline as a whole. And it is chiefly on this grasp of mass and silhouette that the sense of the monumental depends. Domenico Veneziano's fresco of *St. John the Baptist* in the church of Sta. Croce in Florence is one of the most typical of Quattrocento conceptions of Nature: in spite of our admiration for the minute accuracy with which the physical construction of bone and muscle is caught, we are astonished to see how strangely flat the picture looks when seen from a distance. All the minute modelling of Alesso Baldovinetti, Domenico's pupil, is done with an understanding extraordinarily modern of how light and shade fall on a round body. Even that slight but all-important reflection of light on the extreme edge in the shaded part is noted. Yet, on the whole, one wonders how the figure so carefully treated can appear so without depth. Even sculptures designed as monuments, if conceived in this Quattrocento way, disclose a similar weakness. Donatello himself could not always achieve an altogether monumental effect, possibly because of his Gothic and Quattrocento nature, with its detail too pronounced and precise. The famous equestrian statue of Gattamelata, in the Piazza S. Antonio at Padua, appears small against the blue Italian sky. The open air is a trying test for the grand effect in Art, and only the artist possessed of the very greatest gift for the monumental can succeed therein. Verrocchio's *Colleoni* is superb in this respect, but there is a theory, which may or may not be true, that the Cinquecento genius of Leonardo participated in the work. That Pollajuolo, who carried out the Quattrocento manner, could not get beyond a flat and angular effect, I have already shown. Among the Quattrocento masters the art of Andrea del Castagno looms large.

Contemplate well the frescoes in the Refectory of S. Apollonia, in Florence, and confess that you have never met with a grandeur so grimly silent and primitive. There the figures appear like prehistoric monuments, immovable, yet how real! It is sad to think that Andrea's greatness is not yet fully realized. Comparing Botticelli with Andrea, there are two things to be observed. On the one hand, there is a strange similarity between them. Not only in the general conception of Nature were they of the same analytical tendency, but also, there are many of Andrea's types, especially in the fresco of *The Last Supper* in S. Apollonia, which you would not be surprised to find in Botticelli's own works; for instance, the face of Christ. But besides this similarity you will recognize at once how superior Andrea was to Botticelli in extreme severity and grandeur, the very qualities which Botticelli badly lacked when he undertook the Pazzi frescoes. I can well imagine that he eagerly learned from Andrea when he was thrown into touch with him. Thus, and thus only, could Botticelli obtain the grand

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

style. He could for once soar up into the region of monumental Art. But, alas, it was impossible for him to remain grand. Grandeur was a quality so remote from him that when the immediate contact with Andrea's art ceased, Botticelli could retain only the severity, and not the grandeur, without which the excessive severity of Andrea had to become a discordant element in Botticelli's works. Can we, then, rather bless the event which brought about his connection with the 'Master of the Hanged'? I think we must, even if only for the production of the fresco of *St. Augustine*, so unexpectedly grand and profound, which we cannot imagine from Botticelli, unless we take Andrea's influence into consideration.

How soon Andrea's power on Botticelli was to disappear, leaving only the form, but not the spirit, can be seen in the two pictures which were painted in the manner of this great *St. Augustine*. One is the imaginary portrait of Pope Sixtus II in the Sistine Chapel, painted in 1481–2. It is quite obvious that the figure of the Ognissanti *St. Augustine* was here remembered, and yet how different the feeling! Much may be explained if we consider that Botticelli intended in the one to portray the deep thought of the scholarly saint, and in the other merely an ideal figure of a benignant Father of the Church, or that the former was an elaborately finished picture, standing by itself, painted with all his resources to compete with the greatest of his rivals, Domenico Ghirlandajo, while the latter was one of a series intended for decoration at an altitude at which little could be seen. But that is not all. Once released from immediate touch with the formidable Andrea, Botticelli could only retain the acquired form, so indelibly stamped in his imagination, but not the spirit. When we come to examine the other picture in the manner of the *St. Augustine* fresco, the figure of this saint in the small triptych in Prince Pallavicini's Collection at Rome, it is exactly as in the great early work, and shows that Botticelli was still haunted by it some twenty years later. Depth of feeling remains, has even developed into something mysterious: severity there is, if we can call severe this work, strangely unapproachable, yet with a latent depth of infinite loveliness. That monumental grandeur which surges in the dignified pose of the Ognissanti *St. Augustine* and makes him loom out of the picture and fill, as it were, the whole building, where has it departed? Do not suggest that the triptych is so small. An immense feeling of the grand permeates even the small panels of Andrea del Castagno in Florence and elsewhere, especially in that *Crucifixion* in the London National Gallery.

The large altar-piece of the *Coronation of the Virgin*, now in the Uffizi Gallery, teaches us in several ways the distant results of Andrea del Castagno's influence on Botticelli. In Botticelli's works all through his life there is none in which he is so unequal, and this has led modern critics to discuss its authenticity. Mr. Berenson, pointing out the inferiority of the central group of the Father and the Virgin, ascribes the execution of this

LA PRIMAVERA
(Florence, Uffizi Gallery)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

part to a pupil. I admit the inferiority, but I cannot accept Mr. Berenson's solution without doubt. To my mind, Botticelli, his education long since finished, his reputation established, entered his own kingdom in about the year 1485 and ceased to study directly from Nature. Unlike his younger days, when he moved with his age and studied Nature as the primary objective, he became more and more possessed with the world of ideas, and as to outward forms of natural objects, he merely repeated what he had learned: the technical convention was gradually formed, which could not fail to become set the more he repeated it. Can we not see the coarse handling of the central group of the Uffizi *Coronation* in this light? Convention is no more than a formula, which, even if born of Nature-study as advanced as that of Botticelli, cannot but reveal its want of vitality when used on a large scale, although if used only on a small scale our knowledge of Nature is so defective that the same formula may pass without exciting too much adverse criticism. While Botticelli's small panels are sufficiently beautiful up to the end of his life, bad drawing and stiff execution become apparent in the large figures of his late period. The four large saints in the foreground of the *Coronation* are very unsatisfactory in this respect.

We can learn a great deal if we compare the arrangement of these four saints with Andrea del Castagno's *Crucifixion* in S. Apollonia, where four saints also stand in similar arrangement. Botticelli's figures are treated, individually considered, in a very severe manner: they give an impression of severity all the more remarkable, almost disagreeable, because they are executed with mechanical skill, which does not convey the subtle feeling of life. Castagno's figures in the *Crucifixion*, conceived with incomparably greater dignity and force, look supple and delicate, as are all things alive. They teach, as it were, this significant lesson, that Castagno's excessive severity of style was the natural outcome of his close and unmistakable observation of Nature. With Botticelli severity was only an acquired skin, which his beautiful nature could not fill, and became therefore dead, tenacious and hard. In the *Coronation* altar-piece the small angels are most lovely, treated with real tenderness; their extreme charm is hardly consistent with the cold, unfeeling severity of the larger figures. The former is the true nature of Botticelli; the latter are the frozen conventionalities of the grandeur and severity with which Andrea del Castagno overwhelmed him. If we believe that two distinct personalities cannot exist in one being, there is reason for ascribing these two groups in the *Coronation* to different hands. But why cannot two, or even more, personalities dwell in one person? Botticelli was one of those cases where dual natures were antagonistic, and there was a silent tragedy in his life: the main one of artistic 'presentation', longing to soar up from objective ties of realism, the other lateral, but strong, encouraged by the spirit of the time, which desired realistic 'representation'. We know how superb Botticelli was when

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

these two elements were in harmony. If, because of our admiration for him at the time of the *Primavera*, we always expect the same harmony and deny the authenticity of those works in which it is flagrantly missing, not only shall we have to exclude many of his late works, such as the *Madonna and Child with two St. Johns* of the Berlin Museum, which is very stiff in execution, but also we shall be in danger of becoming blind to the essential key to this subtle genius whose life and art was a mute and beautiful tragedy of dual nature. Botticelli's works are by no means equal. There is the famous phrase 'aria virile', continually used by modern critics for describing Botticelli's characteristics. Contrary to the original sense and general usage of this phrase for laudatory purposes, we may understand it as indicating the extreme severity, even inharmonious at times, in Botticelli's works.

The interesting comparison of the lower portion of the *Coronation of the Virgin* with Castagno's *Crucifixion* teaches us another phase as important of Botticelli's artistic character, the remarkable lack in him of the monumental sense. In Castagno's picture the four figures stand out with statue-like dignity and stability; in Botticelli, however, although the saints are evidently intended to be as grandiose as possible, both in size and pose, they are strangely unsteady and inconsistent with the general scheme of this large altar-piece. The four saints should really give a balanced, pillar-like feeling to the picture, which is rather over-weighted at the top. In the Ognissanti *St. Augustine* we have seen that Botticelli could express both grandeur and stability; in the course of time he seems to have lost these qualities, and in the *Coronation*, where he was most in need of them, in spite of his utmost endeavour he could not regain them. To Botticelli's lack of the grand style I shall again refer when I come to what I call Botticelli's 'music of line'.

After all, Andrea's influence was either too remote from, or too strong for Botticelli's genius, and its result in the long run was to become either very slight or to make for discord. If we consider this from another side, it means that while Andrea's influence was being felt Botticelli painted in a way very different from his ordinary manner. Can we take this influence of Castagno as a means for dating Botticelli's pictures? The influence, so conspicuous, felt so strongly and briefly, must serve for such a purpose. I venture to make an attempt to date two pictures, because of the severity and grandeur in them: one is *Pallas and the Centaur*, formerly in the Palazzo Pitti, now in the Uffizi Gallery, and the other is the famous *Adoration of the Magi*, originally in the Church of Santa Maria Novella, now in the Uffizi Gallery, both of which I date from the time between the Pazzi Conspiracy and Botticelli's departure for Rome, that is to say, between 1478 and 1481.

I think critics will smile because both these pictures were formerly ascribed to these dates, though subsequent research, more documentary

than stylistic, appears to have upset the theory. I propose to restore them to their former dates, chiefly for stylistic reasons, which documentary evidence does not contradict. When the picture of the *Pallas* was discovered in a dark corridor of the Palazzo Pitti, Ridolfo expressed the opinion that 'the picture contained an allusion to the statesmanship of Lorenzo de' Medici, who, having overcome the spirit of disorder and violence personified in the centaur, secured for the people a time of peace and prosperity,' and that 'there was ample reason to believe that Botticelli painted the picture in March 1480, when Lorenzo, on his return from Naples, was received with great rejoicings on account of the triumph which he achieved in having induced the King of Naples to leave the league against the Florentines and become their ally.' (cf. *Horne*, p. 161.) Horne was against this view and, chiefly from comparison of historic events in Florence, ascribed the picture to the year 1486, the year, according to him, more conspicuous for Lorenzo's political success, and therefore more probable for the production of a picture clearly intended in celebration of the great Medici.

For me the question is purely stylistic, because the picture was only intended to magnify the Medici family, and for that any year would have sufficed while the Medici prospered. Even if Horne were correct in saying that the year 1486 was more suitable, this reason would not exclude 1480 as a possibility. Stylistically considered, I cannot place the picture at so late a period as 1486, when Botticelli, having departed from direct Nature-study of the 'seventies, established his sensuous-sentimental conventionality and painted those poetic fancies peculiar to him, the *Lemmi* frescoes, the *Birth of Venus*, and others. To me *Pallas and the Centaur* gives an entirely different impression. In the Botticelli Room of the Uffizi Gallery it stands so far apart from all the rest of his works that it is even difficult to admit it in our ordinary conception of the artist.

The nearest picture I can think of is the *Fortezza*, where you will find a somewhat similar treatment of draperies and metal work. The Fortezza's armour is treated in a manner not very different from the spear of Pallas and the Medici diamonds on her dress. This is a proof that the date of *Pallas and the Centaur* cannot be very far from Botticelli's Verrocchio-Pollajuolo days. And, moreover, how grand is the figure of Pallas in conception! If you compare her powerful feet, worthy of being the pedestal of the strong figure, with the slender, nervous, playful feet of the figures in the *Primavera*, the difference will be found too great to be put aside on account of mere diversity of subject: you have to look for another explanation for such an extraordinary change, as was the case with the Ognissanti fresco. Horne recognized this, but he was troubled by the treatment of the landscape, which is indeed like that of the *Coronation* altar-piece and the *Birth of Venus*, and he decided after some hesitation to date the *Pallas* close to the two pictures. I hold a different opinion.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Botticelli could not be expected always to paint grasses and flowers as he did in that most elaborate of his productions, the *Primavera*. That his idea of landscape was always extremely artistic and subservient to the artistic effect of the picture, I shall discuss later on. In spite of Leonardo's blame, his idea of landscape does much honour to Botticelli as an artist, proving that he painted with artistic economy, not with the super-precision of scientific realism. He could be minute in portraying Nature, as in the *Primavera*, if he chose, but that does not mean that he was always desirous of unnecessary detail, as was Benozzo Gozzoli. Even in his younger days, when he was chiefly guided by thorough realism, his æsthetic instinct left him quite free to place landscape in an impulsive, sketchy manner, which with its broad and decorative treatment surrounds the main figure with a calm atmosphere. Naturally this treatment was to increase as Botticelli's genius became released from the realistic preoccupation of the 'seventies, but fine landscape of the kind, as in the *Portrait of a Young Man with a Medici medal*, in the Uffizi, which was certainly painted when Botticelli was in complete accord with Pollajuolo's realism, shows that broad treatment alone cannot be taken as main evidence for chronology. In *Pallas and the Centaur* I can well imagine how Botticelli, being still possessed of the minute nervous interest in Nature, refrained from entering into too elaborate representation for fear of disturbing the general impressiveness of the picture. These olive branches which entwine the beautiful torso of the goddess are observed with exquisite love and care, comparable to those star-like orange flowers in the foliage of the *Primavera*. These olive branches are to become later on either of metallic severity, as in the *Madonna with St. Barnabas and other Saints*, or freely decorative as in the *Birth of Venus*. The rocks appear to have come directly from Nature: though broadly treated there is something very sharp in them which separates them from the rocks in the *Coronation*, which are entirely mannered and remote from any direct intercourse with Nature. In addition I may mention that the whole colour-scheme is entirely distinct from that of Botticelli in the late 'eighties. I confess that on this point my conviction is not strong: how can it be, if I am to be true to facts? That combination of olive-green running into dark brown is unique among existing works of Botticelli in their present state of preservation, and for that reason alone I do not know where to place *Pallas and the Centaur*. But of this I am sure, that it is nearer to his *Fortezza* period than to the later period of the *Coronation of the Virgin*, when Botticelli used without exception that curious gem-like scheme of bright crimson and cobalt blue which appears almost bizarre, on account of the over-cleaning and varnishing of modern times. Another peculiarity is that the *Pallas* is remarkably tonal among Botticelli's works, and the figures stand out with something of sculptured relief which you do not expect to find often in him. Cannot this be considered as one

more reflection of the style of painting he acquired from the sombre and monumental art of Andrea del Castagno?

If this be so, the historical events of 1480 as suggested by Ridolfo may be taken as suited for the production of the picture as those of 1486 supported by Horne. In spite of Horne's objection that Lorenzo de' Medici's mission to Naples was not entirely successful, yet it seems to have been sufficient to warrant courtiers ordering a picture to commemorate the event. In the picture the ship, though possibly put in as Botticelli often did as a whimsical addition, occupies a place so conspicuous as to arouse special attention, and the landscape, with what seemed to Ridolfo to be a cluster of houses on a rocky beach, is a rare occurrence in Botticelli's paintings, so that it is just possible that the scene represents Naples, where Lorenzo is arriving in the ship. But I consider all these historical and topographical references of minor importance. I cannot help wondering why, in books on Botticelli, a river winding through a plain between two ranges of hills is invariably described as the Valley of the Arno, and a field with any bit of stone ruin as the Campagna. The Renaissance liked allegorical and other allusions in Art: in the case of a painter of Botticelli's character, however, I am inclined to take artistic whims more into consideration. If any prefer another popular suggestion that the picture tells of the failure of the Pazzi Conspiracy, the conspirators being represented by the disorderly and ugly centaur, helplessly caught by the Goddess of War and Art, I have little objection to make, and as little to say in its favour. All these historical questions are insoluble with the materials in existence. I shall be satisfied if I can establish that the picture was painted not far from the time when Botticelli was under the influence of Andrea del Castagno.

The other picture which I would date at about the same period is the famous *Adoration of the Magi*, in the Uffizi Gallery. The excellent portraits of the Medici family contained in it made it remarkable in the whole Quattrocento, and the object of the utmost admiration from early times. There is no picture of Botticelli's concerning which conjecture has been so rife in historical reference and identification. If you look into the pages of Uhlmann, Steinmann, Horne and Bode, you will be amazed how all of them, each with great learning, could arrive at results so different. You will learn in the end to distrust historical identification. That this *Adoration*, with the chief members of the Medici family disguised as three Magi and their retinues, was painted when the power of that family was in the ascendant is apparent. With Lorenzo in his prime, the Medici flourished brilliantly about the time of the Pazzi Conspiracy. Was the painting done before or after? It is not so much for the sake of a few years' difference that I wish to consider the point, as for the more important question of understanding the evolution of Botticelli's genius, to which the right dating of

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

this remarkable picture is important. It was formerly believed to have been painted after the Pazzi Conspiracy, to express the gratitude of the Medici for protection against the plot. Why should it not have been?

In recent years, owing to the labour of Mesnil, a document relating to this picture was discovered, and it established that the altar-piece was ordered, not by the Medici, but by one Lami, a Florentine merchant, who had it painted for his chapel in Santa Maria Novella. His motive in representing the chief members of the Medici in the sacred picture was apparently to ingratiate himself with the great family, which was no uncommon thing among Florentine merchants. The discovery of this document has put a check, not only on the former attribution of the picture to the motive of thanksgiving for the failure of the Pazzi Conspiracy, but also on the dating of the picture to the period after it. Dr. Bode and Horne ascribed the picture to earlier dates, the former giving 1475–6, and the latter 1477.

These dates were intimately associated in these scholars with their iconographic researches, and Dr. Bode gave an earlier date, because, according to him, Lorenzo il Magnifico was represented as very young. That the head, which is taken for that of Giuliano de' Medici, was very lifelike is another ground, according to both critics, for assuming that the picture could not have been painted after the Pazzi Conspiracy, when Giuliano was killed. These arguments do not carry much weight, when one remembers that critics in discussing the age of a person differ as to which of the faces is meant to represent him. Moreover, the discussions of the age of a man from his portrait are not very trustworthy. Though the picture certainly contains portraits, yet in such an imaginative painting, where the main subject and general composition rule above all, particularly when the figures are on so small a scale, who can assume for certain that all the heads are representations of those as they actually looked at the time? Iconography can fix a date only in this way, that the painter could not represent a person before he was born, or an old man before he was old. In the case of the *Adoration of the Magi* all the proofs given for dating the picture before the Pazzi Conspiracy are against it. Why could not Botticelli, who had painted Giuliano from life and knew his features quite well, be able to represent a lifelike portrait of him in a small head? It is also admissible that Lorenzo may intentionally be made to appear younger than he really was, as he is portrayed with his grandfather, who was already dead. Anyone who knows the painter's technique at all would hesitate to guess the precise age of a person from a portrait, especially when he has no personal knowledge of him. Even identification is a dubious matter.

That all writers on Botticelli, from Vasari till now, have attempted iconographic studies of this *Adoration* altar-piece as if it were the main point of interest, is more significant than the result of their studies. Why should they think primarily of identification of historical persons? It would

seem to imply, on the one hand, that writers on Art are more literary than artistic. On the other hand, it shows that the picture displays a high excellence of the art of portraiture. Looking at the faces, each being so full of life and individuality, you cannot help wondering who they were. In this respect the *Adoration* altar-piece stands unique among all the works of Botticelli. Unless the influence of Castagno is present here, I cannot solve the problem.

Later on I shall endeavour to show that Botticelli's art was more ethereal than real. When allowed to follow his own inclination, he whole-heartedly pursued his own vision. Even while he was struggling with realism, the thread of reality was easily broken and he would fly to his own imaginative world. Botticelli could very rarely achieve portraiture in the ordinary sense of the word. That he succeeded so superbly as a portrait painter in this *Adoration* constitutes an extraordinary event in his career. Andrea del Castagno is the only master whom we can think of as responsible in Botticelli for so relentless a grip of individuality. The profile of the first king, said to be the portrait of Cosimo, Pater Patriae, is vigorous in an astonishing degree. Botticelli never painted a more powerful head, particularly in the drawing of the neck. What painter does not know the difficulty of modelling a neck which adequately supports a powerful head? In the second king, Giuliano according to Vasari, which is incorrect, Piero il Gottoso according to Horne, the curved line which divides the neck from the jawbone is a master stroke in the exact place, put in with the boldness that only a man in full confidence of his anatomical knowledge could dare. Although I do not base my idea of Castagno's influence so much on Castagnesque fragments in the picture as on the general spirit, yet if we look for them there is no lack of detail which can be shown as coming from Castagno, such as the small, but remarkable profile, with cruel and gloomy features, which peeps out from the group of men on the extreme right, just above a head with profuse hair and beard which reminds us of the profile head of Judas in Castagno's *Last Supper* in S. Apollonia. I must allot this *Adoration* to the period of the Ognissanti *St. Augustine*. Horne has classed it with the tondo *Adoration* in the London National Gallery, which is not a bad suggestion. I do not think there are many years between these two *Adorations*. Beyond doubt there are similarities, which are, however, superficial compared with the essential difference which exists. This means that a change took place in the short period between the painting of the two *Adorations*. Why should I not assign the Uffizi *Adoration* to about 1478?

The document discovered by Mesnil proved only that the picture was ordered by Lami; so the former supposition that it was dedicated by the Medici as a thanksgiving became definitely untenable. What is more important is that the document contained little indication regarding the date

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

of the picture, which, therefore, is left to stylistic investigation. I had to assign the date to 1478 or shortly after, as I felt strongly in it the influence of Castagno. (For the text of the document cf. *Horne*, appendix, p. 349.)

From the beginning of this chapter I have endeavoured to follow the education which young Botticelli received, and I now arrive at what appears to be its completion. Reviewing the whole course, I feel that it was an ideal one for him, as it was thoroughly in harmony with the spirit of the time, and, moreover, came in a sequence which was well calculated to develop the whole genius of the artist. It was providential that he was destined to stay in Florence long enough to absorb the realistic side of Art, and then with this recommendation as a great realist, was called away from the scene of his education, and to an independent career. It seems as if Heaven ordained that the realistic basis in Botticelli should be made as wide and sound as possible, in order that his poetic genius might soar to the greatest heights.

We read in *Vasari* how the fame of the Uffizi *Adoration* reached far and wide, and so caused Pope Sixtus IV to invite the painter to Rome, as the chief of those artists who were to paint frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. Besides coinciding better in date, if I date the picture at a time soon after the Pazzi Conspiracy, this story of Vasari sounds very plausible, as the painting, famed for its portraits, must have been an excellent recommendation to the Pope, who, in the spirit of this most ambitious age, wished to decorate the Sistine Chapel in order to perpetuate his own renown. There was no painting in Florence up to this time in which portrait groups were so impressively accomplished. Was not this exactly fitted to meet the demand of the haughty Renaissance patrons? Botticelli went to Rome in the early part of 1481.

CHAPTER II. BOTTICELLI AS A REALIST · REALISTIC STANDARD OF CRITICISM IN EUROPE · VASARI AS AN ART CRITIC · PROBLEM OF THE 'ARIA VIRILE' · BOTTICELLI'S WEAKNESS IN REALISM

BOTTICELLI'S journey to Rome was the great event of his life, and was destined to be the turning-point in his career. By it his worldly reputation was firmly established; henceforth he had full confidence in himself, and the art peculiarly his own, strangely independent of all other art-movements of the age, began its course. Here is the proper place to estimate Botticelli as a realistic painter, as by this time his realistic power had reached its height, and, with the further development of his genius, which was wider than realism, it had to wane.

This is a delicate question; I wish to make myself clear. It is not that Botticelli was actually to lose the realistic qualities he had acquired; he faithfully retained to the end the technique of the 'seventies: it was rather his freshness that he was destined to lose. He was to become more and more preoccupied with other phases of Art, and so his realistic representations, although employed with the same method, gradually lost that freshness which comes only from direct study of Nature, and tended to conventionality. In the following depreciation rather than appreciation of Botticelli as a realist, I must not be taken to mean that Botticelli was not great enough to attain to heights in realism, if he set his mind to it and when, as I have pointed out, the propitious influence of his educational years inspired him. Only I cannot lose sight of the radical difference between his type of artistic genius and realistic Art. In my view, a due recognition of this weakness is indispensable to the entire understanding of Botticelli. It is the very key with which you can open the whole expanse of his genius, so curiously beautiful.

In the Introduction I had occasion to refer to the tendency in Art-historians to make too much of documents, at the expense of their own subjective impressions of Art, which should form the basis of all artistic judgment. Moreover, it may sometimes be observed that historians eager to quote from old writings do not study their proper value as fully as they ought.

In the case of Botticelli, I would suggest that Vasari's writings be studied in a more critical way before being accepted. That Vasari is a kind of Bible to students of the Renaissance is beyond doubt. Besides being a brilliant story-teller, he had a very remarkable sense of appreciation. But in spite

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

of all his charm as a writer, and his authority, time-honoured, and endorsed by his own experience as a Renaissance artist, he cannot be trusted to finality. He was after all an individual, whose judgment has the same weight as another's. Nothing is so interesting as to listen to Vasari, a man full of experience, full of gossip of the time. But as regards Art-appreciation, quotations from Vasari should not persuade you against your own judgment.

His trustworthiness as an historian has been studied eagerly in recent years, and now there is no lack of writers who treat him as little other than a story-teller. In the cause of historical truth this is good. Mr. Berenson displayed his insight in writing an article on 'Vasari in the Light of Recent Publication', in which he summarized his merit as historian in comparison with historical sources before his time—'Anonimo Magliabecchiano,' *Il Libro di Antonio Billi*, and others.—(Berenson: *Study and Criticism of Italian Art*, vol. I.) Little has been said, however, concerning Vasari's merit as an Art-Critic. Indeed, Vasari appears so important in our eyes that even if we consult him for information we are apt to be influenced by him as a judge of Renaissance Art. Vasari himself wrote the *Vita* with an authoritative attitude common among Art-critics of any time. All the more, attention must be called to the fact that his standard of appreciation was circumscribed by his own æsthetic experience and the spirit of the time. We must criticize him before we accept his criticisms.[1]

With regard to Vasari, a subject requiring a special study, I must confine myself to questions immediately concerned with Botticelli. His attitude to Botticelli seems to indicate that the critic was not of a nature to understand the painter. Vasari was an artist entirely of the Cinquecento, which, although the direct continuation of the Quattrocento, was yet very remote from it, being an age which outlived the Quattrocento and opened a new era. Vasari, who paid unlimited homage to Michelangelo, was a true child of the sixteenth century, that age which completely forgot the existence of Botticelli's art. We look on Vasari almost with pity, seeing how entirely his views were limited either to realistic representation or dramatic grandeur. Botticelli, the most complete embodiment of Quattrocento sensitiveness, was apart from Vasari's element. Was not Botticelli too unreal, and if real at all, too shy and refined, to satisfy Vasari's idea of what he proudly called 'modern Art'? I feel almost inclined to say that Vasari, confronting this most ethereal of artists, did not know how to praise him. Indeed, Vasari was a genius, more than one-sided, and he was not insensible to delicate shades of beauty. Botticelli's art was great enough to penetrate into minds of opposing tendency, if they had any sense of beauty at all. It is not that Vasari does not praise him. He felt something very precious in Botticelli,

[1] Recently Prof. Lionello Venturi, of the University at Turin, published an interesting study of Vasari as an Art-critic. It is contained in *Il gusto dei Primitivi*, Bologna, 1926.

but his vocabulary was so limited to phrases illustrative of Cinquecento realism, that he was at a loss how to express in words this most fleeting of beauties. If one reads Vasari's Life of Botticelli together with those of artists with realistic tendency, for instance, Domenico Ghirlandajo, one gets an impression that Vasari felt some mysterious presentiment of Botticelli's superiority; but he was ill at ease, and being unable definitely to express it, hastened to Ghirlandajo's art, describing with enjoyment how things look in his pictures more lifelike than life itself. It would be too much to say that Vasari could not appreciate Botticelli, but he understood him best when Botticelli was great in realism. No wonder that Vasari, without any hesitation, esteemed the Uffizi *Adoration of the Magi* above all Botticelli's works. He refers to the picture twice, and at length, in the short Life, and seems to attribute Botticelli's invitation to Rome to the fame of that altar-piece. We can easily understand how important this picture must have looked to the Cinquecento Vasari. Vasari closes his Life of Botticelli with an eloquent reference to this *Adoration*, which he used as a practical lesson in contrast to what he considered the useless devotion to literature and religion in the artist's later life.

Vasari was free to value the *Adoration* in the way he liked, but his view should not persuade us into regarding it as the climax of Botticelli's art. Many subsequent writers have fallen into ecstasies over the picture, but I doubt if it was owing to their own taste. The same realistic view of Art which turned to academic form since Vasari's time may still be guiding Europe. If critics really love the *Adoration*, so be it, whether Vasari valued it or not. I do not entirely admire the *Adoration*, and am against valuing it as the greatest of Botticelli's works. I should like to consider the picture as a test of the understanding of Botticelli's art. The merit of the *Adoration* is so remote from Botticelli's real genius that if one prefers it to other works it means that one loves Botticelli when he was least himself.

Vasari's prejudice, as a Medicean, which might have biassed him against the cause of Savonarola, I shall discuss later on.

The now famous phrase, 'aria virile', which occurs in a document discovered by Müller-Walde in the Public Archives at Milan, is one unfailingly used by recent writers on Botticelli. The document is a report made by an agent of the Duke of Milan, concerning the Florentine artists who worked in the Sistine Chapel, and afterwards in the Villa of Lorenzo il Magnifico at Spedaletto, with a view to selecting some of them to work for him. As there is no question about its value as a piece of contemporary criticism of the Quattrocento, I cannot refrain from quoting it in full.

'Sandro di Botticelli, a most excellent painter, both on panel and wall; his works have a virile air, and are [executed] with the greatest judgment and perfect proportion.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

'Filippino, the son of Fra Filippo, the best disciple of the aforesaid, and the son of the most singular master of his times; his works have a sweet air, but not, I think, so much Art.

'Il Perugino, a singular master, especially of wall-painting; his works have an angelical and very sweet air.

'Domenico di Grilandaio, a good master on panel, and still more on the wall; his works have a good air, and he is a man of expedition, and one who executes much work.

'All these aforesaid painters have given proof of their skill in the Chapel of Pope Sixtus, excepting Filippino; but all afterwards at the Spedaletto of Lorenzo il Magnifico; and it is hard to say who bears off the palm.'—(*Horne*, p. 109.)

This certainly is a most alluring document, sufficient to persuade us into implicit belief. It is extremely interesting to know the taste of the time in giving comparisons between great artists. The writer was, moreover, a man of good artistic culture, and quite serious in his criticism, as he had in view the practical purpose of recommending the painters to work for his master. But here the interest as regards appreciation ends. We respect the document, not forgetting that it is only an opinion. Horne says: 'he notes only in Botticelli's work the "aria virile", that virile air, his "optima regione et integra proportione" . . . The former is an expression which the modern critic would have used in characterizing the manner of Andrea del Castagno or Antonio Pollajuolo . . . For us Botticelli is a visionary painter who sees and depicts more than meets the ordinary eye. May not, then, the secret of his greatness lie in the fact that our modern view of him and the view of his contemporaries are, in their measure, and from their several standpoints, equally true?' (*Horne*, p. 110.) Horne is impartial and right in so thinking. Practically, however, the chief object of his book was the appreciation of Botticelli for his 'virile air'. Subsequent writers on Botticelli appear to have followed Horne, and M. Charles Diehl, prominent as a sound scholar among the many writers on Botticelli, seems specially moved by this reactionary spirit against the sentimental love of Botticelli of the days of Ruskin and Pater.

'Aria virile' is indeed a significant phrase. It has peculiar significance in denoting a phase of Botticelli's art, as I have already mentioned in connection with Andrea del Castagno's influence. It is certainly a characteristic in Botticelli which admirers of former days neglected, but it is no more than a characteristic, and not the essential one.

Moreover, I must call attention to the fact that, in the discovered document Botticelli is only compared with Filippino, Perugino, and Domenico Ghirlandajo, and is characterized as having the 'aria virile'. Botticelli could certainly have been thus regarded, when compared with these masters of calm and lovely manner. It is wrong to apply the same

'aria virile' in the general estimation of Botticelli, when we place him in the whole view of the Italian Quattrocento, where Andrea del Castagno, Verrocchio, and Pollajuolo in Florence, Cosimo Tura, and Mantegna in the North of the Apennines, stand out as virile masters, and Botticelli must belong rather to the sweet and imaginative group. To sum up the question, there are two reasons for objecting to the undue popularity of the famous phrase. First, a fragment of contemporary criticism can bear no special authority in determining the artistic value of a painter: this I have more fully treated of in the Introduction; second, in quoting the phrase, unhappily the context has been too frequently neglected. Let us bear in mind that in the document Botticelli is compared with less virile artists, and therefore was correctly characterized as having 'aria virile'.

Divested of all these traditional eulogies, I am not at all sure if Botticelli can really be called great as a realistic master. That he cannot bear comparison with Andrea del Castagno, I have already shown. We have also seen how Botticelli revealed his beautiful personality in the Berlin *St. Sebastian*, the very picture in which he had the best opportunity for displaying his anatomical knowledge, and that at the very prime of his realistic accomplishment. A careful student will not fail to observe that Botticelli's figures are often defective, if anatomically considered. Perhaps I need not give examples from his late period, when he ceased to depend on anatomical construction and drew figures as if they were linear patterns. Examples from the works dating from his realistic period would be more significant. In the *Primavera*, the central figure, usually taken to be Venus, is sometimes thought to be pregnant, indicating the fruitfulness of the Goddess of Love in Spring. This interpretation is not impossible, because the idea of the fruitfulness of Nature in Venus would not be absurd in the revival of Hellenic feeling. It is chiefly for that reason that Lucretius's exordium of the Venus Genetrix, by whom 'genus omne animantum concipitur visitque exortum lumina solis' is pointed out as the text on which Botticelli relied. But I really wonder at this interpretation, and prefer to take it as an example of Botticelli's bad drawing, in the realistic sense. That I do not attach so much importance to Lucretius's poem 'De Rerum Natura' in the pictorial formation of the *Primavera* as did Dr. Warburg and Horne, will be seen when I come to interpret Botticelli's relation with Poliziano. Moreover, that way of drawing the female torso is not at all uncommon in Botticelli, though here somewhat more pronounced than usual. His female figures are always much elongated, and he is much addicted to curved lines. In the nude, any violation of anatomical correctness is obvious, so he drew figures, as in the superb *Birth of Venus*, or in the figure of Truth in the *Calumny*, entrancingly curved, and yet passable in anatomy, if not entirely correct. But when he enveloped human figures in draperies, hiding

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

their anatomical form in ample folds, Botticelli's taste for curved lines could not help asserting itself at every opportunity, and made his figures, not really inaccurate, but on the border line, which was charming, but a dangerous snare for weak pupils. Probably Botticelli did not intend to represent Venus of the *Primavera* as pregnant, but that he exaggerated the outline of the figure to make it conform to his flowing lines. The drawing of the lower part of the torso of a draped figure is most difficult, owing to the fact that no special point of interest presents itself whereon the artist can focus his attention. Nearly all the seated Madonnas of Botticelli show weakness in this respect, *The Enthroned Madonna with St. Barnabas and other Saints*, in the Uffizi Gallery, for instance, and the *Madonna enthroned between two St. Johns*, in the Berlin Museum. Those kneeling Madonnas in the Ambrosiana at Milan and in the London National Gallery reveal the same remarkable weakness. In all these figures the belly swells out in a prominent curve, which was a stumbling-block for imitators. The five allegorical figures in the Corsini Gallery at Florence, which is a school-work, are remarkable examples of this. I do not know what these allegories symbolize: 'Muses', according to Prof. A Venturi; or they may be five 'Virtues', with celestial light emanating from their heads: at all events it would be incongruous to imagine them to be pregnant, although their actual figures exaggerate the manner of the Venus of the *Primavera*, especially in the drawing of the one in the centre. From these examples of pupils' exaggeration, I may infer a weakness in the master, and I take the figure of Venus as a typical example of Botticelli's weakness in realism, rather than an intentional representation of a crude allegory.

The same indifference to realism, sometimes leading to an obvious disregard of anatomical laws, is to be found in various parts of the human figure in Botticelli's works, more noticeably in the treatment of hands and feet and in the poise of the neck. But as these anomalies are the outcome of other artistic laws ruling Botticelli's genius, I shall deal with them in their proper place. Here let me observe as another example of Botticelli's weakness in anatomy one more curious characteristic. It refers to the face, where one might least expect to find mistakes. Sometimes Botticelli's distribution of features, eyes, nose, and mouth is strangely out of place. True, this is a mistake, which is more frequent in painters than is usually recognized. Leonardo da Vinci's advice to young painters to examine their pictures in a mirror applies especially well to this kind of bad drawing. Of the symmetry of the face no artist can be absolutely sure, neither can Nature herself; few painters, however, modelled it in so remarkable a way as Botticelli; in this I exclude Cosimo Tura, El Greco, and Lucas Cranach, who in some ways resembled Botticelli. The face of the boy in the foreground in that most admirable of drawings, the *Abundance*, in the British Museum, is curiously oblique, but that is not a rare occurrence with

Botticelli. Among the beautiful angels in the Uffizi *Coronation of the Virgin* there peep out beautiful faces, looking mischievously lovely, with their eyes and mouths naively out of place. The *Salvator Mundi* in the Bergamo Gallery, considered authentic by Morelli, is a remarkable example of a pupil's exaggeration.

Examples of bad anatomy in Botticelli are endless. In the charming tondo *Madonna* in the Ambrosiana at Milan the head of the Virgin is disproportionately large. In the *Madonna* in Mr. Heseltine's Collection in London, now in that of Mr. Rockefeller, New York, and in the *Madonna of the Annunciation* in the exquisite predella of the *Coronation of the Virgin*, the neck is too fat, which (if one imagines that a good painter paints everything in his picture with definite intention) must be taken as inconsistent with Botticelli's taste for the slender. It seems that he was of a dreamy and ethereal temperament, which, if not strictly on the alert, soon failed to retain a firm grip of Nature. Of course he was too great an artist to be called 'one of the worst anatomists' (George Rose, *The Renaissance Masters*, p. 166) in any sense. In the Dante Drawings, where he drew nude figures with every possible attitude and expression, Botticelli proved himself a master well versed in them. None the less, his real greatness lies apart from the realistic. In the appreciation of Botticelli's art it is very important to recognize his realistic weakness, which, however, did not end as a mere weakness, but had a special significance, being the inevitable manifestation of other greater qualities.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

CHAPTER III. BOTTICELLI'S PORTRAITS · PORTRAITURE AS ART · CHARACTERISTIC AND SYMBOLIC PORTRAITS · BOTTICELLI'S DEVELOPMENT AS A PORTRAIT PAINTER

IT is here expedient to consider Botticelli as a portrait painter, a peculiar art, which has the closest connection with realism. You must expect something extraordinary when an art so real comes from a genius so imaginative. The expectation is amply realized.

What is a portrait? If it is the representation of an individual, I am not sure if Botticelli was truly successful. Holbein and Velasquez accomplished phenomenal feats of portraiture, and from their clear-cut images historic personalities project with miraculous reality. Their art may be compared with the clearest mirror: you look at the persons and you do not realize the existence of the mirror. Your whole attention is absorbed by the forcible individuality. Who were they? What sort of character had Philip IV, with his moustaches, and Henry VIII, who was so fat? In Botticelli's portraits, your interest in the persons represented is very slight. There is a very remote feeling in the picture. Rather you are immersed in a vague ideal atmosphere, which floats above the individualistic world.

Botticelli was not exactly like this from the beginning. When he was being educated in the spirit of Quattrocento realism, he tried to, and could paint individualistic portraits. We have already seen that the famous *Adoration of the Magi*, in the Uffizi Gallery, is the work in which one sees him at his best. He aimed at lifelike representation of illustrious individuals and succeeded. They are master-portraits, which for that alone places him among the great portrait painters. When these heads are compared with the Medici portraits in Ghirlandajo's frescoes in the church of S. Trinità, or in Benozzo Gozzoli's in the Palazzo Riccardi, Botticelli's superior grasp of character is quite clear. But, is the *Adoration* to be called a masterpiece for that reason? Rather the contrary. To my mind, that very superiority is detrimental to the effect of the picture as a whole. What you really do, confronting the picture, is to admire individual heads; you feel impelled by prosaic curiosity to know who they are, and you leave with but a slight impression of the whole. Each head is grasped with such a separate concentration that when you look at the picture your sense of unity is disturbed. Botticelli was quite different in all his other pictures. Let me take, for example, another *Adoration*. Even in the early oblong one in the National Gallery in London, where Botticelli's true nature is still hidden under

Filippesque manner, the harmony unifying the whole is unmistakable: your eyes are carried fluently from left to right, and you will adore with the first Magi the seated Madonna, who meekly receives your pious advent. In the tondo *Adoration*, in the same Gallery, everything in the picture converges to the middle, where the Madonna sits as the centre of the spiritual world. The same thing may be said of the *Adoration* in Petrograd. Even in the unfinished one in the Uffizi Gallery, where you see a whole crowd of excited people, there is no confusion of pictorial effect. All the figures range to the centre as if the whole universe gathered together to do homage to the Most High. This synthetic sense peculiar to Botticelli is disturbed only when I look at the most famous of all the *Adorations*. Why? Because for the purpose of exact portraiture Botticelli had to multiply emphasis, and each face tries to attract your particular attention. I see a forced intention in this *Adoration*. Botticelli could not move in it with his natural inclination.

The works which soon followed this *Adoration* also contained many portraits, but they rather serve as proofs how soon Botticelli was to lose that extreme severity of portraiture which he was only able to retain under the immediate influence of Andrea del Castagno. I refer to the Sistine frescoes which Botticelli executed in 1481–2. Indeed, you find excellent heads, powerful and individual, peeping out here and there, which Dr. Steinmann with great labour tried to identify. For instance, the proud figure holding a baton on the extreme right of the *Purification of the Lepers*, which Dr. Steinmann claimed as Girolamo Riario, Gonfaloniere of the Church, or that strong head of an ecclesiastic behind the figure of the high priest in the same fresco, are glories of severe portraiture. But generally speaking, I think that the strict unflinching grip of feature and character, shown in the famous *Adoration*, was rapidly disappearing. Giuliano della Rovere, afterwards to become the most fiery of Popes, Julius II, standing in cardinal's robe in the same fresco to the right of the woman, who is running with a bundle of faggots on her head, is painted with such a friendly air that I suspect Botticelli's own soul peeping out from the vigorous features, rather than that the cardinal actually looked so good-natured. It is difficult to identify him with the severe and resolute cardinal whom Melozzo da Forli painted at a little earlier date in the ecclesiastical group round Pope Sixtus IV. In the fresco of the *Chastisement of the Company of Korah*, above the figure of Moses on the left of the picture there are two portraits of extreme beauty, which Dr. Steinmann identified as Alessandro Farnese, the future Pope Paul III and his tutor Pomponius Laertus. Indeed, in these frescoes you greet many faces which really live, faces you would not be surprised to meet. Where is, however, that inexorable iron grip of personal character, which looks out so piercingly from each corner of the *Adoration* altar-piece? In the Sistine frescoes

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

figures are still represented with an air of reality, but they are already changing into creatures who lived in Botticelli's kindly imagination.

It would take too long to review all Botticelli portraits, I only intend to indicate the direction his art was taking in portraiture. With that purpose I shall take the four important portraits in the following order: the *Young Man with a Medici medal* in the Uffizi Gallery, *The Young Man* in the National Gallery, *Lorenzo Lorenzano* in the Johnson Collection in Philadelphia, and lastly *The Young Man* in Mr. Mackay's Collection in New York.

There are doubts expressed regarding the authenticity of the Uffizi portrait, and the identity of the subject. I believe it to be a genuine Botticelli, dating from his Pollajuolesque period. As regards the person represented it is impossible to identify him in the present state of historical knowledge, and the whole range of names proposed by Uhlmann, Dr. Steinmann, Müntz and others, from Pico della Mirandola to the Giovanni de' Medici of Horne (which though a good suggestion has little ground, except the possible coincidence of the date of the picture and the sitter's age), shows how many suggestions may be put forward. It is enough to know that the man holds the medal of Cosimo the Elder, Pater Patriae, struck by Michelozzo.

Connoisseurship has made such progress since Morelli first pointed out the picture as Botticelli's, that to-day the critic's exhaustive argument is scarcely necessary to prove the authenticity of the picture. But, in spite of its great popularity, the portrait does not appeal to me as a great work. Apparently young Botticelli was here occupied with facial anatomy before anything else. It is not a character-study, but a Nature-study. Character stamps itself upon the face, and so a realistic study of features may be able to indicate the inner character as well. None the less, Botticelli's chief attention seems to have been occupied in representing the minute light and shade which played upon the undulating surfaces of the face, round the mouth, on the prominent cheek-bones, and the curious projection in the throat. I can think of no other picture in which Botticelli was so near to Pollajuolo, although in saying so I should guard against the possibility of being taken to agree with Horne that there must have been for this picture a 'prototype' by the hand of Pollajuolo, which he hoped to discover one day. In the Corsini Gallery in Florence there is the *Portrait of a Man with a ring* of the school of Botticelli, which I had occasion to mention in the Introduction. It is a school-work imitating the master's Pollajuolesque manner, which was certainly well suited for obtaining a faithful resemblance of the sitter. There is a mole on the cheek, and the painter carefully traced the hairs growing out of it. The hand is studied with faithfulness, which approaches triviality, so that though it looks fairly well independently, the proportion to the rest of the body is lost and it is too small.

This wrong proportion as the result of faithfulness in detail is exactly the exaggeration of Botticelli's realism. The same weakness, though not apparent enough to become a fault in itself, exists in the portrait of *The Medal-bearer* in the Uffizi Gallery.

As I have repeatedly said, Pollajuolo had a vigorous temperament, which could penetrate through realism and reach the inner character. The portrait of *Galeazzo Sforza* in the Uffizi is an excellent example of such a realistic study. The powerful character of the sitter is seen, even in his hands. What Botticelli could do in the manner of Pollajuolo was the utmost faithfulness in surface-delineation, but he lacked his vigorous penetration. I have already mentioned that Botticelli made sudden progress in realistic severity under the influence of Andrea del Castagno. If there were any portraits painted by Botticelli under this influence, they must have been as vigorous as the character-heads in the *Adoration of the Magi* of the Uffizi. Only there are no such in existence. The *Portrait of a Young Man* from the Kahn Collection in Paris, now in the Morgan Library in New York, is attributed to Botticelli both by Dr. Bode and Mr. Berenson. It is astonishingly powerful in conception and execution, and is certainly one of the greatest masterpieces of fifteenth-century portraiture. As to its authorship, however, the attribution to Botticelli rather surprises me. Although I am inclined to emphasize the Castagnesque influence in the formation of Botticelli's genius more than is usual among scholars, the Morgan portrait seems too Castagnesque for Botticelli. I am not entirely satisfied with its attribution to Castagno himself, but I am not yet prepared to give any other name to it. Recently there appeared a picture, which reminds me very much of the Morgan portrait. It is the portrait of a young man, attributed to Botticelli, in the collection of Mr. Friedsam in New York. This picture seems to me very near to Botticelli. But I cannot definitely see Botticelli himself in these two fine portraits.

The Uffizi *Portrait of the Medal-bearer* is the best example of what Botticelli's own realism was capable of in the art of realistic portraiture, and how inferior it was after all! The name of Pico della Mirandola, a most sensitive soul, suggests itself naturally from the spirit of the picture, although its acceptance involves an anachronism. If, according to Horne's suggestion, the head represents Giovanni de' Medici, it is little short of a failure as the interpretation of the man's character, which was 'di natura caldissima', according to an old biographer. Botticelli studied the face with all his energy, but his own softness interfered. He traced minute detail, but the grand construction of masculine feature escaped him. The neck was again the stumbling-block to Botticelli. In realism he went half-way. He was strong enough to interpret features, but lacked positive firmness. He could represent a real person, and yet he invested the portrait

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

with something beautiful, something rather belonging to the artist than possessed by his subject.

Indeed, this unnameable something is what makes Botticelli's portraits extremely attractive, in spite of his defective realistic representation. Botticelli was destined to produce portraits with an increasing tendency towards the ideal, as his art became freed from the realistic fetters of the 'seventies. The London National Gallery *Head of a Youth* is an excellent example, which must have been painted not very long after Botticelli returned from Rome. Here he is still not very different from his early manner, and has not become so entirely ethereal as in his later years. The youth is represented with a sense of reality, but there is something deeper and more remote which attracts the love of all. Everyone greets his own friend in this unknown youth. Horne rightly admires it. It is not only 'one of the finest', as he says, but the very finest Florentine portrait of the fifteenth century. But let us hear what Horne says in praise of it: 'This admirable head is comparable to the portraits of the great Northern masters'. What a comparison!

The great Northern primitives are great chiefly because of their minute, unmistakable realism. The greatest among them could attain to the Ideal, through the Real, as their eyes were so lucid and penetrating that the Real became transparent and revealed the inner beauty. In the works of the Van Eycks, or of Memling, the soul shines out. No, that is not enough. The soul of Nature permeates every part and makes you feel its existence. Every tiny, ugly detail, if followed with such devotion as that of the Van Eycks and Memling, becomes holy in itself and symbolic of deeper existence. You look at mere individuals: they become revelations, if properly seen. Herein lies the ultimate possibility of realism to become ideal. In Botticelli, on the contrary, the individual has a tendency to fade away from the beginning, and the deeper existence shines out. With the Northern paintings you live in an Individualistic World, with Botticelli, so to speak, in an Impersonal. Who except specialists would ask, looking at the National Gallery portrait, who was he? Your curiosity would never tempt you to inquire as to his personality. It is as if a face loomed out of the dark, dear to every child of man, a face which, if you try to recall, you seem to have seen everywhere and nowhere. To me this seems the true function of portraiture, as Art. All true artists are tortured, when they paint portraits, by the demand for personal resemblance. The resemblance is the personal illustration which dies with the person, not Art. Northern masters are great, not because the portrait looks most like the subject, but because through the individual you see inherent humanity.

Botticelli probably painted the strange portrait, full of character, of the Pisan physician, *Lorenzo Lorenzano*, now in the Johnson Collection at Philadelphia, some ten years after the National Gallery portrait. I say

strange, because it is remote from the so-called realistic study, details of drawing being disregarded. And yet it is superb as a character study.

Botticelli had by this time ceased to work much from Nature in a laboured manner, and his brushwork became conventional, more and more adapted for realizing his dreams than for the exact representation of natural objects. The picture betrays a rigidity in modelling, which is no longer facile enough for the interpretation of the ever-changing surfaces of facial anatomy. And yet it is so mysteriously 'presenting'. It seems to suggest that there is a symbolic way of communication between souls. The man exists, but he is not explained. The eyes, as mannered as those of an Egyptian mummy, look dreamily out into the obscure world. It does not surprise you to find out that this Lorenzo Lorenzano was a soul who penetrated into the many-sided mysteries of the world. When very young he was appointed professor of logic in the University of Pisa; then he turned to physics; then to medicine; therein he became one of the greatest scholars. A strange brain immersed in the secrets of dual nature, body and soul. He ended his life in 1502 by throwing himself down a well (cf. Berenson, *Catalogue of the Johnson Collection*, p. 29 ff.).

But it was not characterization, even so symbolic as in the case of Lorenzo Lorenzano, to which Botticelli's art was tending. He was able to achieve the fine portrait of Lorenzano, because his own soul was in deep accord with that of his subject. And who can be sure that it was not Botticelli's own soul rather than Lorenzano's which looks out of the picture? All portraits are self-portraits of the artist. As Botticelli became more and more detached from the real world, his portraits were no longer portraits of real persons: they became the presentment of himself. The youth, now in the collection of Mr. C. H. Mackay, may have been painted earlier, a little after the *Madonna and Child with St. Barnabas and other Saints and Angels* in the Uffizi, but already shows a beautiful head which looks shyly for a moment from Botticelli's imaginary world. Compared with the National Gallery youth, he is a brother, but a distant, spiritual one. In him the thread of reality seems broken: he becomes unreal rather than living. The distinction between the real and unreal melts away, and either you believe both or you disbelieve both. I doubt if, in the whole field of portraiture, there is any comparable to it, except, perhaps, the works of that strange genius, El Greco, to whom I shall have occasion to refer when I come to the Mystic Botticelli.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

CHAPTER IV. BOTTICELLI'S LANDSCAPE — BOTTICELLI'S IDEA OF LANDSCAPE · HIS PERSPECTIVE. GOTHIC LANDSCAPE IN BOTTICELLI'S PICTURES AND IN SCHOOL WORKS · 'SPIRITUAL-DECORATIVE' LANDSCAPE · JAPANESE LANDSCAPE COMPARED WITH CHINESE · QUATTROCENTO LANDSCAPE. BOTTICELLI'S NATURE POEMS

THE object of this book is to reveal, so far as I can, all the phases of Botticelli's art, beginning with its realistic foundation and following its psychological development to the symbolic. The psychological law of mental evolution does not agree in its entirety with the real career of the painter, but it approximates to it. So that though the logical sequence is the principal guide in this study of Botticelli's art, at the same time, broadly speaking, I also follow him in chronological sequence.

I will now discuss another branch of Art, where realism is again expected, and where Botticelli, with his nature adverse to it, once more took a course peculiarly his own: that is in landscape.

It is now almost taken for granted that Botticelli was inferior as a landscape painter, and this impression is mainly due to the famous remark made by Leonardo da Vinci on what Botticelli said about landscape as an art. It is such a remarkable piece of criticism that I cannot refrain from quoting it in full, in Horne's translation.

'That painter', says Leonardo in the best manuscript of the *Trattato* (the Codex Vaticanus, 1270), 'cannot be universal, who does not equally delight in all the things which appertain to painting; thus, if he does not take pleasure in the landscapes, he accounts them to be a thing of slight and simple research; as our Botticelli, who said that such a study is vain, since by merely throwing a sponge full of divers colours against a wall, it left on the wall a stain wherein was seen a fine landscape. Is is indeed true, I say, that the various inventions which a man wishes to find in that stain may be seen in it, such as heads of men, diverse animals, battles, rocks, seas, clouds, woods, and other such things; and that it produces its effect, like the sound of a bell in which one is able to hear that which it seems to say to you; but although those stains may give you invention, they do not teach you to finish any one detail; and of these [stains] such a painter makes wretched landscapes.' (*Horne*, p. 28 ff.)

Surely Leonardo da Vinci, with his absolute reverence for Nature, must have found not only this idea of Botticelli's irrelevant, but also his landscapes, evidently painted from such an idea, very unsatisfactory. Horne appends his own ideas to the quotation, and says: 'This—that is, Botticelli's account that the painting of landscape for its own sake is a vain study—from the view of Leonardo, was a great fault . . . but Leonardo does not assert that Botticelli himself painted wretched landscapes. That saying of Botticelli's which Leonardo here preserves was obviously said in that paradoxical spirit which characterizes more than one of his sayings which have come down to us.' I must confess I entirely disagree. Horne tries, with a logician's subtlety, to rescue Botticelli from Leonardo's blame. To me Botticelli's remark sounds quite serious. It is possible that he expressed it with exaggeration, none the less with an artist's firm conviction, endorsed by his own actual experiences. Moreover, I can hardly imagine that Leonardo would have caught a mere chance remark of Botticelli's in order to disprove it, unless Botticelli's real productions were to Leonardo unsatisfactory. From the realistic view of Nature which Leonardo professed more than anyone, in spite of what Ruskin, flourishing his geology, said of the *Madonna of the Rocks*, Botticelli's landscapes are really inferior and deserve Leonardo's censure. Let us well remember that Botticelli was mentioned in Leonardo's writings in this depreciatory manner. That he was called 'our Botticelli' means little more than that Botticelli was at that time a recognized master in Florence. Pater says, at the beginning of his essay on Botticelli: 'In Leonardo's treatise on painting only one contemporary is mentioned by name—Sandro Botticelli. The pre-eminence may be due to chance only, but to some will appear a result of deliberate judgment.' Many writers on Botticelli seem to push Pater's interpretation one step farther and refer to Leonardo's mention as if Botticelli was the only contemporary master appreciated by him. Such interpretation is not correct.

That Botticelli was as indifferent to scientific study of landscape, as to anatomy, is evident from his works. He attempted it, following the fashion of the time. The essential indifference born of his temperament produced in him but an inadequate knowledge of Nature. In this respect it is interesting to examine the *Calunnia* in the Uffizi Gallery. My recollection of the picture is that of a metallic, or gem-like splendour, cold and glittering. I can remember no mellow half-tones: it is a picture without shadow, a jewelled mosaic, a relief of frozen gold. It is the most unreal of worlds, lacking atmosphere, where only those maliciously beautiful creatures could live and act an allegorical drama. Therefore, when I hear it discussed as if it represented an actual scene on this earth, it sounds strange. Horne may be taken as a good exponent of realistic eulogy. He draws attention to 'the calm of the cloudless sky and untroubled waters, which lie beyond—the clear sunlight in which it is bathed', and farther on, 'some ray of actual sunshine seems to linger in the golden atmosphere in which the scene is bathed.' (*Horne*, pp. 262–3.)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

If one looks for a picture in which brightness reigns, to my mind it will be found in the *Calunnia*, but certainly its brightness is not that of 'actual sunshine'. It is a golden palace of the land of fable, where magic light, strangely glittering but shivering cold, quickens your eyes. It is the last picture to be realistically considered. And yet a close examination of the picture will reveal to you, quite unexpectedly, that 'actual sunshine' was really attempted by the painter. It is studied with wonderful care, but its lack of effect is more wonderful. The picture was painted late in the 'nineties, and so the question of chiaroscuro must have been already studied by the Florentine artists. Obviously Botticelli, in his technique, was reluctant to be behind the times, and he must have studied the problem of light and shade himself. But his interest in Art was directed away from Nature. Thus, failing to grasp the real effect of sunshine, he ended by shedding on the picture a mystic light.

In connection with Botticelli's landscape I wish to express my disagreement with those German scholars who greatly value Botticelli as a master of perspective. Perspective was, indeed, the essence of Nature-study in the Quattrocento, and in my opinion Botticelli, who showed his temperament adverse to the objective study of Nature, made no exception in this special pursuit. Or, rather, it would be better to say that he showed his peculiarly artistic attitude clearly in this most scientific of Nature-studies. To the question of Botticelli's perspective Herr J. Meyer drew attention in the *Gemäldegalerie der königlichen Museen*, where, among other things, he said that in the Botticellesque pictures 'die gerissenen Linien der geometrischen Konstruktion' are sometimes clearly visible. This is true, but I doubt if there is anything artistically remarkable in them. In the Quattrocento, pictures were usually painted in architectural construction, which had to be treated in perspective somehow or other. The School of Botticelli is remarkable, if at all, for the preservation of those outlines in perspective retained in its strictly Quattrocento technique of tempera on panel and also for its linear conception of the picture, while other painters were quickly approaching the Cinquecento method of oil-colours on canvas and aiming at the tonal effect of chiaroscuro. It is evident that the Cinquecento method is effective in obliterating geometrical lines of construction, so easily preserved in the gesso surface of the tempera panel.

Dr. J. Kern, a specialist in perspective, naturally went farther than Herr Meyer, and taking the tondo *Madonna with Seven Angels* in the Berlin Museum as a genuine work of Botticelli, made a mathematical study of it, proving that it has a merit which marks an epoch in the development of perspective in the Florentine Quattrocento (cf. Dr. Kern, '*Eine Perspektische Kreiskonstruktion bei S. Botticelli*,' *Kön. Preuss. Kunstsamml. Jahrbuch*, 1905). The conclusions, however, which he drew from the

ADORATION OF THE MAGI
(Florence, Uffizi Gallery)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

study of the tondo and applied to Botticelli's genius as a whole, I am not prepared to admit. He argues that Botticelli's bottega must have been a centre for the scientific study of perspective, and that possibly the cell of St. Augustine, in Botticelli's fresco in Ognissanti, which is full of mathematical implements and of books, among which a large open volume with geometrical diagrams is conspicuous, actually represented a corner of Botticelli's own studio.

All this seems to have gone too far. Botticelli's works do not give the impression that he was a great master of perspective. Why is this obscure quality of perspective in his works so frequently acclaimed in critical writings, as if it were an important element in his genius? Apparently because it was mentioned by a time-honoured authority. Luca Pacioli, the famous mathematician, refers to it in his book, *Summa de Arithmetica et Geometria*, published in Venice in 1494, alluding to Botticelli as one of the masters of perspective in Florence. Let us see what Pacioli said and weigh its significance.

'Come qui in Vinegia Gentil e Giouan Bellini, carnal fratelli. E in perspectiuo desegno Hyeronimo Malatini. E in Fiorença Alexandro boticelli, Phylippino et Domenico grilandaio. E in Peroscia Pietro ditto elperusino. E in Cortona Luca del ñro Maestro Pietro degno discipulo. E in Mantua Andrea Mantegna. E in Furli Meloçço con cuo caro alieno Marco Palmegiano. Quali sempre con libella et circino lor' opere proportionando a perfection mirabile conducono. . . .'

This is apparently a very broad generalization, which does not tempt me to credit the mathematician with a careful examination of paintings. Good masters of realistic tendency were mentioned with little discrimination, and some great masters of perspective were passed over. It is right to pay attention to the mathematician's remark, which contains, I do not deny, truth, but which should be deliberately weighed before we put much trust in it. What can be the ultimate importance of Pacioli's reference to Botticelli as a great master of perspective when he mentions Filippino, Luca Signorelli, and others whose works were certainly remarkable for other qualities than perspective, and Hyeronimo Malatini, a very obscure artist, and omits any reference to masters who were really great in this subject?

Vasari said of Botticelli's antipathy to arithmetic, when he was a boy: 'ne si contentaua di scuola alcuna, di leggere, di scrivere o di abbaco'. Of course this passage does not indicate Botticelli's special antipathy to mathematics. That he had a literary tendency, which became more pronounced in his later years, may be put forward as evidence that Vasari cannot be trusted in this broad characterization of Botticelli's boyhood. Very frequently, however, a man of real literary taste dislikes dry school works, even 'di leggere', and if you take into consideration that Botticelli

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

led such an unmethodical life, that Vasari had excellent occasion to moralize, it proves to my mind that Botticelli's antipathy to 'abbaco' seems to have connection with his unruly temperament, which was little adapted to studies of scientific precision. I cannot find any reason for supporting Dr. Kern's supposition that Botticelli copied in the Ognissanti fresco a corner of his studio, where, according to that theory, mathematics should have been pursued in company with the light-hearted jokes of the idlers who frequented the place.

I must also point out that the tondo *Madonna with Seven Angels*, in Berlin, which Dr. Kern examined, taking it for granted as Botticelli's own work, in order to establish his theory, can hardly be a real Botticelli, although Dr. Kern gave a list of authorities in his support. I know that although Morelli's description of the tondo as 'ein echtes herrliches Werk des Meisters' would now appear much exaggerated, yet there are still many scholars who accept the design as Botticelli's. But even here I am doubtful. So, however accurate Dr. Kern was in his geometrical calculation of the Berlin tondo, he is only concerned with a school picture, which does not, in my opinion, affect Botticelli very much.

Indeed, Botticelli's works sometimes reveal good perspective, as in the pavement of the large Uffizi *Annunciation*, which Dr. Bode praised as sufficient endorsement of Pacioli's comment. That it is good I admit, but then there is nothing remarkable in it. It shows that Botticelli was not behind his time, and that he could treat foreshortening of pavement without error. I doubt if scholars would have drawn special attention to Botticelli's perspective had it not been for Luca Pacioli.

Dr. Kern, in his article on the subject, says that Dr. Warburg drew his attention to the fact that Doni, in his *Filosofia Morale*, wrote a comment on the passage from Luca Pacioli quoted above, thus: 'Io per me non ci saprei trovare altro sesto a questo mazzocchio di Sandro Botticelli per essere fatto a otto faccie e tirato in perspectiva, che parere e non essere, che essere eparere non puo stare. . .' I know no other notice of this 'mazzocchio' made by Botticelli, but I am not sure if I can trust Doni, who was not a very reliable writer. It would be too much if one, on account of this note of Doni, received an impression that Botticelli could be placed alongside Paolo Uccello, who was famous for the experiments on perspective in designing 'mazzocchio'. (cf. Dr. Kern, '*Der Mazzocchio des Paolo Uccello*,' *Kön. Preuss. Kunstsamml. Jahrbuch*, 1915.)

It seems to me that Botticelli adopted the same attitude towards perspective as towards anatomy. In objective studies of Nature he could never go very far. He had keen intellectual perceptions which, when concentrated on perspective, enabled him to accomplish as much as anyone. But the difficulty was that there were other artistic pursuits more important to him. The result was that perspective, demanding special

attention, became frequently separated from the composition as a whole, and broke the harmony. It seems as if Botticelli had two masters to obey in painting: the sense of artistic composition and the objective law of perspective, and they were destined to contradict each other. Great realists unite the whole composition according to natural law. Leonardo was supreme because he was, as it were, Nature herself, using natural laws to conform with his desires: he was at one with the movement of Nature, and so in him the distinction between the objective and the subjective disappeared. Botticelli belonged to another sphere, where these stood in sharp contrast.

If we thus admit that Botticelli's true nature tended to the subjective, while his study of Nature was objective and scientific, we may well expect to find his perspective becoming more conspicuous and discordant as the painter advanced in years, while his independent nature became more accentuated and his objective study of Nature less. But I must examine this development from his early works.

The Fortezza's throne we have already studied. In it we have seen how Botticelli apparently took pains to give a realistic sense of projection, as in similar examples by the Pollajuoli, but failing, acquired instead the decorative effect more necessary for the painting. This is one phase of discord in Botticelli, which artistically was successful, the objective being duly sacrificed to the subjective. The Sistine frescoes represent another phase of the same discord: its failure in Art. When working on the enormous area of fresco, the painter was evidently absorbed with that portion on which he was immediately engaged, that is to say, when working on an architectural part, obviously he drew that very part carefully in perspective and could think of no other parts, so that that section, however well done in itself, bore little relation to its surroundings. A lack of harmony between the figures and the architecture is especially noticeable, the architecture being drawn for the sake of strict perspective and the figures for their flowing curves. Thus the composition divides itself into two incongruous groups of lines, the figures extremely moving and melodious, the architecture straight, sharply defined and hard as if frozen.

This want of harmony is not noticeable in the idyllic scene in the Life of the youthful Moses, just because there is little architecture in it. In the *Purification of the Leper*, the façade of the hospital of Santo Spirito is traced with an architect's precision, rather than with an artist's sense of beauty, and its straight outlines project from the picture and hurt the eyes with their sharp edges. The same thing may be said of the Triumphal Arch in the *Chastisement of the Company of Korah*. Regarding the Popes' portraits, which were painted chiefly from Botticelli's designs, you will find figures strangely detached from the niches, for the figures are treated as being on the same level as the spectator while the niches are drawn fore-shortened,

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

as if you were to look at them as placed at a height. This want of unity is illustrative of Botticelli's temperament. Paolo Uccello and Andrea del Castagno, who painted the marvellous equestrian statues in the Duomo of Florence, had the vigour to push scientific precision to the very end, and the strong perspective with which all these frescoes are painted, figures, pedestals and accessories, forces you to look up at the powerful gonfaloniers with sheer admiration.

Recently a gem from the hand of Botticelli has been discovered and has passed into Mr. Louis Hyde's collection in Glens Falls, U.S.A. It is a small *Annunciation*, with beautiful architectural surroundings. As regards the architecture the drawing is perfect. The figures are as beautifully flowing as possible; but in the harmony of the two something is lacking. The figures are not so well preserved as the architecture, but still I cannot justify the over-important sense attached to the architecture, which is painted with elaborate perspective.

If we come to the panels of *Lucrezia*, *Virginia*, and *St. Zenobius*, which belong to the latest period, the feeling of separation between architecture and figures becomes more apparent. In the *Lucrezia* panel at Bergamo the architectural part is beautifully treated, but it is heavy and too important, as if the whole picture were nothing else than a study of the interior of the temple. The personages, beautiful in themselves, dwindle into effigies under the great cupola. The reason is that Botticelli by this time vitiated his aptitude for figures by his devotion to the Dante Drawings, whereby he acquired a facility in drawing small dramatic figures in limited space, losing the comparatively grand style of his earlier figure-painting. His method of drawing architecture remained just the same as in his young days, perhaps somewhat hardened by general mannerism, which affected all the Art of his late period: the result was that the small impatient figures do not fit in with the rigid architecture. I do not call the *Lucrezia* panel a failure; rather a success, the architecture powerfully governing the whole picture, which otherwise would have been too confused by small moving figures. Still it gives me an impression of tyranny. Of the *St. Zenobius* panels, the one of the Baptism from the Mond Collection, now in the London National Gallery, shows in one side of the picture a view of a street, much foreshortened in drawing, which disturbs the general conception of the picture, and attracts your attention too forcibly. The straight lines of the frieze and stone steps running to a converging point have an unpleasant attraction. This inartistic accentuation explains why Botticelli's perspective appeals to mathematicians rather than to artists.

Moreover, I am inclined to go one step farther and express my doubt if Botticelli was really correct in his perspective. I confess that my knowledge of perspective is no more than that of a painter, and I feel that though Botticelli took pains to make his perspective correct, he might

very possibly have been led away, so to speak, from the geometrical diagram by his fine sense of decorative line. The school-works seem to show this with exaggeration. The tondo *Madonna with Six Angels and Young St. John* in the Borghese Gallery in Rome has an architectural background very badly drawn, the perspective treatment being oblique so as to conform with the circular composition. Many school-pieces which have been grouped under the name of 'Amico di Sandro' by Mr. Berenson show a strong preference for architectural background, drawn with accentuated foreshortening, of windows, corridors, and so on. The impression one gets from these backgrounds is rather that of a line composition, composed of straight lines laid on obliquely or diagonally, than pure perspective. Was not this a reflection on pupils of Botticelli's own idea, which is essentially artistic, and compels everything into the service of his linear art?

My disagreement with the mathematicians' view of Botticelli's perspective is based on my idea of his indifference to the objective study of Nature. There is a peculiarity in Botticelli's landscape, which throws light on the same characteristic from a different angle. He frequently imitated Flemish miniatures in his landscape.

There are many reasons, I think, which can account for this. The influence of Flemish painting on Florentine artists dates chiefly from the time when the great *Poltinari altar-piece* by Hugo van der Goes arrived at the Spedale S. M. Nuova. Botticelli's contemporaries, Domenico Ghirlandajo and Piero di Cosimo, learned much from it. It is strange that Botticelli was not influenced by this altar-piece, as might have been expected, there being strong affinity between his Gothic nature and the art of Van der Goes. Apparently the *Poltinari altar-piece* came to Florence in 1480, too late to influence Botticelli deeply, as his technique was by that time nearly settled, and he was entering on the most independent career. He did not possess a calm, controlled temperament, which could always profit by the progress of the world around him. In his student days, when he was not sure of himself, he was open to all influences, but this achieved, he shut himself up completely into his subjective world, and so his later career is strangely cut off from all the technical progress, which was so rich as the Quattrocento drew to its close.

But Botticelli's technical independence chiefly concerns his figure painting. In landscape, the case is somewhat different. Generally speaking, Florentine Art was almost entirely occupied with figures. There were very few real landscapes painted in the early part of the Quattrocento, and these few mostly represented piazzas, narrow streets, courtyards, or convent-gardens, in which Florentine life was chiefly carried on. The sunny, open-air character of Domenico Veneziano's landscapes is quite an exception, which may perhaps be explained by his Venetian extraction. In Florentine

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

landscapes straight lines of architecture, treated in perspective, usually predominated. The Florentine artists had little aptitude for real country-scenes, which but rarely present straight lines. In this respect Alesso Baldovinetti, especially in his admirable fresco in the courtyard of the church of SS. Annunziata, at Florence, stands apart from his contemporaries. Yet even in him the fusion of architecture with landscape was not sufficient: though each was beautiful in its own way, they still do not melt intimately into each other as in actual Nature. Objection may be taken that the clear air in Italy makes landscape appear very defined, and also that the Italian method of building, descending from the classic style, consists mainly of vertical and horizontal lines, and looks rigid in Nature. This may be some explanation, but not all. The main feature of landscape in any country is shadow, of which the proper perception alone can give the real effect of natural scenery. Sunny Italy did not cultivate the intimate feeling for Nature so much as did the shadowy North. It was during and after the Cinquecento, with its rich technique of chiaroscuro, that landscapes with real feeling were produced in Italy. Here I need scarcely mention the greatness of Leonardo, but I should like to draw attention to a masterpiece of Florentine landscape by a painter somewhat unexpected in landscape. I refer to the *Noli Me Tangere* of Andrea del Sarto in the Uffizi Gallery.

Fortunate was it for Botticelli to have come in contact with Antonio Pollajuolo, who, in the charming panel of *Apollo and Daphne* in the National Gallery, or in that of *Hercules and Nessus* in the Jarves Collection, New Haven, U.S.A., showed how sensitive he could be to the shadowy atmosphere of poetry in Nature. But Antonio was destined to accomplish little in this promising side of his rich genius, and all the landscapes completed by his brother Piero are very uninteresting, Piero being as topographical as Antonio was poetic.

What Botticelli desired was landscape near to the soul of Nature, not her outward appearance: Nature felt with sentiment rather than intellectually observed. Flemish landscape was the very thing he yearned for, although on the technical side his linear feeling prevented him from fully assimilating the Northern chiaroscuro. Indeed, Flemish landscape painters copied Nature as with a lover's care. Gothic buildings nestle in dark foliage, like the genius of the forest; human dwellings and the Kingdom of Nature are perfectly intimate with each other. Happily are the Northern landscapes styled 'Stimmungslandschaft', the landscape of mood, or 'paysage intime'.

And then, compared with the state of Italian landscape of Botticelli's day, the Northern school was much in advance in the representation of open-air Nature. One might well be surprised to find the perfect winter landscape on the right wing of the *Poltinari altar-piece* painted at the time

when Italian painters were still very arbitrary in their conception of country scenes. Flemish landscapes must have appealed to Botticelli, who, reluctant to study Nature itself, could well take them as his model. Of course, landscape in Flemish miniatures is not always beautiful, but Botticelli never considered landscape of great importance. Flemish miniatures must have sufficed to give him the materials for his own poetic imagination.

He began to imitate Flemish landscapes as early as the time when he painted the Berlin *St. Sebastian*, where in the distance you see Gothic castles beautifully represented, which shed a romantic feeling on the scene. In the Sistine fresco of the scene of the *Chastisement*, he had to fill a large area with landscape, and he put a Northern harbour in the distance. His knowledge of Gothic architecture remained a second-hand one, so that when he had to enlarge the Flemish miniatures to fit into the wide space of the wall, his ignorance of Gothic architecture soon betrayed itself, and he finished by painting a large group of fancy-buildings, full of Gothic and classic detail, put in at random for decorative purposes. This imitation of Gothic landscape Botticelli's pupils followed in an exaggerated manner, and some of them made it a principle to paint Gothic buildings in the background of their pictures. One of the most remarkable of the school-pieces of this sort is the tondo *Madonna* in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, which Dr. Oswald Sirèn gave as the typical example of what he called the 'Master of the Gothic Buildings', an artistic personality, whom he intended to reconstruct from Botticellesque pictures with similar backgrounds, such as the *Madonna and Child* in the Turin Gallery, another version of it in the Jarves Collection in New Haven, the *Madonna* in the Liechtenstein Gallery in Vienna, the tondo *Madonna* in the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris, and others. (*Burlington Magazine*, 1920, December, and the catalogue of the Jarves Collection, also written by Dr. Oswald Sirèn.) I cannot feel quite sure of seeing only one hand in the pictures with Gothic buildings, though I admit that some of them may be grouped together. I am more inclined to think that in Botticelli's bottega, where the direct study from Nature was not much encouraged, pupils copied Flemish landscapes, after the manner of their master.

After divesting Botticelli's landscapes of the praise frequently paid to them for their realistic quality, what is, after all, their value? There is no doubt about the peculiar charm in them. You can feel it, although realistically they are not very happy. I must endeavour to explain this elusive charm.

There were various changes in Botticelli's career, but generally speaking I think his landscape was in its external design a decorative setting for his figures, and in its inward feeling a poetic atmosphere to make his dreams live. Perhaps I may be allowed to call it a decorative-spiritual landscape in contrast to the realistic landscape.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

times aimed at real landscape, but his vivid imagination always absorbed it and made it his own. It is truer to Botticelli's art to lay stress on his subjectivity and not to worry so much about topographical or historical references.

Look at the 'green sea' in the *Calunnia*. It is anything but true. You cannot detect even the difference, which you never fail to see in Nature, between sea and the grassy plain, although the sea sometimes looks very green and the grasses very blue. But how beautiful is this unnatural sea, and what else matters? You look at the colour and are intoxicated with its mysterious charm. That is all that is needed. Only the most prosaic of souls would, after careful examination, decide that, after all, it is the sea, and then begin slowly to appreciate it because it is the sea, and the very imagination of the sea is pleasant.

It is but natural that Botticelli was always more at ease in small panels, being little troubled by realistic elaboration, necessary to large works. Is not the predella of the *Madonna Enthroned with St. Barnabas and Other Saints* the pure crystallization of his fancy? The violet and green distance in the panel of *St. Augustine and the Infant Christ* is a superb piece of artistic atmosphere, worthy of enveloping the most beautiful of imaginative figures. In the no less superb predella of the *Coronation of the Virgin*, St. John sits writing the Book of Revelation in a curious place, the seashore of the Island of Patmos, according to the legend. There is little sense of space indicated in the picture, or rather too much, for you cannot distinguish distance. But the necessary thing is that the Saint is entirely in his right element and can meditate there for ever, in a beautiful pose. This is Botticelli's landscape in its essence: an artistic atmosphere, an imaginary world suitable for its delicate creatures, wherein to live beautiful lives and to dance silent dances.

In some of his late pictures landscape appears, if seen by itself, somewhat coarse, and critics too impulsively attribute them to his pupils. Botticelli was never omnipotent. Rather the contrary, he was a somewhat ill-balanced genius. Accustomed to treat landscape in a subordinate manner, subservient to his human interest, no wonder if his broad manner in an uninspired moment should become hardened into conventionality, dry, even coarse. This tendency towards conventionality always existed in him. We may learn the rise and decline of his art by comparing three pictures with similar landscapes: the *Pallas and the Centaur*, the *Birth of Venus*, and the *Coronation of the Virgin*.

In all the three pictures the landscape is strictly a background, its principal business being to enhance the beauty of the figures. So all three landscapes are painted in the same broad manner, and do not attract particular attention. But behind this similarity in general appearance, how different they are in feeling! In the three pictures is a gradual change,

which represented three different periods: first the crescendo, the climax, then, alas, the decrescendo of Botticelli's art. When he painted *Pallas and the Centaur* towards the end of the 'seventies, he was still under the strong influence of realism, and so, although on this occasion he tried to throw those allegorical figures into the highest relief by treating landscape in as broad a manner as possible, yet the landscape, in spite of its broadness, retained both severity and truth. The impression of distance is unmistakable: the rocks are rugged, the grasses true in the suggestion of thin growth on the beach. Although the broad treatment is excessive and appears incongruous compared with the careful manner of early years, yet it is a kind of shorthand suggestion of the strong sense of Nature, intended not to disturb the concentration of the main figures, and this suggestion was really the starting-point of the decorative manner, which became more pronounced as the years went on. When we come to the *Birth of Venus* the case is just the reverse. It became an entirely poetic world; the suggestion of a real sea-beach is now remote from the painter's motive, which seems to have been devoted from the first to the invocation of a beautiful atmosphere in which to play a decorative drama. From under the Grace's feet just one violet suggestively shoots up, and it is so prettily designed and is in such artistic isolation, that you would be little astonished to see it in a Persian miniature. The whole is broadly treated in the manner of *Pallas and the Centaur*, but here the decorative effect is primarily considered, instead of the suggestion of reality. Considered in the latter sense, the landscape is anything but satisfactory, the brushwork is as arbitrary as beautiful. Suitability is the justification of the broad manner, which you can even describe as weak, if realistically considered. In the *Birth of Venus*, Botticelli was at the very height of his art, and his beautiful sensuousness was in full bloom. Even the most incorrigible of realists would willingly forget the realistic anomalies in the picture, and be enchanted by the sweetness of melodies murmuring from strange waves, grasses, orange-trees, decorative distance, which are false as can be and therefore the more beautiful. By the time Botticelli came to the *Coronation of the Virgin* it is touching to see how he lost all those charms, which alone sustained his realistic weakness. In *Pallas and the Centaur* the broad manner was employed for suggesting a real scene. In the *Birth of Venus* it was the natural outcome of his exquisite sense of decoration and poetry: in the *Coronation* the landscape merely functions in filling up the empty corners, to complete the picture. At the time Botticelli painted the picture of the *Coronation* he had fallen into mannerisms of technique deprived of fresh inspirations, either from Nature or from decorative fancies. Under these circumstances, was not the rigidity of the *Coronation* the natural end to which his conception of landscape was ever pointing, and where it arrived at last? From its stiffness alone I cannot, therefore, conclude that a pupil completed the

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

picture. While deploring the inferior execution in the *Coronation* landscape, I must at least do justice to its adapted subservience to the scheme of the picture. The Gothic spire-like mountain, curiously shaped as an imaginative mountain in Chinese landscape, is happy, forming one of the many unconscious contrivances for guiding the eye upward to where the heavenly event is taking place.

From the subordinate position which landscape occupied in Botticelli's art, it does not necessarily follow that he was not a good landscapist. Rather the contrary. As his main attention was not particularly directed to it, all the more spontaneously his sensitiveness appeared in unimportant landscapes with, as it were, the unexpected lustre of an Oriental pearl. His contribution is small, but shines preciously in the long line of European landscapes, usually so large, so real, and so tedious. I have already characterized Botticelli's landscapes as 'decorative-spiritual', meaning thereby the decorative setting which evokes a spiritual atmosphere. I must explain it now more concretely, with fitting examples.

I can think of no better way than by taking examples from the old Yamato-Ye and the Kōrin Schools of Japanese painting. I do not hesitate to call those two schools the greatest triumph of what I term the decorative-spiritual.

Though having character common to all branches of Oriental Art, Japanese Art is specially remarkable for its delicate decorative style in representing natural objects. I say 'delicate' because, in a purely decorative sense, the Semite, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Arabians were more pronounced in their broad, almost gross methods of geometrical arrangement. From them the Japanese are different in that they remain naturalistic to the very end, only translating their love of Nature into strangely pictorial design. The Japanese can never do wholly without the love of Nature: they never produced entirely geometrical and abstract patterns. They hang on Nature, caress her, and imperceptibly interpret her into language human and luxuriously decorative. In this sense the old Yamato-Ye School, flourishing in the twelfth century, is the finest school of Japanese painting, which great Kōyetsu and Kōrin revived from some three hundred years ago, filling the old form with modern ideas. The main motive of all these painters was the desire for Nature. But their decorative sense was too delicately developed to copy her as she is. They were really the artists of the land of lacquer, porcelain and silk. And then Nature herself is decorative in Japan. Frequently she decks herself in floral designs: cherry-blossom covers the whole country in spring like a galaxy of white stars, relieved against the deep green of semi-tropical vegetation; wistaria blooms a yard long hang from the pine-trees in early summer, making the whole wood a decorative arabesque of white, violet, and green. And large blood-red camellias look out of shadowy foliage of the valley: they are more

wonderful than the embroidered shawls of Spain. And as the fields turn yellow in autumn, the sudden burst of chrysanthemums, madly capricious in form and colour, surprise you like some magic kaleidoscope. Is it because Nature there takes on such decorative form that Japanese artists are designers rather than painters? In Japanese Art Nature speaks in the language of poetry. She is selected, transformed, and presented by the decorative sense of the artist. The result is that a different Nature is evoked out of artificial patterns. This is what I call the decorative-spiritual landscape.

There is an intimate connection between this Japanese sentiment and the Italian Quattrocento. In recent years there has been no lack of critics who emphasize the closeness of æsthetic conceptions between Sienese Art and that of the Far East. Herein I am doubtful and will discuss it later on. I think the Art of Japan more readily claims Piero della Francesca and Masolino da Panicale as kin. In considering decorative-spiritual landscape I will give examples from the Florentine Quattrocento, and then return to the main subject of Botticelli.

We have already seen that the leading spirit of the Quattrocento was the longing for Nature. In the Trecento, man became aware of the existence of Mother Earth, but the desire for her had not yet definitely awakened. The late Quattrocento saw a fully awakened consciousness of Nature, which observed her in her very reality. Between the Trecento and the late Quattrocento, the first dawn, innocent but obscure, and the full, bright light of day, bright but prosaic, was that most hopeful and beautiful forenoon, half day, half night, the early Quattrocento, when men longed for Nature and shyly attempted to trace her beauty with simple pathos and artlessness. This was just the feeling for Nature with which Japanese artists ever lived, which they could not outlive. The Italian Quattrocento was soon to be absorbed by the showy Cinquecento: all the more pathetic appears the fresh and fleeting moment of morning. Similar spirits produce similar results, and European Art never created landscape so near to Oriental ideals as in this short time.

It is very curious to note that Botticelli's landscape bears little resemblance to that of Fra Filippo. Fra Filippo painted landscape which looks unnatural as a whole, while it consists of details which are wonderful in their realistic sense. This seems to show that he was an artist of the Quattrocento, because of his undeveloped technique, but his true nature was so realistic as to belong rather to the Cinquecento. In Botticelli it was just the reverse.

Botticelli was born in time to acquire the advanced technique of the late Quattrocento, when the Pollajuoli and others were leading towards Cinquecento Art. His true nature, however, had little sympathy with the new tendency, so that what I call the decorative in his landscape seems to have

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

come, not as the style of the time, but chiefly from his own temperament, consonant with it. Fra Filippo, in spite of his nature, was born too early to achieve true realism. Botticelli remained a decorative artist, independent of the realistic progress of the age. There was an impassable barrier between the two, in spite of many kindred traits, which prevented Botticelli from learning much from Fra Filippo in landscape. When Botticelli was young, he tried hard to study Fra Filippo. This is shown by the *Madonna and Child* now in the Schlichting Collection of the Louvre, which Prof. A. Venturi proved as being copied from Fra Filippo's picture at Munich. And yet I can think of only few pictures by Botticelli where the landscape really reminds me of Fra Filippo. The small *Judith* in the Uffizi is one. In this picture Botticelli used Fra Filippo's manner of painting trees and grasses, which, though very simple in itself, was the manner suited to further realistic elaboration. Botticelli produced a very natural landscape, which Fra Filippo foresaw, but could not accomplish, which Botticelli was able to attain, but not inclined to repeat.

The nearest master to Botticelli in landscape is Alesso Baldovinetti. I do not mean that Botticelli obtained his landscape from this master of the beautiful fresco in the courtyard of the church of SS. Annunziata in Florence. I mean the general sentiment of landscape, which is common to Baldovinetti and Botticelli. If I were to seek for what I call the decorative-spiritual landscape in Europe, I would give the Annunziata fresco of Baldovinetti as one of the best examples.

I am not quite clear how much Baldovinetti owed his landscape to Domenico Veneziano, his master, or to Piero della Francesca, his fellow-student. Certainly there is something common in all three, which shows itself most conspicuously in colour, Domenico's bright cobalt blue and carnation pink tending in Baldovinetti to grey, and these two combining in the almost 'plein air' colour-scheme of Piero della Francesca. And more than that, there is special kinship in the decorative conception of natural scenery between Piero and Alesso, while in this respect Domenico, though of an earlier generation, betraying, perhaps, his Venetian origin, is far more naturalistic. Piero was a great mathematician, and in his calm and careful contemplation of Nature he realized the scientific desire of the time. It would appear, however, that his brain was in advance of his vision, and, apart from his scientific investigation of proportion and perspective, he still saw Nature with the eye of a primitive, and painted the loveliest of stage-sceneries, full of tranquil, antique atmosphere, suited to the dumb show of his silent figures. Baldovinetti advanced towards Nature remarkably, but he too could not get away from stage scenery. The Annunziata fresco is an artistic theatre, a special world, wherein grasses spread Persian tapestry on the earth. In Art I long for such an artistic land, where truth and myth live together.

PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR
(Florence, Uffizi Gallery)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Botticelli was the last of the artists who could establish such a land of Art. What makes him so attractive is that he painted impossible things, but made you believe them by the sheer force of beauty. In the *Coronation* predella the beautiful sea is higher than the land, but it does not overflow. Only in Botticelli's world and in the land of Kōrin are waves melodious in pattern, entrancing you with a linear seduction more irresistible than the songs of the sirens. The waves in the *Birth of Venus* are as unreal as can be. In Nature they appear as a series of angles pointing upwards, as is excellently painted, for instance, by Giovanni Bellini. Botticelli painted them upside down. They are so odd, and so strangely effective. The whole sea of this painted world is delightful in laughing movement. Your spirit soars over it and is caught and carried up and down on these naughty, impossible waves. In the predella of the *Madonna enthroned with S. Barnabas and other Saints*, Christ disguised as a boy is dipping his spoon into a pool in front of St. Augustine. Beautiful concentric circles widen in the water and sing in exquisite line. The tondo *Madonna* of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana at Milan, which is a very late work and shows the weakness of the painter, who was growing old, is, however, superb in its Japanesque landscape. You can almost imagine the hills, the drowsy undulations near Kyoto in a hazy twilight of spring, when Nature herself becomes so picturesque that you actually feel it is she who imitates Art, not Art that imitates her.

I would like here to compare this landscape of the Ambrosiana tondo with a similar one in the early *Madonna and Child* in the Gardner Collection in Boston. The setting is very alike in the two pictures: a river winds between hills, but how different in conception and in feeling! They are both extremely interesting. In the Ambrosiana picture the landscape is broadly thrown in to evoke a poetic distance, while in the Gardner one a sound, realistic meaning is aimed at. In the latter, which is an early masterpiece, the painter had not yet the bold and swift brushwork of his later period: he imitated real hills with the scrupulousness of a student. All the same, the style of landscape was already his own. Perhaps it was painted at a happy moment, when from under his realistic intention the true preference of his artistic nature showed itself. And then what was the result? However much I admire the Ambrosiana tondo for the freedom of its landscape, I feel something greater and more profound in the landscape of the Gardner *Madonna*. I must again turn to that fundamental problem in plastic art: the importance of realism in poetic landscape.

Why are the realistic and the poetic understood to be so antagonistic? They are only so in narrow minds. Unfortunately, we are most of us narrow-minded. But a great soul can be born which combines the two qualities, producing a work in which realism sustains the poetic feeling and poetry permeates the realistic form. It was given to Leonardo da Vinci to combine the two. Although the comparison is weak, we may compare

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

him with Piero di Cosimo to recognize his greatness, the utmost permitted to man. Leonardo was never a pure realist: he had an imaginative temperament, but it harmonized and was soundly supported by his great intellect, so that he might be taken as great in any of these capacities, poetic or real, indeed as Nature herself is. Piero di Cosimo also possessed both, but his unruly caprice drove him one way, and his realism, which he learned from Leonardo and Hugo van der Goes, wandered another. He is as grotesque and discordant as Leonardo is harmonious and great.

Oh, the greatness of the ancient Chinese paintings! Why are they so great? I shall never forget the divine calm which enveloped my soul when I saw, some years ago, the snow-landscape kakemono by Liang K'ai, which formerly belonged to the Akaboshi Collection at Tokio. The greatness of the ancient Chinese paintings, especially of the almost divine landscapists of the Sung and the Yuan Dynasties, lies, so to speak, in the greatness of Nature herself. Those artists gazed into Nature, accepting all as it actually was. You are taken by them deep into the heart of Nature, you are immersed in her very soul. Compared with them, Japanese paintings, lovely as flowers, beautiful as stars, are small. Japanese paintings are Nature's selected jewels, while the Chinese are the whole universe.

Thinking, on the one hand, of the fine sensitiveness of Botticelli's genius, and on the other of his realistic limitations, recognizing at the same time that the final greatness in Art is only to be reached through the perfect combination of the two qualities, I cannot help deploring the loss of a greater Art which must have been produced had Botticelli turned more earnestly to Nature. This is not a vain hope for the impossible. I think I have grounds for my belief.

In Botticelli's pictures you sometimes come across an almost Arcadian sentiment of Nature, which promised a hopeful, but, alas, unfulfilled future for him. Among the three Sistine frescoes, why is the one representing young Moses in the land of Midian so superior to the others? Chiefly because this subject allowed the painter a freer treatment in idyllic scenes. Here he was not much encumbered with historical references. He could himself run off in the person of the youthful Moses into that wild world, where Man and Nature live together. The feeling of a child of Nature, who felt a general current of life circulating through the whole universe, was the keynote of Botticelli's art at its prime, as in the *Birth of Venus* and in the *Primavera*. It is to be deplored that this idyllic side remained without a chance for developing into simple Nature-poems. How entirely happy he was in painting the young Moses giving water to the sheep of Reuel and Jethro before these loveliest of maidens! If he had not been forced by the subject to illustrate the whole story, from Moses killing the Egyptian till his return, what a simple and innocent idyll he could have made of the fresco! In the *Calunnia*, which is really a wreck of Botticelli's

art from the realistic point of view, there are true gems of idyllic scenes as decorations on the wall; for instance, the bucolic bas-relief on the extreme right, in which a shepherd is looking at the beautiful body of a sleeping nymph. There is a wood, a sea beyond; and on the sea a ship with a large sail; the whole scene might be by some great Venetian landscapist. In the Dante Drawings, Botticelli generally endeavoured to be a faithful commentator, closely following the text. So the work as a whole is heavy with historical and religious allusions, which is detrimental to its artistic value. Then he suddenly becomes free, and appears as a poet of Nature, as in the illustration to Canto XXVIII of the *Purgatorio:*

Now eager to search out through all its maze
The living green of the divine forest,
Which to my eyes tempered the new sun's rays,
I came down from the bank upon that quest,
Taking the plain by slow and slow degrees
On ground that gave sweet smells where the foot prest.
Gentle air, harbouring no inconstancies
Within its motion, smote upon my brow
With no more violence than a gracious breeze;
And trembling to the touch of it, each bough
Was bending all its foliage toward that side
Where the Holy Mount casteth its first shadow,
Yet not so far from upright was blown wide
But that the small birds on the topmost spray
All their sweet art continually still plied,
And from a full throat singing loud and gay
Welcomed the first thrills in the leaves, that bore
A burden to the descant of their lay,
Such as swells up along Ravenna's shore
From branch to branch of the pine-forest blown,
When Aeolus has loosed Sirocco's roar.
Already my slow steps had borne me on
So far within that immemorial wood
That I could no more see whence I had gone;
And lo! a stream that stole from where I stood;
And at the left the ripple in its train
Moved on the bank the grasses where it flowed.
All waters here that are most pure from stain
Would qualified with some immixture seem
Compared with this, which veils not the least grain,
Altho' so dark, dark goes the gliding stream

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Under the eternal shadow, that hides fast
For ever there the sun's and the moon's beam.
With my feet halting, with my eyes I passed
That brook, for the regaling of my sight
With the fresh blossoms in their fair contrast.
And then appeared (as in a sudden light
Something appears which from astonishment
Puts suddenly all other thoughts to flight)
A lady who all alone and singing went
And as she sang plucked flowers that numberless
About her path made colour and sweet scent.
I pray thee, gentle Lady, if, as I guess,
Thou warm'st thyself from Love's most radiant sphere—
For looks are wont to be the heart's witness—
I pray thee toward this water to draw near
So far (said I to her), while thou dost sing,
That with my understanding I may hear.
Thou puttest me in remembrance of what thing
Proserpine was, and where, when mischance
Her mother lost her, and she lost the spring.
Even as a lady turns round in the dance
With feet close to each other and to the ground
And hardly foot beyond foot doth advance,
Toward me with maiden mien she turned her round
Upon the floor of flowers yellow and red,
Holding the while her modest eyes earth-bound.
My supplication then she comforted,
So near approaching, that her song divine
Reached me with meaning to the music wed.
Soon as she came to where the grasses line
The fair stream's bank and stand wet in its wave,
She accorded me to lift her eyes to mine.

(Translated by LAURENCE BINYON.)

In this scene Botticelli was at his happiest.

This idyllic side of Botticelli which, alas, was hidden even from himself, is like some precious gem shining out from his pictures, usually encumbered by allegorical allusions. When I think of these promising signs of Botticelli's idyllism, and then of the comparative inferiority of his work in this line, for instance, of the *Mars and Venus* of the National Gallery somewhat unfavourably compared with Piero di Cosimo's *Death of Procris* in the same gallery, or Piero's *Mars and Venus* in Berlin, I become sad to

think that Botticelli, infinitely greater in all respects, should not have been better. Botticelli painted the *Mars and Venus* late in the 'eighties, about 1486, and at that time his art was deteriorating into a mannerism, being divorced from that freedom of technique which comes only from direct contact with Nature. This mannerism, broad and easy, is sufficient for decorative purposes, not perhaps unsuited for this picture, which was designed for a panel of a bed, but considered as a work of art, representing a breezy world, where Nature enjoys herself, it lacks essential freshness and fine feeling. In the right-hand corner, above the head of the sleeping Mars, wasps are flying out of their nest in a tree trunk. The painter must have resorted to Nature to paint the winged insects. They are lovingly observed. They mark just one spot, painted with freshness, which makes me reconstruct in imagination the splendour of the picture as it might have been painted in Botticelli's younger days, when he worked in close connection with Mother Nature.

In the upper corner on the left hand of the fresco, of the *Life of the Young Moses*, in the Sistine Chapel, is a most beautiful landscape in which God appears in the burning bush to the prophet, who kneels down and worships. It is a lovely Nature picture, fresh from a real open-air inspiration. Some twenty years after, Botticelli remembered the scene and reproduced it in a small panel, *The Agony in the Garden*, now in the Royal Chapel at Granada. But the old inspiration is gone. The small panel is great in another sense, in mysticism. Yet, one cannot help missing in it the cool, free-moving open air, which had once filled Botticelli the lover of Nature.

Am I complaining too much of what is *not* in Botticelli? No, I am complaining of what *is* in Botticelli, which might have been infinitely more, but for circumstances. Let us close this study of his landscape with an admiration for a marvel, done apparently without special intention, therefore all the more spontaneously, a marvel in the whole field of European painting. Who would believe that the peacock on the wall on the right-hand side in the famous *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi Gallery was not painted by a great Chinese painter of the Sung dynasty? By the Emperor Hui Tsung himself? He once painted a dove on a branch of a peach-tree, and it ruled the whole universe, more surely than did the Emperor himself the whole vast country of the East. The true artist's eye looked at a mere bird, but his soul spoke with the Soul of the World. Botticelli's peacock is the Soul of the World; he saw it, he felt it, alas, only for a moment.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

PART II

THE SENSUOUS BOTTICELLI

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

CHAPTER V. BOTTICELLI'S TREATMENT OF FLOWERS · APPRECIATION OF FLOWERS · FLOWER-PAINTERS OF THE QUATTROCENTO · REALISTIC FLOWERS · BOTTICELLI'S AND GHIRLANDAJO'S FLOWERS COMPARED · DECORATIVE FLOWERS · BOTTICELLI AND FRA ANGELICO · FLOWERS OF THE JAPANESE PAINTERS: YAMATO-YE AND KŌRIN SCHOOLS · SENSUOUS FLOWERS · FRA FILIPPO LIPPI'S FLOWERS · UTAMARO'S FLOWERS. SENSITIVE FLOWERS · FLOWERS IN BUDDHISTIC PAINTINGS · ORIENTAL INFLUENCES IN FLOWER PAINTING IN ITALY

BROADLY speaking, we have hitherto been studying Botticelli in the light of realism. We have seen that his artistic career began with a primitive love of Nature, and that he was then brought up in the most advanced realism of the Quattrocento. Before long, however, his true nature, sensuous and mystic, appeared, first timidly from unsuspected corners, then more and more boldly, till it transformed his art into an instrument suited only to his peculiar temperament. In tracing his development, it is extremely interesting and important to seek in his realistic pursuits for those early buds of his true art, which were before long to burst out into large mysterious flowers. Botticelli's supersensuous nature, which, in my view, forms the main source of his rare artistic genius, showed itself, even while his youth was occupied above all with realism in the treatment of natural objects, for the appreciation of which a sensuous activity played a large part.

Who would not associate Botticelli with flowers? He is the very genius of old Fiorenza, City of Flowers, which each spring fills with flowers variegated as the rainbow. Flowers are the very symbols of the sensuous life of Nature, which loves and is happy in them: she gathers all the sweet senses of life into flowers. Who would not love them? Young girls caress them, and no creature in Nature is so full of sensuousness, though it be latent and beautiful, as a young maiden. She enjoys flowers with all the feelings of her life. Our appreciation of flowers is mainly sensuous, and artists love them more or less in proportion to their sensuous nature. Botticelli's love of flowers and the pathetic sympathy with which he entered into the life of those lovely things of the earth initiates us into the essence of his genius.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

It is only we moderns, alas so prone to introspection, who see psychology in our love of flowers; Botticelli must have loved them simply, and painted them with no other conscious motive than the desire to represent their beautiful forms. All the same, we find in his flowers strangely delicate deviations from their natural forms and colours, and we cannot understand them, save by reference to the sensuous psychology of the painter.

Love engenders true desire to know, and it is wonderful how Botticelli, with his essential indifference to the external appearance of Nature, understood flowers. In the Quattrocento the representation of flowers in Art made rapid progress with him.

If you examine flowers as represented in Quattrocento painting, you will notice with surprise how neglected they were in this most realistic of ages. The energy of artists was then too exclusively absorbed by the anatomy of man and beast, and by perspective of architectural backgrounds. On the comparatively rare occasions when open fields were represented, flowers were chiefly painted in primitive form, usually derived from floral designs in applied art. This primitive form has suggestion and charm, which is very effective for decoration; still the fact remains that flowers were not loved and studied for themselves. Paolo Uccello's flowers are extremely interesting for their bold style, surprising for its total independence of natural beauty. This excellent student of perspective obviously paid little attention to flowers. A peculiar study of flower-painting in Florence began with Alesso Baldovinetti. As I have already said, he received an extraordinary insight into the life of Nature from Domenico Veneziano, and the fresco of the Church of SS. Annunziata in Florence surprises us with its open air freshness, least expected in painters of his time. The green convolvulus creeping up the stone wall is as beautiful as true. Still, with all this advance in the study of detail, Baldovinetti remained in the main a decorative designer. He composed plants and flowers according to a decorative law, and wove floral patterns as delicate as those in Persian carpets. His merit lay in pouring new feeling into old forms; old forms had to disappear, but the time was not yet come.

There was a phase in the Art of Florence which was especially remarkable for its preoccupation with flowers: the so-called monastic school, though there was no such definite school, of Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi. They are both very remarkable for their flowers and for their beauty of feminine form.

Fra Angelico lived from 1387 to 1455, some ten years senior to Paolo Uccello, and yet it is simply astonishing to see natural feeling so advanced in him. Fra Angelico is usually admired for his piety; as an appreciation of his art in general, this is far from being sufficient. Considered in the development of Florentine Art, such appreciation of him is almost wrong, unless his wonderful advance in the feeling for Nature be also emphasized.

While Paolo Uccello and other professional painters were more engaged in theoretical experiments of perspective and anatomy, in practice, however, still remaining archaic and formal, this happy priest-painter, with nothing but a genuine love of Art and a keen artistic instinct, unencumbered by Art theories, went far in advance in the true approach to Nature. You must wait for the nineteenth century for another picture so direct from Nature as the grassy field, fresh with morning dew, in the fresco of the *Noli Me Tangere* in San Marco.

Why were flowers so dear to those monastic painters? One reason may be sought for in their relation, through Don Lorenzo Monaco, with Sienese painting, that most feminist school of Italian painting, which, with Ambrogio Lorenzetti at its head, used to adorn charming angels and female saints with wreaths of flowers. But apart from this influence, more important is it to understand that monks, compelled to the monastic life, intended to exclude or minimize any kind of sensuous enjoyment, were curiously sensuous in their psychology; and their desires had in some way to be fulfilled. Monks have to a certain extent the beautiful sensuousness of maidens: monasteries in Italy are full of flowers. Who can deny that those chaste brothers became intoxicated with the forbidden pleasures of the senses, scenting heavy fragrance, and contemplating the most beautiful of all earthly colours? This is true, although it sounds extravagant, and explains the strangely sensuous nature of Art produced by those pious souls. We may criticize Fra Filippo on account of his free life, but still I feel that his 'appetito della bellezza' was emphasized by his being, if only nominally, a monk, to whom beauty was accompanied by the desire for 'forbidden fruits'. Why are Fra Angelico's Madonnas and angels so amorously dreamy and so entrancingly beautiful, all the more so because of their innocence? Was it not that he put all his secret yearning for the feminine into his heavenly figures? He filled every little bit of ground with flowers, sparkling like stars, as if he was ever greedy for more beauty.

The knowledge born of love is simply wonderful in its penetration, although it is uneven and lacks order. I have already mentioned the admirable freshness of Nature in the fresco of the *Noli Me Tangere*. Still more intimate knowledge of the floral world is displayed by Fra Angelico in his superb *Annunciation* in the Prado at Madrid. In the picture the courtyard opens on to the Garden of Eden, from which Adam and Eve are being driven out. Well may they be sad at leaving for ever such a garden, where blue spring is at its full. Flowers sparkle from every corner. There is a lilac-tree in full bloom, so natural and surprising at this early period. It is, however, a rare exception. Fra Angelico could never again reach so high an inspiration. He loved flowers, and so, generally speaking, was satisfied with his presentment of them as floral designs of a spiritual beauty. In this sense his attitude toward flowers is similar to that of

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Botticelli's, decorative rather than anything else. Botticelli, born some thirty years after Fra Angelico, had naturally a much wider realistic horizon, but they were both guided primarily by the decorative instinct for beauty.

By comparing Fra Angelico with another great monastic painter, Fra Filippo Lippi, who was equally fond of flowers, we may clearly see the pattern-like conception of flowers by Fra Angelico in strong contrast with the interpretation by the other, which is sombrely realistic and least pattern-like. Fra Filippo is never so near to Fra Angelico, under whom he must have studied, as in the beautiful tondo *Adoration of the Magi* in Sir Herbert Cook's collection at Richmond. The ground is, as is usual with both the masters, scattered with flowers, but here they are entirely of Fra Angelico's type. Fra Filippo never again painted them in a style so geometrical. Fra Angelico's flowers were derived originally from the technique of miniature painting, where they were, so to speak, in geometrical arrangement, adapted for filling small spaces. Thus his style is more adapted for smaller panels, as those in San Marco representing the Life of Jesus or of the saints. In such small panels those star-like flowers, together with those conventional palms, cypresses and other trees so botanically impossible, remained without interfering much with our sense of Nature. Fra Filippo's flowers are flowers far more naturalistic in intention. Flowers are born in him, not as a development of the primitive ones of old masters, but independently from that wonderfully modern sense of Nature which he possessed.

True, flowers are designs by the artist Nature. They are themselves geometrically arranged as are crystals, and so, if they are naturally understood, they also show geometrical design. In this sense, I cannot deny that Fra Filippo painted star-like patterns of flowers, as may be seen in the foreground of his *Adoration of the Child* in the Berlin Museum. But still I feel the realistic character in them. They were painted for the main interest of the actual flowers, so that floral design was the result, not the chief intention. Besides, we must remember that the Berlin *Adoration of the Child* was the picture in which the painter attempted unusual finish and perfection, worthy of serving as the altar-piece of so precious a chapel as that of the Riccardi Palace, with its frescoes of tapestry-like finish by Benozzo Gozzoli. Technically considered, high finish in tempera meant precision of detail, and Fra Filippo, who used to paint flowers and leaves in a rather blurred way as the result of his extremely modern view of Nature, had on this occasion to paint with a definition unusual to him. That means that he went beyond his actual perception, and had to fall back into something like an old conventional pattern. In most of his pictures he is conspicuous for flowers and vegetation in an undefined, almost tonal representation, consisting of dotted brushwork, which means little in itself, but, seen from a certain distance, creates the soft, liquid

MADONNA DEL MAGNIFICAT
(Florence, Uffizi Gallery)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

elasticity of vegetable life. It is as if this monastic brother, so full of sensuous appreciation, but at the same time deeply imbued with an advanced view of Nature, was not content, as Fra Angelico, to scatter variegated stars on a green ground, and desiring something more directly appealing to his senses, tactile rather than merely visual, ended in giving a sensuous suggestion of flowers and not a definite pattern of stars.

In considering Botticelli among these flower-painters of the Florentine Quattrocento, the first thing we are impressed by is the wonderful advance he made in botanical knowledge. I am always struck by his profound knowledge of the wild flowers with which he embroidered the foreground of the *Primavera* in a manner so incomparably superior to that of any other painter of the time, that I am strongly tempted to seek a solution for this remarkable advance in some external source. The only flowers comparable to them in Florence are those of Hugo van der Goes in his *Poltinari altar-piece*, which came to the City of Flowers in 1480. When I compare the irises, one from the right-hand corner of the *Primavera* and the other from the central part of the Poltinari *Nativity*, they present such a resemblance to each other that I can almost imagine a clever historian dating the *Primavera* to the year after the arrival of the masterpiece of the great Northern master. But I refrain from doing so, as the irises on the bank of the Arno flower forth each spring with infinitely greater beauty than any painted ones, not excepting those from the brush of Hugo van der Goes, and there is no reason why Botticelli, with his sensitive eyes, should not have learned more from these real flowers. From this remarkable resemblance between Botticelli and Hugo van der Goes, let us learn as important that Botticelli in the Quattrocento made such a rapid progress in the knowledge of flowers that he stood quite apart from his predecessors and contemporaries and came very near to one of the best Gothic painters, whose technical speciality lay in the individualistic representation of Nature.

Indeed, the foreground of the *Primavera* is a marvel for all lovers of flowers, a treasury where they can detect rare gems sparkling unexpectedly from every corner. These flowers are not so formless as those of Fra Filippo, but have their smoothness and life: they are not such defined patterns as those of Fra Angelico, but retain their star-like brilliance. Moreover, they are so rationally constructed that you would never doubt their beautiful existence.

But I would ask, are the flowers in the *Primavera* real flowers? Do you admire them as you do the wonderfully real flowers of Leonardo da Vinci? Conte Gamba, in a short but good essay on Botticelli in Thieme-Becker's *Allgemeine Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, thinks that the flowers of the *Primavera* serve 'auch als Zeugnis für die erstaunliche Vollkommenheit der damaligen Naturkenntnis, da der Künstler jedes bescheidene Blümlein,

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

the Virgin of the Ascension in the Parma Gallery the same design is followed. It is coarsely imitated and makes us see the weakness hidden in the original. The orange-trees in the *Birth of Venus* are suited to the composition, but suited in the sense of stage scenery. Botticelli seems to have been unusually inspired when he painted the *Birth of Venus*, and that inspiration alone created a masterpiece in spite of weakness in detail. When not so inspired, he, in his late years, produced works which, though beautiful among the average works of his time, must be called ruins compared with the high excellence once attained.

I wish particularly to allude to the famous *Madonna enthroned with two St. Johns* in the Berlin Museum. In this work, Botticelli was extremely careful in his treatment of plants. They are excellent in conception, but how inferior in execution! Here he was literally following texts from the Bible, which he wrote in fragments of scrolls and put in various parts of the picture. (*Horne*, pp. 137–8.) With the exception of the lilies, the texts were taken 'from the rendering in the Vulgate of a passage in the 24th chapter of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach, in which Wisdom praises herself: I came out of the Most High.... And I took root in an honourable people, even in the portion of the Lord's inheritance. I am exalted like a cedar in Livanus, and as a cypress tree upon Mount Siam. I was exalted like a palm tree in Cades, and as a rose plant in Jericho, as a fair olive in the fields and grew up as a plane-tree near to the water by the way sides.' Botticelli attempted a pictorial translation of the text as faithfully as possible, and filled the background with all the plants mentioned, roses, olives, citrons, mistaking the 'cedrus' (cedar) for the Italian 'cedro', citron or lemon, palm-trees, and finally the ilex, as the plane-tree, *Platanus Orientalis*, was unknown in Tuscany in the fifteenth century. By the time he painted this picture, he came to think more of the spiritual significance of Art than its outward appearance, and endeavoured, as his principal aim, to give as clear a representation of those symbolic trees as possible. I do not say that he was unsuccessful, for you can distinguish the character of the trees. Nevertheless, how uninteresting they are! It is true that the whole composition is beautiful. The idea of using allegorical trees as green recesses for saints is very happy. They have a decorative effect from a distance, relieving the figures against the dark green of the foliage. Closely examined, however, the picture reveals that these excellent motives were treated with little of the fine feeling worthy of the painter of the *Primavera*. The character of the trees is grasped sufficiently for elucidating the text, but with little of the silent and sensitive plant life which he once felt. Did not this broad, unsensitive skill come to him as a result of his repeated ornamentalism, divorced from the direct contact with Nature? The happiest of the trees is the palm, because it was woven into a recess, such as is carried about in Florence on Palm Sunday,

and so with impunity could be treated with decorative precision. Your attention is absorbed by the geometrical network, and you pay little heed to the mechanical hardness of the master's brushwork. Did not this attempt at general decorative impression cause the gradual loss of Botticelli's extreme subtlety in feeling tiny beauties in Nature? That his intention might have been to represent the trees with a biblical severity cannot stand as an objection to my conclusion, for the very same hardness of feeling and brushwork is shown in the wild flowers and grasses on the ground, which at one time he treated so tenderly. They are here represented as stereotyped as the sharp-edged grasses of Cosimo Roselli. It is sad to see this from the hand of the painter of the *Primavera*. Why is great praise given to this Berlin picture? Horne says that 'the mystical flowers and leafy niches are of naturalism as exquisite as their symbolism is elaborate'. Comparing this work with the *Primavera*, he goes on to say: 'in the course of seven years which had elapsed since Botticelli painted the latter picture, his art had rapidly attained to that full ripeness of manner, beyond which any further development must tend towards a deterioration'. To me it already looks like definite deterioration.

So the twilight of Botticelli's art had arrived, and that was the domination of decorative form, separated from Nature. Now, the distinction between Botticelli's 'decorative flowers' and Fra Angelico's, or Alesso Baldovinetti's, was no other than Botticelli's advanced feeling for Nature. This feeling was not, however, strong enough in him to break through the old Quattrocento form: it amplified it, and his flowers remained to the last 'decorative flowers'. The special beauty of Botticelli's flowers increased or diminished in proportion to the feeling for Nature with which the painter was inspired. At the same time it is important to notice that this feeling not merely amplified the old form, but modified it in some undefinable way, so that when Botticelli's natural feeling diminished he could not return to the simple loveliness of the primitive design. And this is what distinguishes his late flowers from those of Fra Angelico, which continued ever lovely and hopeful in their youth, while Botticelli's, after a period of sudden glory, sank into decadence.

Thus Botticelli's flowers, though they were 'decorative flowers' to the last, owed their beauty to Nature. They were near to Nature, not in the usual realistic way, but in what I may call the sensuous. Among those artists who cultivate Nature, one may distinguish two attitudes, the intellectual and the sensuous, the former meaning what is usually called realism. As this important distinction is not duly recognized, and as by realism can be meant any art derived from Nature, endless arguments are used in vain in deciding the merits of realism. Although these two attitudes start from the same source, Nature, they produce results, not only widely apart, but diametrically opposed to each other. Realism proper is the

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

intellectual attitude, which aims at grasping the mechanical organization of Nature; sensuous appreciation cannot be so precise but is not less real. All human contact with Nature comes through the senses, therefore real communication with Nature is not less because the senses of the artist are so keen and strong as partly to efface his intellectual precision. We may even say that the more sensuously sensitive is an artist the deeper is his feeling for Nature. The sensuous attitude may be understood as more profound in its penetration to Nature than intellectual realism. Botticelli's flowers were highly artificial in arrangement and yet at the same time strangely real because of this sensuous penetration. Decorative art consists essentially of abstract sensations, rhythm of line, and harmony of colour. The artist in whom sensuousness is highly developed, as in Botticelli, has a tendency to become decorative, breaking up plastic forms of Nature into æsthetic combinations of agreeable sensations which seem in appearance to be diametrically opposed to realistic art. None the less, such artists often show a penetration into the very core of Nature which can scarcely be found in ordinary realists, who are devoted to the imitation of the visual form. Artificiality and Reality are not so much in opposition as the words express: they are connected to each other by the mysticism of the senses. Botticelli's flowers were 'sensuous flowers', decorative and real at the same time.

When treating of his flowers from their decorative side, I pointed out the wide difference between his and Fra Filippo's flowers, meaning thereby that Botticelli was nearer to Fra Angelico than to Fra Filippo in decorative aspect. But in that alone. If I proceed deeper, and compare the inner characteristics, I feel that Botticelli was far nearer to Fra Filippo than to Fra Angelico in the sensuous perception of Nature. The similarity between Fra Angelico and Botticelli in flowers was superficial. I have shown the sensuous nature of Fra Angelico's art, sufficient to shock sentimental admirers of the pious painter, who hastily regard him as something like a heavenly being, devoid of bodily existence. Still his sensuousness remained ever a chaste one, latent and innocent. Botticelli's sensuousness went much farther. It was not so tenacious and covetous as that of Fra Filippo, but if I am to place Botticelli between these two pillars of sensuous art, he is nearer the dangerously sensuous world of Fra Filippo.

I think I can distinguish between the sensuousness of Fra Angelico and that of Fra Filippo, thus: the one was visual, the other tactile. Fra Angelico's flowers are, as it were, 'seen' flowers. His is the contemplation of flowers with a beautiful pathos of distance. Fra Filippo's flowers are flowers caressed, not merely objectively seen: flowers with heavy scent, sharp edged, and wet. Botticelli's flowers have the qualities of both masters. His rhythmical eye rescued them from becoming a formless mass of stimulants to the senses as in Fra Filippo, and arranged them in æsthetic star-like designs. Botticelli was the best flower-painter the world ever produced.

How uninteresting are the realistic flowers when compared with Botticelli's! Flowers are of all things in the world born to be loved. From the very moment they are not loved, they are dead. Even if precisely studied and copied, flowers are dry and lifeless, unless they are felt and sympathised with. Ghirlandajo's flowers are a good contrast to Botticelli's, and show the magical beauty of the latter. Ghirlandajo, Botticelli's greatest rival, had an opposing artistic temperament, and his calm, objective nature, which made him undoubtedly superior to Botticelli in some respects, appeared most uninteresting as a flower-painter. Ghirlandajo's altar-piece of the *Madonna enthroned with Angels and Saints* in the Uffizi Gallery is as full of flowers as Botticelli's own pictures, but they are surprisingly lacking in attraction, in spite of their closeness to Nature. He treated them with an exasperating indifference. Not one nerve seems to have vibrated with the lovely sense of flower-life. He painted all, the stone-steps, the Oriental carpet on them, the hard vases, and the odorous flowers, with cool objective impartiality. Flowers were reflected in his brain in a scholarly constructed assemblage of colour, line, and tone. They are agreeable, but where is the little soul hidden in flowers?

That the simple decorative style of the primitive masters was bound to disappear in the realism of the late Quattrocento masters, chiefly explains the decrease of beauty in their flowers. Benozzo Gozzoli, with as prosaic a soul as an artist can possess, is quite interesting in flowers compared with Ghirlandajo, as Benozzo, in spite of his impartial contemplation of Nature, which ushered in the new era, still belonged technically to the primitives. The birds and flowers in the foreground of the Riccardi Palace frescoes, curiously isolated from each other, are charming in their childlike placement. This primitive loveliness had soon to disappear before the rapid advance of Renaissance realism. It was only in such real, loving appreciation as Botticelli's that the new feeling for Nature could produce flowers both real and charming.

The only painter comparable to Botticelli for his sensuous appreciation of flowers is, so far as I know, that strange genius Utamaro, whose extraordinary sensitiveness to feminine charm is well understood, but whose equally extraordinary feeling for Nature still waits for appreciation. In the whole scope of flowers and plants in Art I know not one instance of such exquisite interpretation.

As examples of his extreme delicacy for flowers, I may mention the *Mushi-erabi*, popularly called the *Insect Book*, a fine copy of which is in the Print Room of the British Museum. But first I wish also to draw attention, as explanatory of Utamaro's extraordinary sense for Nature, to his *Shiohi-no-tsuto*, known as the *Shell Book*, which I have seen in the fine collection of Messrs. Ricketts and Shannon. It is indeed wonderful as the expression of an æsthetic soul which really feels Nature. Did you ever notice the

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

unearthly beauty of sea-shells, or better still sea-flowers? You may invent any fantastic combination of colours, but you will find all your inventions and imaginations surpassed by the ever-changing sheen and shadow in the green kingdom of the sea, where pearls are lamps that dream rather than shine. Japan is surrounded by the sea, and the gathering of those beautiful objects is the favourite pastime in the spring, when the sea ebbs afar. My childhood having been passed by the sea, I retain as my dearest of memories those strange colours and the cold slippery touch of shells, with which I played on the beach, and the sea breezes, fragrant with the odour of seaweeds, that blew against my cheek. Do you really know the enchantment of the curious inhabitants of the deep? The famous etching of a shell by Rembrandt is to me but a tracing, wonderful in its faithfulness to outward appearance. Of European artists I can think of no one whose sensitiveness was fine enough to vibrate in accord with the silent murmurs of those elusive creatures. Botticelli, born in the land where Nature was more studied than poetically loved, had, alas, little opportunity for acquiring that extreme delicacy, as did Utamaro. Did Botticelli, however, feel some strange affinity for this delicate beauty when he introduced shells into some of his pictures? Although in the *Birth of Venus* the shell is introduced merely for the subject, and is painted broadly for decorative effect of the composition, yet its pale pink and gold continuing the pearly body of the goddess is a happy combination, and justifies the classical association of the pearly charm of the female body with the hidden beauty of the sea. Botticelli seems also to have been sensible to the strange intricacy of lines on a shell, once so well applied to decorative design by the prehistoric people of the Ægean islands. Botticelli used shells abundantly as motives of decorative carving on architectural parts of pictures such as niches or friezes. But all these remained as unconscious hints of a secret treasure. The best shell painted by Botticelli is in the *Mars and Venus* of the London National Gallery, the large shell blown by an infant satyr, whispering the sleepy murmur of the distant sea, as if the shell itself were homesick.

The most interesting part in this decorative picture of *Mars and Venus*, in point of the genuine feeling for Nature, is the wasps flying in and out of a nest in the tree trunk, to which I have referred before. Let us examine them attentively, and compare the two kindred artists, Utamaro and Botticelli, once again.

The main intention of Utamaro in the famous *Insect Book* was to present the beautiful life of insects, and he found wonderful intimacy existing between them and flowers. Flowers and insects are real lovers, intimately helping and injuring each other. Utamaro felt the living, sensuous flowers and insects, and the result was a representation, as clear as the beautiful spring sunshine, of the organic sympathy throughout Nature.

Japan can boast many painters of flowers, among whom I have mentioned the old Yamato-Ye masters and their truest modern revival, the Kōrin school. But as I have already said, these masters treated flowers as decorative designs more than anything else. After being surprised by their antique simplicity, our modern realistic sense yearns for something more. Indeed, Kōrin was born in an age modern enough, and he had an eye extremely keen for the real aspect of Nature, of which he left fine proofs in his sketch-books, but to counterbalance it he was devoted to applied art, and his greatness chiefly lay in translating varied, infinite Nature into a beautiful, significant simplicity. The appetite for delicate beauty, inherent in the highly-strung nerves of modern people desirous of increasing the details of sense excitement, cannot be long satisfied with such primitive simplicity. We have felt the same in the appreciation of Italian primitives. Who can help longing for things nearer to their actual complicated desires, for something like the luxurious 'banquet of senses' of Botticelli's art? Utamaro, in the East, satisfies this hunger of modern man. The flowers in the *Insect Book* are really sensuous flowers. They tempt the insects and you with the mystic life of Nature. The tendril is not merely the extremity of the cucumber plant, but an animated arm, with nervous hands of a shy, loving maiden with vibrant fingers at the end, with which the tender soul of the plant seeks to embrace a tenacious love. The semi-transparent, white worm calmly nestling on a green stem of the large-leaved taro is like a greedy baby who feeds on his mother.

While I am comparing Botticelli's flowers with Utamaro's, I cannot neglect the differences, which are also great. Botticelli, with all his lovely sensitiveness, was a child of the great Quattrocento, and Utamaro after all belonged to the Oriental Rococo. All the more interesting is it to see similar results arrived at by similar natures, in spite of all differences of environment, education, and artistic convention. In Japanese Art, the Ukiyoye school, to which Utamaro belonged, was a realistic school in reaction against the academic court-painters, and Utamaro's artistic development was along the line of the general tendency of the eighteenth century, when in Japan a naturalistic tendency was strongly awakened by the influx of modern Chinese painting on the one hand, brought by Chinese refugees after the fall of the Ming Dynasty, and of European engraving on the other, brought by Dutch merchants, who were allowed to trade in Japanese ports. Therefore, although a child of the country of decoration, yet, born in such an age, Utamaro's artistic milieu must be said to be nearer to Nature than that of Botticelli. Utamaro had not the same primitive limitations to conform to. Then, were Utamaro's flowers merely realistic with his added characteristic of extreme sensuousness? No, if merely so, I would never have undertaken a comparison between him and Botticelli. Besides being sensuous, Utamaro's flowers were also extremely decorative.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

It is curious to observe that his flowers, as well as his female figures, present a strong sense of unreality together with their modern realism. I may, perhaps, attribute this incongruity to the Rococo artificiality of life which ruled in eighteenth-century Tokio and to the fact that Utamaro, as the purest genius of that atmosphere, presented in his art the beautiful mixture of the natural and unnatural. He published some wood-prints of 'Flower-arrangement', specially those of the Yenshu school. Flower-arrangement is an art which has been much in vogue in Japan, for teaching how to arrange flowers in a vase. The main aim is to give a natural appearance to an arrangement of cut flowers, that is, to transfer a feeling of Nature's grandeur and freedom into a room by a selection of a few branches or flowers. It is an art, aiming at extreme naturalism by means of the most artificial invention, and the result is a complete combination of opposites. In his prints, Utamaro showed himself quite proficient in the extreme development, or rather decadence, of the Yenshu school, where Rococo artificiality was the final note. It was the most elaborate torture of plants into artistic formulæ, making mere saplings look like aged trees of a thousand winters. Therefore, although the final naturalism is not entirely lost, yet the immediate impression of the Yenshu school is artificiality itself, a perfect linear arrangement of decorative effect. Does not this show the character of Utamaro's art in a nutshell? Higher above all Utamaro's naturalism and his wonderfully keen perceptions reigned this rhythmic law as the guiding spirit, and his flowers, full of life, entrancingly appeal to us through the senses, wearing none the less a look of dreamland.

Here, finally, after all minor differences, comes the essential similarity between Utamaro and Botticelli. Their flowers were near kin: they were floral patterns, but fragrant and caressing.

The 'sensuous' flowers 'decoratively' arranged: from the combination of these two characteristics comes out the third characteristic of Botticelli's flowers, which I call the 'sensitive flower', flowers with a soul. It is extraordinary, this pantheistic animism; I believe it. How can I do otherwise, since flowers are, if anything, eyes, through which the soul of Nature looks out? Their unbelievable beauty is its proof.

I felt it once, standing in full spring in a Tuscan garden, where great flowers shot up like fireworks under the violet sky. My eyes opened, marvelling at them. Either their unreal beauty was unbelievable, or their souls were alive. Shelley felt it in the *Sensitive Plant*, with a Buddhistic philosophy of mutability; Maurice Maeterlinck studied it like a pagan scientist, beautifully calling it 'l'intelligence des fleurs'. I feel it, with a simple artist's instinct, and do not know what to call it. From the excess of sense-intoxication of flowers looms up a beautiful atmosphere, in which ancient myths become true.

If all this is true of real flowers, with what greater freedom a spiritual atmosphere is evoked from Botticelli's flowers, which retain the entrancing sensuousness of the real, and yet have little realistic bonds to tie down the imagination. In this respect Botticelli again shows another difference in the essential similarity between himself and Utamaro, who is much nearer to reality. Utamaro evokes an artistic atmosphere, but it cannot detach itself completely from the real. That beautiful organic sympathy, uniting and animating the whole universe through the interlaced relation of the senses, is what Utamaro calls forth from his flowers which smell, and his insects which creep, under whatever decorative arrangement. Botticelli's sensuousness was more ethereal. It was very powerful, sufficient to animate any flowers he painted, but combined with a freedom which I may term abstract and decorative. A distant symbolic soul peeps out of Botticelli's flowers. The soul summoned in Utamaro's flowers is heavy with the intoxication of the real senses. With Botticelli the soul forgets its birth from the sensuous hothouse, and cools itself in the spiritual heights of symbolism.

I may compare, in this last trait alone, though not in other respects, Utamaro's sensuousness with that of Fra Filippo, whose flowers, with their pure sense-perception, with little of the relief of decorative arrangement, evoke a mystery. Utamaro, who is a decorator compared with Fra Filippo, looks ethereal, as Botticelli does by the side of Utamaro. Putting Utamaro and Filippo in common contrast with Botticelli, we can best appreciate the cool spiritual air of Botticelli's flowers, free from the heat of sensuous fermentation, which makes us sometimes feel giddy in Utamaro, and even more in Fra Filippo's over-perfumed flower-gardens.

With Botticelli's flowers I often associate those of Bartholomeo Veneto: rare precious gems they are of unusual brilliance. Bartholomeo Veneto, a curious genius, was formed under artistic tradition, widely different from Botticelli. Technically considered, it would almost be ridiculous to associate the two; mentally I find some essential closeness between them in sensitiveness. Of Veneto's keen interest in the tactile charm of hair I will speak later on. Of his flowers I would call to mind those beautiful ones that adorn the head of *St. Catherine* in the Glasgow Gallery. Why are they so brilliant, like mysterious stars? One can explain their brilliance by technical considerations: that he painted them with the technique of the Northern masters, in oil, which makes a glittering contrast between the white petals and the black background. But the mysterious feeling that shines out cannot be thus explained, as the flowers painted with the same technique by Holbein and others do not always give the same feeling. Albrecht Dürer did it sometimes, as in the small flower held in the hand in the *Self-portrait* lately acquired by the Louvre. But Dürer belonged to the limited circle of artists who could reach the mystery of Nature through absolute realism. Bartholomeo Veneto's flowers were symbolic. Might I not call

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

those in the *Primavera* symbolic too? They are exactly like tiny stars playing hide-and-seek in a galaxy of green night, or white bubbles murmuring and floating up from deep waters at eve. They look at me sometimes like distant souls, and talk mysterious flower-talk.

Botticelli's flowers were to undergo the same evolution which we have studied throughout his art. The severe and clear-cut type of flowers of the *Primavera* were to disappear with the decline of his realism, and his later flowers became more direct expressions of his spirituality. As the culmination of this transcendency I do not hesitate to give the Dante Drawing, *Paradiso Canto XXX*, where Dante and Beatrice are seen flying upward:

> And I beheld, shaped like a stream, a light,
> Tawny in its burning, between banks whereon
> The miracle of the spring was pictured bright.
> Out of this river living sparkles thrown
> Shot everywhere a fire amid the bloom
> And there like rubies gold-encrusted shone;
> Then, as if dizzy with the spiced perfume,
> They plunged into the enchanted eddy again;
> As one sank, rose another fiery plume.
>
> (Translated by LAURENCE BINYON.)

How Botticelli's imagination must have been excited in coming across this splendid imagery in the austere poem, which with jewel-like brilliance in detail, and mysterious in content, was just suited to the artist's genius, then inclining to mysticism! With Dante, he too must have drunk from the river of light, with as impatient eagerness:

> Soon as mine eyes within the eyelids' bound
> Had drunken of that luminous wave, straightway
> The length of it shone altered into round,
> Then as a mask doth a man's face portray
> Other than it was,—if he but cast aside
> The counterfeit that did the truth bewray,
> So into festal change were glorified
> Sparkles and flowers, and lo! both Courts of Heaven
> Manifested in radiance I descried.
>
> (Translated by LAURENCE BINYON.)

Oh, the giddy surprise of eyes suddenly opened to the highest mystery! Seek in the tropical virgin forests of India, but you cannot find such mysterious flowers. Who would doubt that those children of the golden sunlight, in place of bees and butterflies, should dive deep into the flowers

to issue forth again, heavy laden with dust, mysteriously fragrant? I can think of only one species of flowers in Art comparable with this in its spiritual presence: the weeping lime covering the *Nirvana of Sakya*. There the whole universe weeps, just as in Dante's Paradise souls are in happy ecstasy in those marvellous flowers.

When thus I associate Botticelli's spiritual flowers with those in Oriental Art, which had its birth in India, the home of mysticism, I may not be entirely without historic grounds. Through the strangely complicated intermediary of the Byzantine, the mystic element of Indian Art seems to have arrived in Italy. However, Indian mysticism could have come West through the Persians, who were excellent designers, so that Oriental mysticism appeared in Italian Art as adaptations from Persian influences. The ways in which these powers were felt in Italy were strangely complicated. In Venice, Carlo Crivelli painted, as a favourite motive, mystic golden designs of flowers and fruits, which you can readily associate with the gold hangings or gilded carvings of a Buddhist temple. This is entirely Byzantine, just as Venice was for a time more a Byzantine than an Italian city. In Verona you see another phase, quite as interesting. Stefano da Zevio painted flowers as charmingly simple as the Cologne masters. You see large marvellous flowers filling the garden, where small angels fly about and get lost among the petals. Is this peculiar style derived from Gothic tapestry, which may be taken as a modification of Byzantine decoration? Flowers in Gothic tapestries which are supposed to have given a hint to Botticelli for the pictorial conception of the *Primavera* are disproportionately large, and have a spiritual fragrance. Pisanello's flowers are like ghosts of dead flowers, projecting their damp enamel-like petals, some of which are about to be transformed into large butterflies. Indeed, the Quattrocento Italian Art occasionally showed close relation with Persian miniatures, and Pisanello was not alone in his resemblance. Lorenzo and Jacopo da Sanseverino's frescoes in the Oratorio of S. Giovanni at Urbino may even be described as an enlargement of Persian miniature, surprisingly Oriental in character. The beautiful treatment of the bushes in the Baptism scene, the large and elaborate nimbus of the Madonna on the left wall entering the chapel, are especially remarkable. The same may be said, though to a smaller degree, of Gentile da Fabriano, whose flower decorations on the frame of the famous *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi Gallery are as delicately fitted for the purpose and as sensitively conceived as the ornamental borders in precious Oriental manuscripts. Gentile's pictorial influence was one of the most far-reaching in the early Renaissance, especially in central Italy, but I cannot say to what extent the taste for flowers, strangely Oriental in sentiment, of the central Italian and Sienese masters can be traced, through Gentile, to the original Oriental sources. Simone Martini's lilies in the centre of the fine Uffizi

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Annunciation are very real, though real only when placed in the golden atmosphere of the spiritual world. Ambrosio Lorenzetti's angels are, like the Umbrian Bonfigli and Caporali, crowned so profusely with many coloured garlands that you would take them as sisters to the female attendants in the heaven of Buddha. Why is the *Garden of Eden* of Giovanni di Paolo so full of large flowers, as large and tempting as those of a butterfly's dream?

There is little doubt that Botticelli was influenced by Oriental textiles. Luxurious brocades and embroidered stuffs were merchandise greatly welcomed in Venice, and they appealed to rich princesses and powerful families throughout Italy. Jacopo Bellini and Pisanello copied them. In Florence, Ghirlandajo's calmness stands in contrast to Botticelli's nervous sensuousness, Ghirlandajo making frequent use of Oriental rugs of geometrical design in straight lines as accessories in his pictures, while Botticelli seldom used them, preferring floral embroideries and prints of Persian origin, where isolated flowers are scattered restlessly about and sparkle.

From the knowledge that exists, we must not exaggerate the influence of the Orient on Botticelli. He may have seen Persian miniatures. In the Ognissanti fresco of *St. Augustine* and in other of his works he copied Oriental letters, and in Ghirlandajo's fresco, in the same church, St. Jerome is reading an Oriental manuscript, such as usually contained miniatures. But after all, we must not forget that for the due appreciation of Botticelli's art, of more importance than the slight relationship between his art and that of the East was the spontaneous confluence in his genius of the Oriental and the Occidental ideals, which produced things of universal beauty. Both hemispheres would claim them as their own.

PORTRAIT OF A YOUTH
(London, National Gallery)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

CHAPTER VI. BOTTICELLI'S TREATMENT OF THE HUMAN BODY · BOTTICELLI'S VENUSES · 'ETHICAL' AND 'PATHETIC' ART · BOTTICELLI'S ETHEREAL SENSUOUSNESS · BOTTICELLI AND LEONARDO · UTAMARO AND KIYONAGA

FROM flowers we turn our attention to Botticelli's treatment of the human body, for the appreciation of which sensuousness plays the greatest part. This is a delicate question, but as it verges on the essence of Botticelli's genius, we must study it with frankness. There has always been a puritanical sentiment in man, especially in the Teutonic people. In bygone ages the representation of the nude in Art was sometimes forbidden. If supersensuousness is to be avoided in Art, the only right method is completely to suppress the nude, according to the dictum of Savonarola. In modern times little is heard of the prohibition of the nude in Art, but not because the puritanical sentiment has disappeared. It still exists, but it has ceased to be so bold. It merely attempts to ignore sensuousness. Hence the confusion in Art-theories.

Let us admit as a healthy and beautiful fact, that the charm of the human body is appreciated, in Art as well as in Nature, chiefly in a sensuous manner. There is no other thing in Nature for the representation of which an artist has so great an employment for his sense-activities. After seeing Botticelli's peculiar sensuousness in the treatment of flowers, we may well expect to find him unparalleled in his treatment of this most precious thing in our sensuous life, the human body.

In the first chapter we followed the development of the Realistic Botticelli in an age when anatomy was pursued as the principal study of artists. We have seen how moderately well equipped he was here, and yet how anatomically defective were his figures. I explained this peculiarity in the sense that he was only a realist in his intention. But there was another Botticelli, the spontaneous one, more essentially himself, who gave the lie to the determined realist. What was this Botticelli? The following pages are intended to serve as an explanation. The core is the Sensuous Botticelli, from which the Sentimental and the Mystic are gradually to develop. For the elucidation of Botticelli's genius, his essential indifference to anatomy is, in my view, very important. Paradoxical though it may appear, there is great naturalness in his defective anatomy, so that when looking at it, although you may feel something strange, you will readily acquiesce in the praise usually accorded to Botticelli's realism. This paradox is highly significant. Botticelli could not have made anatomical mistakes through

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

ignorance. He simply deviated from scientific correctness because he had to move with a law more essential. His sensuous inspiration was so strong that it could not bear the restrictions of realism. Sensuousness being itself the most primitive, fundamental faculty of human nature, who can deny that Botticelli, by following it at the expense of the apparent accuracy, did not arrive much nearer to the true Nature? This is what I understand as the key of the complicated relations between his comparative failure as an anatomist and his great success as an artist. Botticelli was a sensuous genius.

Among all the artists of the world, is there any with nerves so delicate in responding to the fine nuances of the human body as Botticelli? Why was he so sensitive? I should like to find some physiological basis for this, but except in his own works, which make me suspect an abnormal keenness for feminine charms on the part of the painter, his biography gives little help. There is a story of his dream about marriage, preserved by 'Anonimo Gaddiano', which runs as follows:

'On one occasion, being pressed by Messer Tommaso Soderini to take a wife, he replied to him: I would have you know, that not many nights since, it happened to me, that I dreamed I had taken a wife, and I was so greatly troubled at the thought of it, that I awoke, and in order that I might not fall asleep a second time and dream it over again, I rose and wandered about all night, through Florence, like one distracted: by which Messer Tommaso knew that that was not soil wherein to plant a vineyard.' (*Horne*, p. 326.)

How can we interpret this anecdote of his life? It is so vague a story that I wonder if even Dr. Freud, who predicted the whole future career of Leonardo da Vinci from a dream of his infancy, could attempt the same too ingenious psycho-analysis of Botticelli's character from this dream. I cannot give any definite interpretation, though I feel an intimate connection between this story and Botticelli's art. The story is usually given as an illustration of the artist's love for jokes, but if joke it was, it came from a serious source.

Another way of approaching Botticelli's real personality is through his portrait, painted by his pupil Filippino Lippi about the year 1482 in the Brancacci Chapel in the Church of the Carmine. As I will show later, this is the only reliable portrait of Botticelli. Filippino was a good-natured and shy soul endowed with considerable descriptive power. Moreover, he was the favourite pupil of the master. As a direct testimony to Botticelli's appearance, one cannot hope for anything better. And what did Botticelli look like? As far as I know, this portrait was generally understood as showing a tired, sensuous type, corresponding well with Vasari's description of Botticelli's boyhood, of his bad health and capricious mood.

Was he not really frail of body, a body in which there were too many

nerves, which responded too vividly to all the faint shades of beauty, to the detriment of physical health? His senses were perhaps too acute, while the power to control and unite them into the fixed purposes of life was lacking. He was like a mass of nerves without the sustaining quality of will-power. Thus feminine beauty, the greatest charm for every child of man, he must have felt too keenly. He must have enjoyed and suffered all the conflicting sensations called forth by fair woman. It is only a man of brute nature who can feel only the sensual in regard to sex. Botticelli's supersensuousness was not of this kind.

Although I am against the prevailing fashion of psycho-analysis, which gives too great an importance to sexual motives, I am more against the puritanical prejudice in understanding great men of the past. Dr. Jens Thiis, in his study of Leonardo's younger days, criticized the vain and frequent attempts of those biographers of Leonardo who described him as a saintly being. In the case of Botticelli, Horne endeavoured to endow with a special chastity the personality of his favourite painter, by enumerating details of his life as conducive to the critic's conclusion, such as, that Botticelli's name never was mentioned in conjunction with any woman, and that he lived contentedly all his life as a dependant under the paternal roof. The story of his dream of marriage sounds, in Horne's book, as if Botticelli might have had something of a monk-like feeling towards the fair sex. Dr. Bode, too, after giving the story, refers to Botticelli as the 'enemy of marriage', as if Botticelli's pure soul was more inclined to yearn for the fair image than for possession. This is true, as far as it goes, but it is not all. Puritanical interpretation places Botticelli near to the angels. But in him I see the living man.

Besides, it is wrong to consider these painters of the Renaissance in the moralistic light of modern times: their art, which is, after all, the best expression of their life, shows them as extremely human. While Fra Angelico dreamed of female beauty, Botticelli must have been immersed in beautiful sensuousness in order to paint those alluring torsos and limbs. In Fra Angelico you feel the innocent longing for unknown joys; in Botticelli there is rather the sadness of a man who knows all. His story of the dream sounds almost like a disguised confession of a decadent being.

The psychology of the decadent is complex. Overstrung and tired sensuousness is perhaps its basis, which, by its very ardour, leads to embarrassment in the pursuit of desire. Every sensation is so keenly felt that it monopolizes the moment and is soon tired. A decadent man is restless and sad. Usually this type is the product of dissipation, frequent in the over-refined Rococo period and the 'fin de siècle', which succeeded it. But it may come spontaneously as in a supersensitive genius like Botticelli's. In normal psychology a sensuous attraction presupposes the desire for physical approach. In supersensitive cases, the physical may repel by its

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

very attraction, as pleasure too acute turns to pain. Botticelli's dream in itself has no interpretation in this way. Putting his alluring female figures together with his strangely serious antipathy against marriage, which can be felt from the story, I cannot help coming to the conclusion that his nature verged on decadent psychology. All through Botticelli's life and art there is always something of duality which was the cause of his unrest and capriciousness.

That the painter of Venus should become converted to the ascetic sect of Savonarola and end his last days in a mystic silence is very symbolic of the whole art and life of Botticelli. He was at bottom a medieval being. But he was born in the age of Hellenic culture. The spirit of the time is so powerful that Botticelli was brought up to play a part which was contrary to his fundamental temperament. In his time he was among the most daring in serving the cult of Venus; he, however, remained essentially the same, a medieval and religious soul, in which a temporary deviation in an opposite direction could not fail to ferment the revolt of his real nature, one day to burst out and upset his whole life. Botticelli was ever a medieval soul, yearning for classic Greece, and as it was beyond his reach, he longed for it all the more. There is no conception of the female figure in Art so remote from Greek ideals as Botticelli's Venuses.

To the medieval mind, contrasted with the classic, a female body was 'forbidden fruit'. Look at the nervous feeling of shame, shaking every line of Botticelli's Venus, more tremulous than the young hanging willows by the river side. This Venus of the *Birth of Venus* must have been modelled from an antique type, of which the *Venus de' Medici* in the Uffizi Gallery is the most famous example. There is, however, a whole world of difference. True, the *Venus de' Medici*, being a work of the late period, is apart from the Arcadian innocence of the Golden Age, and the goddess of beauty has become conscious of her nakedness. Compared with Botticelli's, she is still a goddess, a child of the antique world, when everything natural was accepted without shame. Perhaps she is already approaching the time of the birth of Christianity, which, with its contrasted dualism between spiritual salvation and bodily temptation, was to implant a nervous, guilty feeling of shame in the bosom of the descendants of Adam and Eve, and make them cover their nakedness. In the *Venus de' Medici* is just awakened an organic feeling of shyness, a natural instinct for protection. Is she not calm in her beauty thus guarded?

Poor nervous Venus of Botticelli's forbidden vision! She is of the clad race, stripped of her garments. In her bashfulness, she does not know where to look, merely twitching her nervous fingers, anxious to be hidden behind the garment spread by the awaiting Grace. Every line running through the fair pearly body, which Pater called 'cadaverous, or at least cold', because, as I think, it is a pale slender body, an aristocratic plant,

grown in a secret palace remote from the sun—every line of her body is a silver chord of high-strung nerves conscious of its precious nakedness. Not only her soul is embarrassed, her limbs themselves are suffering from the vulgar gaze.

According to the researches of Horne, Botticelli seems to have followed for the painting the passages from Poliziano's Stanze, where the poet tried among other things to reconstruct, though with inaccuracy, the lost painting of Venus Anodyomene by Apelles. Inaccurate because, although Poliziano expressly says to Antonio Urcèo Codro, in sending him some specimens of his Greek epigrams, 'Read first what I have composed in imitation of not a few ancient writers upon the Venus of Apelles, which our Pliny calls Anodyomene and worthily described in certain Greek verses, by which it may still be illustrated', yet Poliziano's description of Venus' hands is different, both from the manner in which Venus Anodyomene, 'wringing the ooze out of her hair with her hands', should be represented, and also from the existing statues with the same title. Then why did Poliziano change the position of her hands in this significant way, as is described in the Stanze:

'La Dea premendo colla destra il crino,
Collaltra il dolce pomo ricoprissi'

or in the Latin version of Jacques Toussain of Poliziano's Greek epigrams:

'Et manu quindem gattus mari perfusi capitis
Dextera stringebat, & resonabat spuma
—at laeva
Tegebat pubem adhuc demersam'.
(cf. *Horne*, p. 150.)

Indeed, there are many Greek statues of Venus beginning with the famous *Venus de' Medici*, with hands in these positions, and it is interesting to notice that this type was preferred by the taste of the time, at variance with Pliny's literary authority. Poliziano, the main supporter of the classic culture of the circle of Lorenzo il Magnifico, tried to regard the naked beauty frankly with the innocent eyes of the Arcadians, but Poliziano, a Quattrocento poet, deceived his intention. His conscience, brought up in Christian morality, could not but feel a strange disturbance at observing the secret beauty, and ended in endowing the nude with his own guilty appreciation. Botticelli had more of a medieval mind, in which the sense of sin was deeply set, so in his vision, religious and sensuous at the same time, Venus must have appeared as an image doubly disturbing. His soul, as it were, in an agony of beautiful sin, seems to be reflected in the trembling but dreamy Venus.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

To one who is not sensuous, the question of the flesh is simple. He shuns the danger, or, rather, there is no danger. To Botticelli the spiritual danger, hidden in the flesh, must have been great in proportion with his extreme sensuousness. I imagine that to him the female body was the 'white ghost' of medieval fancy. She looms out of the night, menacing him with an awful charm.

On no point are Botticelli's early biographers so unanimous as in their mention of his nude figures. 'Many, most beautiful naked women', according to Anonimo Gaddiano. Vasari says, in his first edition, that 'throughout the city, in diverse houses', were to be seen 'many naked women' by his hand. In Antonio Petrei's version of the Libro di Billi is mentioned that Botticelli painted 'many naked women, which were more beautiful than anything else which he did'. There are three of those nude figures of Botticellian inspiration: the first is in the Berlin Museum, accepted by Dr. Bode and others, the second is now in the collection of Sig. Gualino, in Turin, which Prof. A. Venturi accepted as genuine, and the third a nude *Flora* which was formerly in the Lydig Collection in America. Among these three paintings, I take the one in Sig. Gualino's collection as Botticelli's own, from the time of the *Birth of Venus*. Others look to me like school-pictures, but even they are strangely fascinating in conception. Their charm works in unknown ways, to which your ordinary measure of artistic comprehension will not apply. How irresistible is this Botticellian setting of the white female body against a black background! Even so prosaic a rendering of the female body as Lorenzo di Credi's *Venus* in the Uffizi Gallery becomes endowed with a strange charm when it was painted in a way similar to that of Botticelli, ivory against ebony. If Savonarola had troubled dreams of temptation, surely his visionary eyes must have found the same white ghost in Botticelli's pictures, and, feeling its tremendous charm, became furious. In the Bonfire of Vanities, many of Botticelli's nudes must have shone with glittering splendour for a moment, and then, alas, perished.

Why did Botticelli adopt the black background, so Northern in character, for his white figures? There was a custom in Florence of painting monochrome frescoes in terra-verde if they were exposed to the atmosphere, the Chiostro Verde of S. Maria Novella being one of the most famous examples. These monochrome frescoes look very dignified and give the painted figures a sculpture-like impressiveness. Did Botticelli get the idea therefrom? The same monochromatic scheme in grisaille or terra-verde, deepening into black, was adopted by Northern painters when they painted the exterior part of an altar-piece, while the interior was always finished in colours. What is extremely interesting is that those Northern painters, obliged to use monochrome, were induced to paint the figures outside the altar-piece, usually an Annunciation, or saints, in

imitations of sculptures. Northern paintings of this sort were seen sometimes in Florence, for example, the Poltinari altar-piece by Hugo van der Goes, to mention the most important, which arrived in Florence in 1480 and caused a great sensation. Botticelli must have been impressed by the simple and solemn, nay, even mysterious effect of monochrome painting. And then in this age of classic revival there was no lack of Italian painters, who tried to reproduce classic sculptures, especially Roman reliefs, in monochrome in their works. Andrea Mantegna was the greatest exponent of this. In Florence, Antonio Pollajuolo showed the same preference, if not actually in his paintings, at least in his drawings. Thus, looking over the Quattrocento world, in which Botticelli lived, we find various aspects of Art, which might have given him ideas for trying the same sculpture-like scheme for his Venuses: all the more startling is his genius, which produced a charm realized by no one else. In the Galleria Pitti in Florence (now transferred to the Uffizi) there is a picture of St. Sebastian, ascribed once to Pollajuolo, where the saint is represented sculpture-like as a white body against a black background. I am not sure of the authorship of this painting, but I am inclined to think it is by a master of Northern Italy. Anyway, this painting shows the trend which the art of black and white was taking at the time. Just as a little later, under the overwhelming influence of Leonardo da Vinci, painters began to conceive Nature in the term of tone-values, and used chiaroscuro to express that conception, so in this St. Sebastian the painter employed black and white with intermediary tones, and gave a realistic effect of modelling, although still retaining some of the Quattrocento rigidity. Botticelli's appeal is entirely otherwise, depending rather upon the symbolic effect at the expense of realism.

To my mind Botticelli must have got the idea directly from the mysterious black and white effect of a marble statue, and wanted to produce this very effect, as is shown in the ex-Lydic *Flora*, who stands as a statue on an isolated pedestal, the covering falling in straight folds down from her left hand representing the disguised support, indispensable to such statues. The marble goddess seen in the twilight is as attractive as White Death itself, and Heine felt something of the same kind in his *Florentinische Nächte*, describing a boy who stole into the garden at night to embrace a marble goddess. Such feeling justifies the medieval legend current in districts, where from ruined temples buried in black earth white torsos and lovely limbs of ancient gods and goddesses were dug out. The legend tells how, after the advent of Christ, the ancient gods had hid themselves among dark mountains and became tempters of the soul. It is interesting to note that in Germany, from whence comes the symbolic story of the Venusberg and Tannhäuser, female figures were conceived by painters' imagination in a similar way. In the cold climate of the North the body was carefully veiled, and beneath the veiling was developed that on which

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

it was forbidden to look. It became pale and shy, as a young vernal stem under the earth, shrinking not only from the gaze of others, but from its own nudity. This is what I call the Northern body, so well represented by Lucas Cranach, the most characteristic of Northern geniuses. In his imagination the body was impossibly white, the figure disproportionately slim, the flesh moulded as round as fresh fruits, and all against the pitch black background. You are not surprised to find that a little later Hans Baldung Grien, mixing his Italianized taste for the nude with his troubled imagination of the North, painted as his favourite subject the gloomiest of love-scenes, a fair girl piquantly undraped, embraced by a skeleton against a background of night.

Botticelli's nudes are as appealing to the imagination as are Lucas Cranach's white figures. I have already referred to Botticelli's Gothic nature. In his conception of the female body he seems more than ever nearer to the Northern than to the Southern temperament. In Greek æsthetic theories, Aristotle very ingeniously distinguished 'ethical' art from 'pathetic' art, the former indicating the representation of the permanent, steady phase of man, while the latter that of the opposite, the transient. (cf. P. Gardner, *Principles of Greek Art*, p. 23 ff.) The Ethos was the essence of Greek Art, with its Olympian serenity, the calm contented philosophy of the intellect, but as civilized luxury gave the Athenians more and more of the refinement of sensibility, and especially after the Peloponnesian Wars shook their sentiment with the cruelty peculiar to civil war, the pathetic side of man and Art was strongly awakened in Greece and became the precursor of Christian Art, the Art of pathos and sentiment. This distinction of Pathos and Ethos in Greek Art applies better between the classic and Christian Arts, between the Southern and Northern. And I suggest that Botticelli's art is an extreme case of the pathetic.

Look at Giorgione's or Titian's or Correggio's nudes, above all Titian's. They are as natural, innocent, and as happy as fine animals basking in the sun. You may feel them dull sometimes: dull, certainly they are, in this sense that their nudity, being natural, fails to excite the pleasure of something uncommon. There is a famous story of Edouard Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, now in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. It was considered an improper combination of nude women in the society of fully-clad men in the open air. The painter answered this vulgar criticism by pointing out that the same setting, artistically so effective, was painted by Giorgione in the *Concert Champêtre*, and had been under the gaze of the public eyes for years, without causing any scandal. With full sympathy and admiration for Manet, I cannot help noting the great difference between the two pictures, similar in subject but widely apart in conception. The easy calm, not only in facial expression, but in the whole indolent body enjoying the evening air of the Southern summer: where can you

find this calm in the work of the most naturalistic of 'fin de siècle' painters? In the ancient Venetians, pagan and Oriental, there was no question on this happy, caressing evening, of being dressed or undressed. Venus could sleep sweetly by the hillside, nor would she mind the approach of satyrs. But Manet was a modern man, brought up in a modern age, and dressed accordingly in body as well as in mind. Naked flesh produces an unnatural excitation in modern man. If not artistically sophisticated, a blush would be called up by the work of Goya, Manet's real master, the marvellous *Naked Maja* in the Prado Gallery, the most modern, I might say the diabolically modern, conception of the nude.

I hope I have made clear the position occupied by Botticelli among the painters of the nude. It was an extreme case of the 'pathetic', Gothic and modern. It think this touches the very core of Botticelli's art, and explains the modern cult of the artist, which I will discuss later on.

Having admitted the pathetic sensuousness as the kernel of Botticelli's genius, we must analyse this sensuousness itself, so that we may arrive at another characteristic, seemingly, but only seemingly, antagonistic to his fundamental sensuousness. This second characteristic distinguishes Botticelli from other sensuous masters.

The psychological processes through which we appreciate plastic art are, besides the visual, the tactile sensation, which plays a part infinitely greater than is generally supposed. That tactile sensation is an important factor in building up our lives has begun to be recognized only recently with the progress of experimental psychology, as it works mostly in a subconscious, uncalculated, reflexive way. But that it does not attract special attention is the sure proof of its frequent use and great importance in life. In the case of appreciating the beauty of the human body, the tactile sensation plays a large part.

The tactile sensation is to be divided into two: the exterior or direct tactile sensation, the enjoyment of the immediate touch, which is closely related with sex sensations, and the interior or indirect tactile sensation, the enjoyment of smooth muscular movements, which make us appreciate in plastic art chiefly the harmony of line. Although these two are derived from the same physiological base, acted on the same nervous system, only dispersed in different places, one on the skin, the other more central in the muscles, and although they seldom act independently, their psychological functions are widely differentiated. The exterior tactile sense may be compared with the tentacles of primitive animals, which are immediately sensitive to outside influences. It is the most practical, most instinctive of senses, which, when too much excited, monopolizes your attention with physical contact, and gives you little opportunity for artistic contemplation. It belongs to the lowest of the senses and is usually, though too

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

hastily, excluded from æsthetic psychology. On the other hand, the inner tactile sense, which feels muscle-movements, is far more abstract, and collectively forms the ideas of Space and Rhythm. This inner tactile sense has its practical side, but, generally speaking, is far apart from animal instincts and greatly contributes to our contemplative life, to which artistic pursuits, however sensuous they may be, belong. I wish to point out that Botticelli's sensuousness, extraordinarily strong in itself, belongs mainly to this inner tactile, and was, of its nature, free from sensuality. I call Botticelli's sensuousness 'ethereal sensuousness'.

The association of the ethereal with the sensuous may appear at first sight to be illogical. But the possibility of their combination may best be felt by comparing Botticelli with Leonardo, the greatest realist in all phases of realism, greatest, therefore, in the reality of sensuousness. The illusive expression of *Mona Lisa* is sometimes interpreted as the tempting smile of a fair demon, and not without reason, though the interpretation reflects more clearly the latent sensuality of the interpreter. When woman is mirrored in her whole nature as in Leonardo's magic crystal, why should not an angel emerge as well as a fair demon? I can imagine and shudder at the awful allure of Leonardo's *Leda*, which must have been a dangerous picture, sufficient to enrage the hungry soul of a monk. Leonardo was so great that his pupils seem to have been perplexed in grasping the sublime totality of his art, and most of them, Marco d' Oggiono, Giampetrino and, above all, Il Sodoma, seem to have absorbed chiefly the sensuous trait of their master. So the nude figures of the school of Leonardo became the most voluptuous of their kind.

We must admit that oil-painting, with its advantages for chiaroscuro and wet surface, was more adapted for the expression of real sensuousness than the old technique of tempera, preferred by Botticelli, which, with its defined brushwork, has a tendency to form a linear tracery and is accompanied by a feeling somewhat remote from the real. Indeed, the white Venuses of Botticelli and his school were timid apparitions, while those represented by Leonardo's school were masses of real and sensual flesh.

Botticelli's sensuousness was, after all, 'ethereal'. His figures enticed one, but enticed to spirituality. Here I am thrown back to my comparison of Botticelli with Utamaro. That in the history of Japanese figure-painting Utamaro was a wonderful step in realism, but that, none the less, his figures showed beautiful defects, draws again a close parallel between the two artists. In drawing the comparisons between them I am induced sometimes to lay more stress on their dissimilarities for the sake of precision, but generally speaking the resemblance must be said to be striking. From the time of such charming primitive masters as Ishikawa Toyonobu and Suzuki Harunobu, it was Utamaro who ushered in a new era: into the variegated dreamland of dolls, Utamaro entered with Life, and fair

women. But his delicate creatures were more slender and wavy than the blooms of the wistaria. Compared with Kiyonaga, his greatest rival as a painter of feminine beauty, Utamaro's women look strange, but how infinitely more fascinating, more convincing of their existence, as beautiful as impossible! It is natural that Kiyonaga, with the greatest knowledge of human anatomy ever attained to by a modern Japanese artist, should have been appreciated in realistic Europe and America and comparatively disregarded in Japan. I firmly maintain Utamaro's superiority.

Utamaro's figures are sometimes curiously elongated and even distorted. It seems that he, as well as Botticelli, felt a force in woman essential to her nature, and the fascination it exercised on those sensitive artists made them unwittingly deviate from a cold objective contemplation of her form. In Kiyonaga, you see 'real' women, though 'real' only in the Oriental dreamland; they certainly fade into shadow if placed by the side of the tenaciously real women in European Art. Nevertheless I call Kiyonaga a realist, endowed with the strength of reality and its dullness. Utamaro gave just the essence of femininity as precious and as frivolous as her tears. Utamaro's women surprise you, disturb you, enter into and immediately captivate you. Perhaps these daughters of Eve revealed their secret charms to the favoured genius, and he was content to give them symbolic form.

In the Ukiyoye artists, who worked for and sometimes lived in, the tea-houses, rococo coquetry and sensuousness were invariable. But who among them all was more beautifully sensuous than Utamaro? Harunobu's world might be sweeter, but it was the world before the advent of realism, the charm of an artificial tea-garden, where dolls lived and acted. In Utamaro the spring is fully awake, but why so innocently? Kiyonaga's women are like women in the indolent warmth of a Japanese summer. Their flimsy garments open freely to the river breeze, but they do not care. Utamaro's maidens, even in their sweetest *négligée* after the bath, are both more innocent and more seductive. With Utamaro you peep sometimes into boudoirs, and your heart beats. But these maidens are virtuous, even in their privacy.

Virtue exercises more charm than sensuality. The latter attracts and repels at the same time, as in the celebrated, unseemly pictures by Hokusai and his daughter Oyei, whose realism, phenomenal in Japanese Art, presents sensuality with nauseating effect. In Utamaro we cherish a chaste sensuousness, as in Botticelli.

Utamaro's art was represented through the restricted medium of the woodcut, and so we can attribute his ethereal sensuousness in part to the limitation of his technique. But the main reason seems to lie in his temperament, which, like Botticelli's, was more occupied with the white silhouette and wavy lines of the female body than with actual flesh modelling. It is wonderful to observe Utamaro's extreme aversion to sensuous

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

vulgarity, and all his inventions tended towards what I may call the etherealization of the senses. Japanese line is always fine, but Utamaro was not satisfied with black outline, however fine, which gives an appearance too hard and self-assertive for the evanescence of young white flesh. He tried sometimes to give this effect with faint vermilion outline, which was certainly more adapted for the purpose. But not always, for vermilion is too warm a colour and is apt to give a feeling of indolent flesh. Auguste Renoir's excellent nudes give me this impression. The female body appeared to the finer eye of Utamaro in another colour. Virginal flesh looks cold, quick, not indolent. It is warm, but warm as the 'peony-snow', as the Japanese call the gorgeous snowflakes of early spring, which fall on the cherry-trees in full bloom. Utamaro tried and succeeded in giving this precious effect 'without outlines', with what in Japan is called 'Karasuri', printing without ink. This was invented by Harunobu, Utamaro's predecessor in this kind of delicate feeling, to give the lineless nuances of snow-scenes, or the smooth but sharp effect of a cat's skin, but it was used superbly by Utamaro in the representation of female flesh. Look at his famous *Lineless Beauty*, whose white silhouette is given faintly in tone, all the more insinuating to sensitive eyes against the yellow background. Her arm is pure, soft, and nervous: its whiteness, while rejecting the surrounding yellow, is yet tinted by it and looks delicately warm. Behind the rich attire your eye follows along the unseen lines the most harmonious of creations, the body.

CHAPTER VII. BOTTICELLI'S TREATMENT OF HANDS AND FEET · GENERAL INDIFFERENCE TO THE BEAUTY OF HANDS AND FEET · SYMBOLIC HANDS IN INDIAN ART AND LITERATURE · DEVELOPMENT OF HANDS IN BOTTICELLI'S ART · LINEAR TREATMENT OF HANDS · EXPRESSIVE HANDS

IN continuing our study of Botticelli we observe that he took particular interest in hands and feet. Indeed, these members, especially the hands, besides playing a large part in practical life and greatly appealing to our attention in general, have shapes so beautiful as to have special interest for artists. In the whole history of Art I know of no good artist who did not draw hands and feet well. I might almost say that they may be taken as standards in distinguishing good artists from bad. The face is so important that ordinary artists and spectators look for it and for little else in a picture. Hands are considered as mere accessories. But they are no such slight things. Moreover, they are not easy to draw correctly, and only very great artists can draw them well, the whole attention of minor artists being entirely absorbed by the face. If you find uninteresting hands painted by an artist, it is sure that you will find the same dullness in every part of his picture, although at first sight you may not notice it. For instance, if you look at the *Mars and Venus* in the Berlin Museum, and the *Death of Procris* in the London National Gallery, by Piero di Cosimo, you are immediately charmed, and in a general way they are most charming pictures in sentiment and conception. After a little while you will be astonished to find how badly the hands in them are treated: correct in a broad way but lacking in delicacy. Indeed, I have nothing to say against these masterpieces of Piero di Cosimo, in which he really surpassed himself, perhaps under the poetic influence of Botticelli, but even in such inspired moments the hands revealed the real painter, who cannot be classed among the greatest.

With regard to the treatment of hands in Art, Mr. Berenson says: 'The hands, although in the draped figure they attract more attention than any other part, excepting the face, yet do not attract so much attention as any features of the face, excepting the ears, because the hands are not the rivals, in expression, of any of the features, and because until comparatively recent times they do not seem to have been regarded as indications of individual character. But their importance in the composition of the human figure draws far more attention to them, particularly to their

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

colour, than to the ears. . . . Their shape seems to have attracted as little notice as that of the ears, and the artist was free to give them any contours he pleased, and he nearly always fell into a stereotyped or habitual way of forming them.' (Berenson: *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art*, Vol. II, p. 134 ff.)

This is so far true, as Mr. Berenson speaks of hands in reference to the 'Rudiments of Connoisseurship', of the method of how to distinguish one painter from another. For this purpose the hands painted by various painters are really one of the best standards, and Morelli formulated a comparative diagram of hands and ears, which is useful for stylistic connoisseurs. Hands treated as such do not concern me here. But still I cannot help feeling that even for the sake of connoisseurship hands should be treated of with more care, as their beauty deserves. First feel for yourself the fine psychological functions of hands and also their beautiful formation, full of artistic possibilities. When you know and love real hands, then turn to the Renaissance masters: you will find that Mr. Berenson's generalization requires considerable modification. If you are yourself sensitive to the beauty of hands, it would be difficult to admit that 'their shape seems to have attracted as little notice as that of ears' among old masters. Does the interest in hands date from 'recent years'? True, it is only in modern times that a painter with some genius, such as Hodler, could infuse allegorical intentions into the hands and make them gesticulate so as to attract undue notice. This insistent demand on the spectators' attention cannot be a good proof of the modern interest in hands. To my mind the Renaissance masters, great and far-reaching in the study of the whole of Nature, evinced a far deeper interest in hands, and knew their artistic possibilities infinitely better. If they are not particularly noticeable in Renaissance works, it is because they were appreciated in their proper proportion to the whole body. Mr. Berenson says that 'the artist was free to give the hands any contour he pleases'. In a general way, this is true. So hands become in Art 'stereotyped' and 'habitual' at the convenience of connoisseurs. But lovers of Art should see a deeper meaning in this change too. The artist is 'free to give the hands any contour he pleases', therefore they give him an excellent opportunity for developing his artistic fancies. With good artists, as Botticelli, it is an artistic pleasure to trace the manner in which hands came to deviate beautifully from their realistic forms.

We may analyse interest in the hand in two ways, the realistic and the expressive. The formation of the hand is more complex than any other part of the body. It consists of varied combinations of lines and planes, which are capable of movements in every direction. A great artist of realistic habit cannot but be attracted to attacking the difficult task of painting hands, which, if successfully accomplished, amply compensates him. For

THE VISION OF ST. AUGUSTINE
(Florence, Uffizi Gallery)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

realistic interest alone, the hand is found sometimes more interesting to artists, even than the face. That Leonardo da Vinci was specially fond of hands is evident, if only from the excellent study of female hands in the Windsor Collection. It was the same with Michelangelo. Michangelo had a tendency to make the hands of his figures very large, as we may see in the youthful and ambitious work, the *David*, in the Accademia in Florence, and according to some philosophers this is explained as an unconscious expression of the spirit of the Renaissance, the apotheosis of human power, the hand being the symbol of human power. To me such a metaphysical interpretation seems too far-fetched. All that is certain is that Michelangelo saw in hands the best opportunity of expressing an energetic, muscular view of human construction, which is specially his. Dürer, another giant of unflinching realism, drew superb hands, which are perhaps among the greatest achievements of realism: the innumerable lines are selected and combined into a simple and dignified whole. Andrea del Sarto's famous studies of hands in the Uffizi Gallery are by comparison much inferior. Andrea observed only the surface and vigorously followed it, but he stopped there.

Parallel to this realistic interest goes the expressive interest which I may subdivide into 'characteristic' and 'symbolic', according to the inner sense which they express. I mean by the 'characteristic' hand, the hand which expresses the character of man, the actual intention entertained by man, and directly expressed in his hand as well as in his face. Italians make much use of hands as means of expression. Critics often say that in Leonardo's *Last Supper* the hands were so full of movement on account of this Italian habit. Leonardo was a profound soul, who felt more than anyone the spiritual significance of the hand. Painting is a silent art: in this climax of dramatic situation in the *Last Supper*, when Christ uttered the fatal word to the disciples, Leonardo was right to use, and perfectly successful in using, all the possible means of human expression, and the disciples look like giant Alps, which, hitherto serene under the benign sky, are suddenly encompassed with storm, echoing with thunder. The awed soul of the spectator is practically carried away by these 'hands' and is thrown from one peak to another.

As I have said, the truly great realist is not a mere realist. Dürer used the expression of the hand with utmost success. There is something extremely noble in his studies of praying hands, which you cannot explain by realism alone. The small painting of *Christ disputing with the Doctors*, in the Palazzo Barberini in Rome, is a wonder of expressive hands. With his tenacious interest in individual characteristics, he here inclines more than ever to the grotesque, and the features of the disputing doctors are deformities. And observe how those pedants discuss with toothless mouths and lascivious hands. You can almost hear the futile, scholastic noise in

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

the confusion of ugly, fleshy hands, each awkwardly flourishing, from the midst of which young Christ, the emblem of true Wisdom, emerges calm and serene. The whole series of Dürer's and Van Eyck's and El Greco's portraits stand as excellent proofs of the expression of character in hands.

To go a step farther, we find as well that hands often convey meanings deeper than what I call 'characteristic', than the immediate expression of the mental intention. In the underground store-house at the British Museum I once saw a marble hand pinching the frail wings of a butterfly, a beautiful fragment of an antique statue. When my eyes unexpectedly fell upon it in the dark twilight of the North, I felt some sweet mystery of the sunny South. Nor yet quite that: I cannot describe the feeling, sad and occult. Perhaps this feeling was remote from what the ancient artist intended or from what I would have felt had the statue been complete. Just because I saw the hand and no more, I could feel the pure mystery. Leonardo was fond of the hand, pointing. It is indeed an extraordinary thing, this pointing hand. It is really the symbol of the awakening of human intelligence, as was fittingly indicated by a psychologist. You point at a thing: and a dog, if not particularly trained, looks at the finger, not at the thing. You point, and spiritual meaning projects itself from the tip of the finger to something distant. Is it not extraordinary, if you come to think of it? The prophet points at Heaven, and the people's eyes are opened to Heaven's glory.

In Buddhism and other Oriental religions, all of which have strong tendencies to mysticism, hands play a large part in solemnities. The whole system of the mudras, or position of hands, in Buddhism is as complex as mysterious, which with its infinite combinations, positions of hands, their turnings, knittings of fingers and so on, serves to indicate innumerable gods and goddesses who are nothing less than the personification of different moods of the human mind. Among the Buddhist sects the most occult one, the Mikkyo (Tantric), makes most of the mudras and the slow, solemn tying and untying of hands and fingers adds greatly to the occult character of the ceremony. One of the Boddhisatvas most popularly worshipped is the Kwannon with a thousand hands, Kwannon the omnipotent, whose hands symbolize power. Its statue with one thousand hands radiating from both shoulders, with all sorts of attributes and in various positions, is really a mystic realization of supernatural power.

All this probably came from India, where the cult of the hand and foot seems to have been always cherished. There are innumerable representations of hands, both beautiful and ugly, always very symbolic, in Indian Art and its derivatives in the Art of all Eastern lands, and in Indian literature you can see no lack of similar interest in hands. (cf. *Burlington Mag.*, January 1914, Ananda Coomaraswamy: *Hands and Feet in Indian Art.*) A girl in love imagines 'the moon, stretching out a long ray, draws

me on, like a hand'. I can almost see, and shudder at, a white, long hand coming out of the green Indian night. The old way in Italian Art of representing God the Father with a hand coming out of a cloud gives me also a strangely supernatural impression. Its primitive simplicity is much more effective in impressing me with the miracle than the realistic way of representation in later time, in which the head and shoulders of an old man appears among the clouds attended by angels, and asks us to believe that he is God. The older way preserved the inspiration in the primitive mind. Fra Filippo Lippi, to whose mysticism I shall have occasion to refer, retained this primitive way of representation far into the realistic Quattrocento. Though this can be explained by his technical archaism, yet it may also be regarded in the light of the supernatural visions he might have had.

Again in the *Romantic Legend of Sakyamuni*, Sakaracharya prays to Devi:

> 'O mother, by the sword, spear and club,
> And other weapons, in thy leaf-like hands,
> Guard us on every side.'

Leaf-like hands! Maple-leaves are called in Japan 'human hands', because of their similarity in form, but I would say more, that those young pale leaves, extending in late spring, expanding visibly after sun and rain, are like the dancing hands of children. If young buds are signs of the mystery of expanding life, young hands are as well.

I think by now I have made clear the special charm and artistic possibilities of hands. It seems to me that Botticelli, with his sensitive nature, felt them all keenly, and enriched his art with their exquisite representations.

The portrait of a *Young Man with the Medici medal* is very indicative of the later characteristics of Botticelli's treatment of hands. First of all the picture shows that the painter's interest in hands almost equalled his interest in the face. Dr. Bode rejected this portrait as by Botticelli, chiefly because of the hands, of which he said: 'Zudem ist Sandro unmöglich die Geschmacklosigkeit zuzumuten, dass er den vornehmen Mediceer die Medaille seines Vaters in den Händen halten lässt, wie eine Bauerndirne ihre Zitrone hält.' (*Bode*, p. 105.) This seems to me an unfortunate remark. I confess I cannot imagine how anyone can see in the picture an attitude of 'a farmer's girl holding a lemon', and accuse Botticelli of 'tastelessness'. And then he says of the hands, 'so abscheulich verzeichnet', which is a very bold condemnation. The hands were much repainted, as Horne observed. Painters know that it is an extremely difficult thing to draw hands correctly with so much foreshortening, a slight mistake in the tone upsetting the whole construction, so that repainting, ever so little, does

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

vital harm. But, even allowing for wrong effect, on account of the unfortunate repainting, an artist's eye can see how well these hands were drawn in this significant pose, and placed rightly in the whole composition. Botticelli's hands are the hands imagined by an artistic eye.

As with everything else in Botticelli's art, hands began their development with the realistic basis which he learned from the Florentine Naturalists. Of his realistic hands, none is so fine as those of the *Fortezza*, which I do not hesitate to characterize as highly Pollajuolesque, bony, angular, and with the little finger apart. But there the similarity ceases. This angular outline, Botticelli filled in in his own way, which, at the prime of his naturalistic tendency, aimed at the minute modelling of the surface. This minute, almost timid, modelling you cannot find in Pollajuolo himself, who, being a greater master in realism, attained to better results with simple but effective modelling. The hands of the *Medal-Bearer* belong to this period of conscientious modelling, in a manner more forced and therefore unsuccessful, because of the difficult pose. In this respect the good school-work, *The Young Man with a Ring*, in the Corsini Gallery in Florence, again shows the weakness of the master exaggerated by a pupil. You can see at once how conscientiously the hand which holds the ring is studied, none the less how miserably small and crooked it looks with the minimizing effect of over-scrupulous elaboration. In several other portraits of the Botticelli school, for instance, that of a young man which was shown at Messrs. Duveen's in Paris in 1921, which is now in Mrs. Salomon's Collection, New York, or the man in the Museo Filangeri at Naples, or the young man in the Johnson Collection at Philadelphia, appear similar weak hands in forced and ugly attitudes and look like distant, faded descendants of Botticelli's own weakness.

When, from about the year 1478, the art of Andrea del Castagno began to influence Botticelli, its grand style moderated this elaboration. What a difference there is between the *Fortezza*'s hands and those of the Ognissanti *St. Augustine!* They are both admirable, each in its own way, the former in scientific observation of detail, the latter in bold grandeur. They are the two masterpieces of 'masculine' hands painted by Botticelli.

Indeed, as Botticelli learned realism from those masters of masculine vigour, he was more facile with masculine hands than with feminine, when he attempted realistic modelling. In the *Coronation of the Virgin* the uplifted hand of St. John the Evangelist is so superbly painted, with bony articulation and sculpture-like mass, that it is almost worthy of Andrea del Castagno, while the weak hands of the Virgin, crossed on her breast, are astonishingly unsatisfactory. Evidently Botticelli intended a careful foreshortening of the Virgin's hands, but the result was so poor, either in truth or beauty, that Mr. Berenson is doubtful of its being by the master. And, again, look at the difference between the male and female hands in

Pallas and the Centaur. In this picture there is a strange contrast in artistic conception between the Centaur's uplifted hand and the Pallas' right hand. The Centaur's hand is one of the very best male hands Botticelli ever painted. In it the broad and grand contour of Andrea del Castagno is followed, not imitated but interpreted with true knowledge and filled in with the nervous, subtle realism more of Verrocchio than of Pollajuolo, and, together with the torso of the Centaur, it constitutes one of the glories of masculine nudes of the Quattrocento. However, the hands of the Pallas are quite ordinary. The light and shade of the modelling of the left hand do not contribute to the feminine character of the goddess, which, although she was goddess of war, should be more tender than vigorous. In her right hand Botticelli's peculiar beauty is already appearing: the white, long fingers are charmingly intertwined in the wavy hair of the Centaur. Indeed this hand, inclined to be linear, is outside the province of realism. Considered as realistic, its way of grasping the hair is not entirely correct, the fingers being composed more for the sake of linear design than for the representation of a real and powerful hold. I may say, taking this as the first of many examples, that Botticelli's interest in female hands consisted mainly in artistic, non-realistic feeling, and so was able to develop freely, after he was more completely emancipated from the thrall of realism.

Before leaving Botticelli's realistic hands, let us compare his early female hands, say those in the *Primavera*, with the hands of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, which mark the climax of realistic representation. Botticelli painted the *Primavera* at the height of his Verrocchio-Pollajuolo realism, and all the details are studied from Nature with a solicitude never again evinced. But amid all this, Botticelli's inclination to the linear seems to have flowed forth beyond control. Seen in detail, those white hands and feet of the nymphs are shown to have been modelled with astonishing care. If you allow for the technical limitation of tempera on gesso compared with oil-colour, they are no less studied from Nature than the exquisite hands of *Mona Lisa*. But looking at the *Primavera* as a whole you cannot see these details, and your eye and soul are simply immersed in the arrangement of smooth melodious outlines. You feel, in the hands of *Mona Lisa*, as if your own hands were pleasurably wet in the green atmosphere, while in those of the white nymphs of the *Primavera* you realize the silvery movement of music.

The main character of Botticelli's female hands is that they are 'linear hands'. He enriched the representation of hands in Art in the two ways I have already indicated, the realistic and the expressive, and also in another way, the linear. I can see the hands of the *Medal-Bearer* also in this linear light, and can defend and admire them in spite of their weak realism. Their linear quality bears an unalterable relation to the whole composition.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

It is natural, if regrettable, that Botticelli, beginning the career of a linear designer, was destined in the treatment of hands and feet to lose his realistic precision. In the *Birth of Venus*, which shows, perhaps, the completest maturity of Botticelli's art, it is a shock to find so weak a hand as that of the Grace's left. Such a deviation from anatomical correctness was a stumbling-block, both for Botticelli's pupils in their attempts to imitate the master, and for critics in their appreciation of his art.

Botticelli's hands and feet are often called ugly. To all appearance Horne found them so, describing the hands of Venus as 'the hands plebeian', and he suggested as his justification that the artist had literally copied these from 'the expressive rather than beautiful "Tuscan Type"'. Mr. George Rose, who wrote an appreciative study of Botticelli in his *Renaissance Masters*, counts as the foremost among the 'surprising limitations' of Botticelli his defective hands and feet, saying, 'Though he spent his life in seeking after dainty types, his hands and feet are unusually coarse'. The phrase 'unusually coarse' is anything but suitable in describing Botticelli's hands and feet. If there exist hands and feet in the world that are not 'coarse', they are Botticelli's. As I have already mentioned, Morelli, in his study of Italian Painters, made a comparative chart of hands and ears by different artists. With all my respect for this pioneer of modern connoisseurship, these 'facsimiles' look to me like caricatures of the beautiful originals. They may be excused as being mere notes of a scholar and unsatisfactorily reproduced. Characteristics are grasped with exaggerated clearness, but where is the beauty which made them alive?

Why are Morelli's facsimiles of Botticelli's hands ugly? It is because these linear hands were interpreted by a modern realistic eye, modulating the outlines, accentuating light and shade, and making them like living hands. In this way outlines, artistically composed in relation to the general scheme, and therefore quite passable or even natural in a picture which is entirely thought out as Art, are suddenly dragged out into the real world. They cannot but look awkward, being out of their element. Even that deformed hand of the *Salvator Mundi*, which Morelli took for Botticelli's original and copied in the diagram, looks well in the picture, which is strange as a whole, while in the diagram it gives a false idea much too strongly.

If modern critics fell into this misconception led on by their own realistic standard, Botticelli's pupils, on the other hand, looking up to their beloved master with devotion, committed an exactly opposite error. Their blind wish to imitate the master carried them very far, and the numerous works of the Botticelli school have a common trait of strange hands and feet, which exaggerate Botticelli's linear conception to deformity.

As an example, I refer to the feet of the *Reclining Venus* in the Louvre, attributed to Jacopo del Sellajo. Among the pupils of Botticelli, Jacopo

had inferior qualities which were common to his master, as if he had inherited Botticelli's weaknesses alone. The feet of this Venus are actual exaggerations of Botticelli's manner, as seen in the National Gallery *Mars and Venus* and in the *Birth of Venus*. Botticelli, the linear genius, straining to the extreme the anatomical possibilities of the human figure in order to make it conform to the harmonious requirements of his composition, was indeed a dangerous master. The feet of both Venuses, in London and in Florence, are indeed perilous pieces of drawing, which, if imitated by one without Botticelli's own knowledge and instinct, would soon become deformed and unbearable. Jacopo's remarkable failure in the Louvre *Venus* is symbolic of all the imitative methods of his fellow-pupils.

Of the many examples of badly drawn hands, I shall only mention the impossibly bent wrist of the angel drawing the curtain on the right of the Madonna, in the tondo of the Corsini Gallery at Florence. Botticelli himself went sometimes too far in bending wrists and other joints in the human body. He did so noticeably in the *Primavera*, where the surprised Flora extends her arm in a fine curve; the arm ends in a sudden upturn, as though the white hand itself were in distress and crying for help. This upturning of the wrist was just possible at so extreme a moment, and was effectively used as the culmination of the whole curve. The same forced turn of the wrist is observable in the Madonna of the *Magnificat*, and in the angel to the extreme left in the *Enthroned Madonna with St. Barnabas and other Saints* in the Uffizi. From this angel the angels of the Corsini tondo were taken. From out the Corsini tondo, which was the work of an inferior pupil, the crooked wrists of the angels drawing the curtain appear false, not because the angle of the twist is sharper in itself, but because it is not so much in harmony with the whole scheme of the picture as in the Uffizi altar-piece.

As Botticelli painted hands chiefly depending on his sense of line, two tendencies in development appeared. One was their length, which, together with the length of the arm, sometimes became excessive. This is also an outcome of Botticelli's love for the slender figure, so that although it does not strike us as strange in so slender a figure, yet taken by itself, for instance, the arm of the Madonna of the *Magnificat*, or of the *Abundance* in the British Museum, or of St. John the Baptist in the *Enthroned Madonna with St. Barnabas and other Saints*, is really too disproportionate in length. It is interesting to notice that Botticelli had to evolve the slender hand from the short and fleshy type of Fra Filippo, who was conspicuous for his short, plump hands. We have already seen that the hands of the two kneeling saints in the *Enthroned Madonna with Six Saints* in the Accademia at Florence are Filippesque in their shortness. The short pointed hand of the *Profile Madonna in the Louvre* is another example, whose unexpected departure from the usual style has been the chief cause

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

of its rejection as by the master, though I must also admit that the Madonna's mantle and some other portions are too coarse to be given entirely to Botticelli. These short hands were destined to disappear in Botticelli's maturer works. Of the excessively long fingers of the Botticelli school, I need not give any example, as they are too numerous for mention. Jacopo del Sellajo again inherited this characteristic with exaggeration, and his female hands are sometimes like a collection of slender reeds.

The other tendency, naturally born from Botticelli's love of linear hands, is his frequent painting of two hands clasped together, where, in the interlacings of the ten long fingers, he had occasion for enjoying his fantasies in line. In the group of the three Graces in the *Primavera* they blend their white hands like the tendrils of young plants, and the line symphonies they present are nothing less than the intimate interlacing of soul with soul. With instinctive pleasure, Botticelli thought and invented how to vary all the modes of clasping hands among the eleven angels who form the dancing ring round the ceremony of the Coronation of the Virgin. In the Dante Illustrations, *Inferno*, Canto XIX, Botticelli drew the awful torture of the Simonists with a penetrating realization: the sinners are kept singly in narrow round holes, heads downward, so that only feet and struggling legs are visible:

> Of all these feet the soles were both alight
> By reason of which the joints were trembling so,
> They would have snapped strong withes or flaxen bright
> As on things oiled the flames flicker and flow,
> Moving only along their outward face,
> So was it with these soles from heel to toe.
> (Translated by Laurence Binyon.)

The tactile sensitiveness of the heels is strangely acute. Did Botticelli the sensuous genius feel it, and enjoy its nervous tremor? In the ring of dancing angels in the National Gallery *Nativity*, he changed the manner of taking hands with keen delight. Here he had more variations to make than in the *Coronation*, as in *The Nativity* each angel carried an olive branch, and at the same time had to clasp each other's hand. With a goldsmith's feeling of losing nothing precious, he curved the jewels of tiny hands in elaborate and varied settings. Dainty female hands are as beautiful as flowers or gems set in stellar design. In the panel of the *Calunnia* in the Uffizi Gallery you see a beautiful group of three maidens. They are Treachery and Deceit adorning Calumny's hair with flowers. Indeed the twenty fingers, radiating in stellar pattern from the ends of the four arms, as slender as new stems in spring, and gathered again in converging lines round the pretty face of Calumny, are they not more beautiful than the flowers which they hold?

Running parallel with this formal development of Botticelli's hand, from the realistic to the linear, was an inner development of feeling for the beauty of the hand, from the expressive to the symbolic. So spiritual a being as Botticelli never took any lasting interest in outward form, unless as an initiative to some inner meaning. Or it is better to say: Botticelli was after all a painter, the immediate motive for him was always a pictorial interest, but, at the same time, along with it his sensitive soul worked and filled the beautiful exterior of his art with spiritual content. In this spirituality, dependent upon the artistic form, was a parallel development as well. If we trace the evolution of Botticelli's art, taking into consideration this inner development, it would appear to be of this nature: at first he was too exclusively occupied with the outward aspect of the hand and its technical difficulties; then his spiritual sense awoke; but being strictly dependent upon the still tenacious realism, its expression was at first what I called the 'characteristic', the expression of the soul or its intentions immediately behind the exterior. And then, as his art approached more and more to its absolute domain, his outward form being gradually released from the grip of realism, the expression was also released from the immediate illustration of the character of the actual person represented, and became freer, finally arriving at symbolism, just as the outward form became a linear design. If in the outward form Botticelli's great merit lay in the linear, so in spiritual expression it must lie in the corresponding one, the symbolic. It remains to trace Botticelli's hand from the expressive to the symbolic.

When one looks intently at the right hand of the beautiful *Venus* in the Uffizi one feels as if it really moves: it is bashful and nervously alive to its position. The superb feet of the Zephyrs are joyously cleaving the green water. There are tiny souls in hands and feet and they are playing hide and seek among these sweet moving lines. I should like to mention here the happy expedient, so peculiar to Botticelli, of expressing flight in the air by long stretched legs, placed closely together. He used this frequently in Dante, especially in the later part of the *Purgatorio*, where souls were floating upward into heaven. The Doctors of the Church, of whom only the stretched feet are visible, fly lightly up in this way through the seven-coloured smoke of candles in *Purgatorio*, Canto XXXIII. Botticelli used this excellently in the large fresco *Annunciation of S. Martino* in Florence. The small panel of the *Annunciation* from the Stroganoff Collection, described by Mr. V. Lazareff in the *Burlington Magazine*, March 1924, is also a beautiful work, with the angel in this attitude. How this flying pose is essential to the buoyant nature of an angel can best be seen in Botticini's angels in the Collegiata at Empoli, which, though imitating Botticelli so closely as to deceive Vasari, have a heavy earthly character, endowed with healthy feet which step firmly on the ground.

Let us see the symbolical significance of hands in the most admirable

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

of *Annunciations* of the world's Art, in the Uffizi, of which, however, I must say only the conception and composition are due to Botticelli himself. This is a late work, and the painter's gloomy, nervous nature, inclining to its last phase of mysticism, comes out. Hands play a mystic part in this most beautiful of miracles. Have you ever noticed the mesmeric effect with which two hands sometimes speak to each other? If a spiritual communication can be visualized, invisible sparks flying from soul to soul, here surely you see it. The solemn message emanates from the angel's open hand: it must be received, it must travel its course; the awed Virgin, helplessly extending her receiving hand, draws with her body a corresponding curve. Michelangelo, too, understood this fine psychology, superbly using it in his greatest masterpiece, the *Creation of Adam*. God extends His hand, the lifeless Adam extends his, they do not so much as touch, these two awful fingers. Adam opens his eyes, life is given to him. Who can change a single line in this mysterious communication? In the Berlin copy of the Uffizi *Annunciation* the imitator faithfully copied the angel but changed the pose of the Madonna. The whole effect is gone.

Botticelli came to feel symbolic significances more and more deeply as, advancing in age, he approached the day of his conversion to the cause of Savonarola. In his late works, pronouncedly religious, hands are used as vehicles of emotion more than any other means of expression, and that with the utmost effect. In the central panel of the *Transfiguration* of the Pallavicini Collection at Rome, religious ecstasy, filling all the souls present at this solemn miracle, is expressed with gesticulating hands, involuntarily raised, partly to shade their eyes, partly in awed astonishment. The same thing must be said of Botticelli's drawing at Darmstadt, in which excited scene, perhaps of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, I do not know whether their hands and feet were not as much shaken as their souls, in feeling the holy presence. In the large school-piece of the same subject in the Cook Collection at Richmond, though differently composed, a similar effect is given and, in spite of the very coarse execution, the picture has something impressive in its linear composition, which is like a wonderful flower, opening under the sun of mystery. In the dramatic scene of *Virginia's* death by the sword of her own father (Accademia, Bergamo), five female hands raised high, crying for help, are exactly the prayers of women's souls, soaring in despair, flame-like, unto heaven.

It is not in those excited moments alone that Botticelli's hands are eloquent. When the old beloved *St. Zenobius* of Florence dies (Gemäldegalerie, Dresden), after his long life spent for faith and for the good of others, sorrowing multitudes encircle his bed. It is a silent, solemn scene. Like concentric petals of a large dandelion, the praying hands all point to the saint, the surest sign that all souls are one, sorrowing in a common sorrow.

Thus, psychologically, Botticelli's hand developed. At the end of this study, let us admire the finest hand ever painted by him, in which, I may say, all the qualities I have mentioned were perfectly combined. I mean the hand of the *Portrait of a Young Man* in Mr. Clarence MacKay's Collection in New York. It is the hand of an Adonis, where the soft feminine charm is mingled with a man's strength, though still young. It is a perfect hand. Except in a few of El Greco's masterpieces, you cannot see such a hand, a mere hand, with a whole mystery behind it.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

CHAPTER VIII. BOTTICELLI'S TREATMENT OF THE HAIR · ÆSTHETICS OF THE HAIR · REALISTIC TREATMENT; LINEAR TREATMENT OF THE HAIR BY DÜRER; TONAL TREATMENT BY TITIAN; SENSUOUS AND DECORATIVE TREATMENT BY LEONARDO AND BARTOLOMMEO VENETO · THE YAMATOYE SCHOOL · UTAMARO AND BOTTICELLI · BOTTICELLI'S NYMPHS

IN my plan of following Botticelli's sensuousness from the real to the ethereal, after the study of his treatment of the human body, of hands and feet, comes that of the hair, for the appreciation of which real sensuousness becomes less and the ethereal more. Hair has no definite form, consisting in fine, flexible lines, in which an artist of Botticelli's type had the best opportunity of indulging his linear inclinations.

The æsthetics of hair are strange. As in everything else appertaining to the human body, the appreciation of hair is mainly sensuous. But it is in itself insensitive. It grows in the skin, but grows out of it, and becomes semi-exterior matter. The beauty of the hair is primarily felt by the senses, but while retaining its sensuous character, it is also abstract and approaches linear design. If we admit 'ethereal sensuousness' as the main characteristic of Botticelli's art, we expect him to paint the beauty of hair well.

Hair is also in its realistic aspect of absorbing interest to artists. Its colour and reflection, its mysterious semi-transparency, velvety tone and silken lines, innumerable and fine, ever trembling and undulating, provide artists with endless problems. Hair has no definite form, it admits of the freest treatment: it is ever a snare for inferior painters, and as a rule its representation in painting is very unsatisfactory, and passes uncensured solely because of the general ignorance of its real beauty. Indeed, the hair is a difficult thing to paint correctly, because of its very irregularity. Only the very greatest of realists can extract the secret of its accurate representation. It is highly instructive to study the hair as painted by great realists, because its æsthetic qualities are so rich and related to each other with such freedom that the artist is enabled to grasp its reality from any of the aspects suited to his genius. But it also means that the beauty of the hair is too fleeting for realists to catch in its entirety.

The visual aspect of any natural object divides itself into two, line, and colour and tone. This division never applies so truly as to the hair, which literally consists of lines, tinted with colour and tone. It is interesting to observe Dürer's treatment of hair as representative of its linear realism, and compare it with Titian's, which I take as the representative of the

tonal. Dürer took special interest in the hair, which he drew with miraculous precision. With almost inconceivable labour he traced the stream of innumerable lines without omission. But it was not ideal portrayal. His drawing of the hair is like an aggregation of fine-drawn spiral wires. You are struck by the wonderful technique, but the beauty of the hair is absent. As Dürer was attracted to the hair, in order to indulge in the technical pleasure of line-tracery, his tendency was to over-emphasize the linear qualities, which were apt to become too profuse and too clearly defined.

What was Titian, the direct opposite of Dürer, in his conception of Art? Dürer was strictly linear, Titian entirely tonal. Dürer with his severe line could well portray the rugged beard of the furrowed intellectual face; Titian's caressing brush, full of honeyed colours, was best suited for painting the glossy, soft masses of a maiden's tresses. His picture of the *Repenting Magdalene* in the Pitti Gallery is perhaps the greatest marvel in the world of representation of hair in tone and colour. What is lacking in it? As always with this most healthy of artists, serenely contemplating Nature with a well-balanced mind, his appreciation is so adequate as to verge on the commonplace. He gave a normal idea of hair. It was a marvellous representation which, however, did not hide the ordinary vision. Titian was immense, there is no doubt about it, if only for his power of description; but when this technical marvel disappears, what remains, except something grand, yet at the same time dull? And in fact Titian's followers, Tintoretto and especially Paul Veronese, became decorators on a large scale, and thus lost, as the price of their sublime composition, the delicate technique of execution, and had to show an almost barren breadth in their treatment of the hair. They painted in its general effect of mass and colour with as rough and indifferent brushwork as in their draperies.

That these two marvels, Dürer with his line, Titian with his tone and colour, were each able to represent some characteristics of the hair, while really failing to gain its essential beauty, is very significant. It was chiefly because of their intellectual outlook. The utmost they could do was to represent some aspects of the hair, which is seen, but not felt. The fleeting quality of the hair, which every minute draws a new gossamer design, easily escapes the heavy grip of healthy realism. The artists of purely visual types could not catch the beauty of such abstract qualities.

Here, as always, entered Leonardo, as the climax of realistic representation, in whom the visual and the sensuous converged. Here especially, because possessing a highly intellectual character, none the less his great sensuousness could not be content without an ultra-sensuous appreciation. Leonardo's comparison of female hair to flowing water is well known. Unmistakably to his discerning eyes female hair, as well as flowing water, revealed the same rhythmic lines along which dynamics work in physical Nature. Added to this scientific penetration, Leonardo obviously loved

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

hair for its sensual attractions as an artist. How caressing is the way he traced the ringlets on the head of young St. John, both in *La Vierge aux Rochers* in the Louvre and in the superb drawing of *St. Anne* in the Royal Academy in London! In his finished works, Leonardo's unity of character arranged all things in proportion to their proper values, as in harmonious Nature, and refrained from making the hair, however beautiful, too conspicuous. In his small sketches and studies, however, he let his caprice go its own way, and you can peep into the secret corners of his genius. He had an extreme fondness for female hair, in which respect he proved more than ever his kinship with Botticelli. In the small flying angels, drawn in pen and ink in the British Museum, he let their long hair stream like flame. He had a weakness for fantastic plaitings which add so much to the charm of woman. Above all, he invented elaborate interlacings to *Leda*, which, clinging to her head like gorgeous snakes, must have endowed the white serpentine body with a fearful fascination. Leonardo it was who knew from his boyhood the shuddering effect of the Medusa's head, with hair of creepy snakes. Together with the extremely sensuous representation of female flesh, Leonardo's pupils inherited from their master the portrayal of sensuous hair, and the female figures of his followers in Northern Italy have profuse hair, which has an uncanny effect. I may name Gaudenzio Ferrari as an example, conspicuous, though inferior.

Indeed, the nature of the hair is such that only artists of sensuous character can deeply feel its charm. Bartolommeo Veneto must have felt it with a peculiar sensitiveness, as we have already noticed in his flowers. Why does his *Portrait of a Courtesan* in the Frankfurt Museum present so extraordinary a treatment of the hair? It is usually accounted for as the mode of the time. It may be true, but there is a psychological meaning more important. Bartolommeo alone painted the hair like that and very often. In the female portrait in the possession of the Duke of Melzi in Milan, we see the same wavy, wiry hair: it is a mere portrait, and so may represent the fashion. He repeats the same again in the *Madonna* in the Crespi-Morbis Collection in Milan (cf. Morelli, *Italian Painters*, Vol. I), and if it was the mode favoured by courtesans it would not have been very suitable to Madonnas, although it may have been the fashion of the time. I think it more important to know that Bartolommeo Veneto frequently painted it because he liked it, and with exaggeration. The hair of the Frankfurt Courtesan looks as if it had been woven by a golden spider. Its extreme charm makes me think of the story of Lilith, 'Adam's first wife', with her wonderful golden hair, who

> 'Draws men to watch the bright net she can weave,
> Till heart and body and life are in its hold.'
>
> (D. G. Rossetti, 'Lady Lilith'.)

MARS AND VENUS
(London, National Gallery)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

It is interesting to notice that so realistic a painter as Bartolommeo Veneto should have been tempted by his sensuous susceptibility to represent hair under a linear transformation. If it appears so to such a realist, how extraordinarily an artist with less grip of realism and more inclined to linear design must interpret the beauty of the hair. Before studying Botticelli's manner, I wish to review, by way of contrast to the above-mentioned realists, the representation of hair in the opposite manner, as pure linear designs.

As I have said, Japanese Art is conspicuous for its boldness of decorative form. Hair must provide such an Art with the most suitable material for displaying its peculiarities. Japanese women have wonderful hair, sometimes as long as their stature, streaming down their shoulders like flowing water, and so black in colour that it almost looks blue in the sun. In contrast with men's hair in India, scanty, short and curling in small spirals as conventionalized in the images of Buddha, the female hair in Japan has always preserved in Art its extraordinary length and black colour as distinctive characteristics, however decoratively conventionalized. Indeed, in the Yamatoye school, women's hair is treated purely as line melody in black and white, and as little else. From a little distance you cannot distinguish what is really represented in the picture, which is so beautiful in line arabesque. On closer examination you are astonished to find that those black rivers are the hair streaming down from the tiny heads of court ladies, and flowing in and out among the large folds of their dresses. As a design it is exquisite, but there is no realistic interest.

This purely decorative treatment is insufficient for the progress of modern ideas. Japanese Art, which started with this decorative principle, was destined, when its tradition became complemented by modern realistic senses, to produce the finest rendering of the hair. Here comes the genius of Utamaro, whose representation of it is the purest embodiment of the charms of female hair as felt in his own country, where hair is admired as the chief requisite of beauty. That Utamaro felt the capacity for expression in hair can best be proved from his series of *Yamauba*, beautiful mother among mountains, the primeval Magna Mater imagined in modern sense, whose strange charm he set out grandly with a Medusa-like halo of profuse, coal-black hair. As a proof of his realistic penetration into the tiny beauties of the hair, so tiny as to escape the notice of careless eyes, I may mention his infinite care in drawing the down close to the hair line of the forehead. Yet above all, Utamaro retained the character of decorativeness, and he used the hair chiefly as motives of line-harmony. Women combing their hair into smooth flowing lines, then tying it up into line-arrangements, as bizarre as tropical butterflies, were ever his favourite subject. Botticelli was born in a country where the hair of woman was more wavy than straight, and at a time when genre-painting was scarcely known,

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

and where realism reigned supreme. With modification arising from circumstances, Botticelli again showed an artistic sensitiveness akin to Utamaro.

Examining Botticelli's treatment of the hair, we can well imagine the great interest he took in it. It seems that, even in his most realistic days, with this formless substance which permitted of a very free interpretation, Botticelli's love of line could not help flowing forth and taking his attention from realistic representation. He could be a realist with regard to the human body, even in hands and feet, in spite of his tendency to the contrary. In hair, however, he could not be, its decorative and symbolic allurement being too much for him. Antonio Pollajuolo was an excellent master in the realistic treatment of hair, as is proved by the famous profile of a lady in the Poldi-Pezzoli Museum, formerly attributed to Piero della Francesca, which shows a miraculous representation of blond hair, of which there is no parallel. Botticelli, just because he felt the peculiar charm of the hair as no one else did, could not have been so perfect in his realistic delineation of it.

Botticelli, in the treatment of the hair, showed himself as more than ever an artist. He simply could not bear realism in it. His appreciation of it, starting from its sensuous charm, went straight to its artistic treatment without the circuitous process of realism. From the few realistic examples of the hair which are quite unremarkable, except in delicate details, as in the hair under the veil of Mary Magdalene in the *Madonna with Six Saints* of the Accademia in Florence, Botticelli immediately painted those pictures, in which the decorative treatment of the hair was remarkable in combination with the general realism, and announced the future of his career as a musician of line.

Here again let us compare the *Primavera* and the *Birth of Venus*, those two monuments of Botticelli's career. In the *Primavera* the hair shows the painter's closest approach to realism, but it is none the less perfectly absorbed into the decorative scheme. Is not this what hair should be? Looking closely, you find that Botticelli felt as well as Utamaro the strange tactile charm of the substance. Each line is traced, not with the sharpness of Dürer, or of Mantegna, not with a dull objective precision of Domenico Ghirlandajo, but with a moist and silky caress. In the *Birth of Venus* this caressing sensation is entirely lost, but the linear decorative quality is much greater. The curve of Venus' body is in the subtlest harmony with the sweep of her golden hair, which together builds up the exquisite line-construction of the body of the goddess. In the Berlin copy of the Venus, the pupil omitted the indispensable curve of the hair, which in the original compensated for the too-lowered and narrow shoulder, and exquisitely kept the balance of the figure, and added, instead, an unnecessary mass, wrongly accentuating the curve of the right shoulder, which was already sufficiently raised. The whole effect of the superb original is lost. Do not

say the hair may fall in any direction, as the wind blows: Botticelli's creations are linear constructions, and the slightest change of the delicate line imperils the whole effect.

As to Botticelli's love of blond hair, I simply refer it to his love of gold as a colour. Horne says: 'Even the abundant golden hair, which at first sight might appear a piece of pedantry borrowed from the antique, is to be found an actual Florentine trait.

"Se poi si tira le bionde trecce
Decco la donna di sette bellezze"

ends one of the Florentine "Rispetti" on the seven beauties which a woman ought to possess.' (*Horne*, p. 151.) Here more than ever Horne evinced his untiring desire for seeking documentary grounds for Botticelli's artistic creations. I cannot see that the abundant golden hair appears 'a piece of pedantry borrowed from the antique'. According to the old 'Rispetti' which Horne quoted, golden hair may have been generally admired in Quattrocento Florence, yet who but Botticelli felt it and expressed it with such loving exaggeration?

Among many interesting comparisons between the *Primavera* and the *Birth of Venus*, the totally different treatment of the hair marks the latter as a work more valuable for its general effect, the former for its elaborate detail. The sensuous type of man is as frail as a flower. Botticelli, well over forty when he painted the *Birth of Venus*, must have lost something in sensuous appreciation of feminine charm, a quality with which he had been so abundantly supplied at the time he painted the *Primavera*, when he was about thirty. At the time of the *Primavera* he showed such an excessive fondness for women's hair, that though softened by the general tendency of decorative style, it almost realized the strange feeling of the hair as snaky. Snaky plaits added very much to the mysterious charm of the young women he painted and made them approach fairies.

Dr. Warburg thinks that this nymph-like trait of fantastic plaiting was suggested to Botticelli by Poliziano, and he gives many quotations from Poliziano to prove his theory. I agree with Dr. Warburg, but in this sense that Poliziano showed himself in his works a kindred spirit to Botticelli, particularly in the sensuous appreciation of female charms. Poliziano was never tired of describing in elegies, odes or in longer poems, all the beautiful maidens, Simonetta and Albiera and the rest, transforming them into nymphs, who were the personifications of pure feminine charms as felt by Quattrocento sensitiveness. A nymph is a charming frailty: the unreal beauty of the hair must be her suitable ornament. The *Primavera* is the first picture in which Botticelli painted nymphs, and as it is clear that he obtained the idea of the picture from the verses of '*La Giostra*',

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

in which Poliziano described women abundantly in nymphean traits, possibly Botticelli received his conception of nymphs from the poet. What is more important, however, is that it was Botticelli who realized in visual forms these mythological maidens and fixed their type for ever.

Indeed, Botticelli is the creator of nymphs in painting, and although the illustrator of Boccaccio's *Nimfale Fiesoliano* was an artist brought up in the style of Pollajuolo, yet in the representation of nymphs he could not but use Botticellesque figures. Botticelli's interest in the sensuous charms of the hair was thus embodied in his representation of nymphs. The Grace in the extreme left in the *Primavera* is the perfect image of a nymph, amorous, frail and mysterious. Botticelli at the time of the *Primavera* could not help transforming every charming maiden into a nymph. The daughters of Jericho in the Sistine Chapel are mythical white shadows of the wood rather than scriptural personages. Those imaginary portraits of the Botticelli school that go usually under the name of 'La Bella Simonetta', reflect the nymph-like beauty of the master at his artistic prime, which even weak execution could not destroy. Especially interesting is the one in the Cook Collection. Through its very weak technique you can still see the frail beauty, which, if you were to touch, would melt into a dewdrop.

It is not the mere fantastic plaitings of hair which can give a nymph-like appearance to a figure. In the Rothschild Collection in Paris there is a profile of a lady by Raffaelino del Garbo, with extremely rich head ornaments in the manner of Botticelli, but it does not give a nymph-like impression. '*La Bella Simonetta*' at Chantilly, by Piero di Cosimo, has her hair plaited in a very fantastic way, but she appears anything but fairy-like. All depends for mythical transformation on the sensitiveness with which the hair is felt and treated by the artist. The hair of the Chantilly '*Simonetta*' is realistically studied, only piled up with a fantastic caprice, which alone cannot change woman into nymph. Only the fine genius of Botticelli, who felt the snaky charm in the hair itself, could realize the presence of the imaginary creatures in the daughters of Eve.

The nymph-like aspect of the hair was to diminish by and by in his works as the sensuous life of youth gave way to the contemplative tendencies of old age. We have already noted that even in the *Birth of Venus*, with its classical necessities for nymph-like figures, Botticelli's brushwork, inclining to the decorative, became too broad, and you miss the elaborate, but melting details of his youthful conceptions. With the disappearance of nymphs, Botticelli's treatment of the hair became a purely decorative invention of linear composition, or a means of dramatic expression, and although the sensuous charm is lacking, his manner is again unmatched. We noted how Venus' hair was constructively indispensable to her figure. In the *Madonna della Melagrana*, in the Uffizi Gallery, the angels' heads, posed in different directions, are exquisitely kept in balance by the line-

arrangement of their hair. The Borghese tondo *Madonna*, which is a school-picture, shows the defect in this very point, and the angels' heads are clumsy in pose, especially the one on the extreme right, whose hair grows parallel with the line of the neck and accentuates the already too sharp angle of the head with the torso.

Botticelli's treatment of hair was gradually becoming an arrangement of abstract lines, less sweet and pliant, and more and more functional as part of the linear composition. For instance, in the *Madonna della Melagrana* the two angels nearest to the Madonna on her right have beautiful snaky tresses, charmingly curling, but they have lost the living, kissing sense of touch, contained in the fair hair of the Three Graces and of Flora in the *Primavera*. Yet they are still better than the angel in profile in the right hand, whose hair, if realistically considered, is just a wig, though a wig well suited to the head. This mannered tendency was taken up, as usual, by unworthy imitators and turned into a vulgar, hard style as if the hair was not a tender and natural aureole, but rather a metal cap, curling fantastically. Francesco Botticini's tondo *Madonna and Child with Angels in the Garden*, in the Pitti Gallery, is an extreme example.

In accord with what I have said of the æsthetic nature of the hair, I observe that, parallel with Botticelli's decorative development in the treatment of it, he advanced in its expressive function. In later Madonna pictures with Saints, Botticelli depended for the expression of deep thought in St. John the Evangelist, St. Barnabas, St. Augustine and others, chiefly upon the silvery aureole of the hair and beard. And, again, in the *Coronation of the Virgin*, and in the National Gallery *Nativity* of the year 1500, the joyous movements of the circle of angels, as if the whole of heaven were rejoicing, are so well expressed by their wild, streaming hair, which gives them the look of airy spirits. In dramatic situations, which Botticelli preferred in his last years, the hair is so well used for passionate expression, it appears almost to weep, and to fear, in the tragic scenes of *Lucrezia* and *Virginia*. Not executed by Botticelli himself, though superbly designed by him, is the *Story of Nastagio degli Onesti*, where an infuriated warrior on horseback chases a naked lady with two ferocious dogs. In a free copy of the banquet scene in the Johnson Collection in Philadelphia, the dullness of the whole execution is explained by the meagre, dangling hair of the nude woman, who looks little like fleeing from the desperate fangs. Dante's *Inferno*, with its presentation of the whole scale of human agony, provided the painter with every opportunity for depicting tragic hair. Canto XVIII, describing the first two chasms of the Malebolge, may be given as an excellent example. The flatterers wallowing in excrement, their hair wet and dripping with filth, some in despair, scratching and pulling their polluted hair, are emblems of misery itself.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

CHAPTER IX. BOTTICELLI'S TREATMENT OF DRAPERIES · ÆSTHETICS OF DRAPERIES · REALISM IN DRAPERIES · GREEK AND GOTHIC DRAPERIES · TRANSPARENT GARMENTS · BEAUTY OF TEXTURE · 'FLAT' AND 'LINEAR' CONCEPTIONS OF DRAPERIES · BOTTICELLI AND AGOSTINO DI DUCCIO

AFTER Botticelli's treatment of the hair, we turn our attention to his draperies. The psychological function of draperies is similar to that of the hair, and Botticelli's genius flashed out with equal beauty in his interpretation of them.

It has already been observed that the hair, beginning with the sensitive skin, projects from it into the open in a free and abstract design, and therefore only half-belongs to the human body. The nature of draperies is similar, only their relation to the body is reversed. That is to say, they are in themselves unfeeling, external matters, but they cover and protect the whole body like an outer skin. In the artistic treatment of the hair we have seen a strange mixture of realistic and æsthetic interests, arising from its dual nature, half human, half abstract. Draperies, with the same dual nature more pronounced in each, have only to allow the artist to apply the same two treatments, realistic and decorative, in a more heightened way.

From our previous study of Botticelli we cannot expect to find him very satisfactory in the realism of draperies. On the one hand, draperies, with their direct contact with the entire body, appealed much to his sensuous appreciation. On the other, draperies, with their free formation of folds and lines, led him immediately into decorative treatment. It must be said that he was doubly distracted from the objective study of them. Leonardo was able to accomplish it, and proved, more clearly than anyone, the existence of an objective law ruling draperies in the formation of folds. Indeed, Leonardo's studies, worthy of their great fame, are objective realism of draperies at their very best. Botticelli's attitude was just the opposite of Leonardo's.

Subjective draperies, draperies not as they are, but as they are felt: draperies in their relation to man; these were what Botticelli could accomplish. They can be analysed into the following two elements, in which Botticelli with his nature, sensuous and decorative, excelled any artist in existence: the draperies intended to 'represent' real draperies, although more subjectively felt than objectively described, and draperies 'presented' as a motive of linear design. I will begin by examining the first.

If the sentiment of intimacy originated with and therefore presupposed physical contact, there is nothing so inseparably intimate in our lives as clothes, which embrace the whole expanse of our body. Draperies are insensate substance, but as our relation is so intimate we spontaneously project our own senses into them, and they become, as I have said, our outer skin. This extremely sensuous nature of clothes appealed immensely to Botticelli, and while preventing him from calmly studying their structure, enabled him, as a rich compensation, to portray the most charming of subjective garments.

I refer especially to the garments of the Three Graces and of Flora in the *Primavera*, of which I know no parallel in the whole world, which are too impossibly beautiful really to exist. These clothes are, indeed, the precious tactile atmosphere, floating round fair bodies, to make your eyes misty before a splendour too dangerous. They love and cling to secret limbs as if alive.

This is nothing less than the Greek idea of garments, which was interpreted by Botticelli with an over-wrought sensuousness, peculiar to modern times, but still Greek in its fundamental openness. The body is frank, is not ashamed to show its beauty: the draperies do not hide but heighten the precious thing beneath. Put Botticelli's Flora side by side with the famous relief of the *Birth of Venus* on the Ludovici Throne in the Museo delle Terme in Rome. Although there is a world of difference between the archaic innocence of the Greek Goddess and the trembling nervousness of the Quattrocento nymph, Flora's draperies are the descendants of those of the Venus. Can this Hellenic conception be explained by geographical reasons? The Southern artist might have actually seen the beautiful movements of the body beneath the thin garment, and so even when he sculptured a figure with rather thick draperies, as the *Niké of Samothrace*, the glory of the Louvre, he could not but trace the sublime structure of the body underneath. Meanwhile the Gothic artist of the North, accustomed to see figures enveloped in thick garments, which are nothing but insensible hard armour against the biting cold, carved or painted figures in such heavy, bulky clothing, that you really wonder in what corner the small pale pearl of a body lies hidden. Clothes and body are separate in the Art of the North, there is no organic relation between them. Gothic clothes were painted mainly as still-life for the sake of their gorgeous texture, never with sensuous appreciation as an outer skin, endowed with feeling. In Southern Art, clothes are always treated in close connection with the body.

The Three Graces and Flora in the *Primavera* wear garments of transparent gauze. According to the Greek idea of clothes, this must have been the ideal material, and we see it frequently used in the representations of women on Greek vase-paintings. The Three Graces were the personifi-

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

cation, in the Southern mind, of young life in happy enjoyment in Nature, and they are represented as three young girls dancing, clad in open and filmy clothes, which do not hide their beauty. Scholars would have us believe that ungirdled, transparent clothes were the classical attributes of the Three Graces, and that Botticelli followed the classical authority. Leon Battista Alberti, art-theorist as well as architect, who had great influence on artists of his time, gave, in his 'Della Pittura di Leon Battista Alberti Libri Tre', as a suitable subject for artists, 'quelle tre sorelle, a quali si pose nome Eglie, Heufronesis et Thalia, quali si dipignievano prese fra loro l' una e' altra per mano, ridendo, con la vesta scinta et ben monda; per quali volea s' intendesse la liberalità . . .'. Both Janitchek and Horne agreed that Alberti freely transcribed this passage from Seneca, where it reads: 'quare tres Gratiae et quare sorores sint et quare manibus inplexis et quare ridentes juvenes et virgines solutaque ac perlucida veste'. These are authorities for 'transparent' clothes (cf. *Horne*, p. 58). Of the 'ungirdled', there is a minute study from classical sources by Warburg. (Warburg: *Botticelli's Geburt der Venus u. Frühling*, p. 24 ff.)

It is quite possible that Botticelli referred to some literary sources when he painted these transparent garments: he was accustomed all through his life to a dependence on literature. But what is important is that Botticelli felt the artistic possibilities of transparent gauze and lovingly used it, not only as garments for his classical figures, but also as veils and head-dresses of Madonnas, with such beautiful effect as has never before or since been surpassed. The veil was one of the popular fashions of the time. Among others, Cosimo Rosselli used it largely and with little effect. Jacopo del Sellajo, always close in character to Botticelli, though in a very inferior manner, employed this most beautiful of Botticelli's devices, using it with innumerable variations, with a result more ugly than beautiful. Botticelli alone understood the æsthetic effect of transparent gauze. How his pupils tried and failed to inherit his superior quality can be clearly seen by a comparison of the angel in the large Uffizi *Annunciation*, by Botticelli, with that in the Berlin *Annunciation* of the Botticelli school. The Uffizi angel trails behind him a gauze mantle, which, with its aerial effect, wonderfully woven into fine gossamer threads, makes him look as if he had just flown into the room, cleaving the air. In the Berlin copy the mantle is painted opaque and heavy, and the whole effect of buoyancy is lost. The copy of the same angel in Mr. W. Sichel's Collection in London has no flying mantle, which in the Berlin angel at least maintains the flowing line-composition of the figure, so that the angel in Mr. Sichel's picture looks just like a nice boy pathetically gazing ahead.

Though I deviate a little from the main argument, I wish to point out that Utamaro was also susceptible to the peculiar effect of transparent gauze. In Japan, the thin summer clothes are usually so stiffly starched

that they are rarely parallel with the body they cover, so that Utamaro had little opportunity for painting what I called the Greek ideal of clothes. But he was richly endowed with a fine sensibility for the strange charm of transparency. Often he made his fair women look through some semi-transparent material as they examine it against the light, and their pretty faces, coming vaguely through the flowery patterns and the fine texture of the intervening stuff, look more charming than ever. For such an appreciation of texture the artist must be endowed with most sensitive nerves. Utamaro lovingly drew the Japanese mosquito-net, the fine lines of which, running horizontally and vertically, seem to weave a green dream over sleeping beauties. Botticelli, too, could understand the infinity of artistic effect of fine woven transparencies, which is well exemplified in the head-dress of Mary Magdalene of the Accademia *Madonna with Six Saints*, or *the Profile Madonna of the Louvre*. I have already mentioned the ugliness of the gauze painted by Cosimo Rosselli and Jacopo del Sellajo. Their sensitiveness was not fine enough, and they tried to give the general effect of transparency by rough brushwork with razor-like edges.

After studying the realistic side of Botticelli's subjective clothes, we may proceed to garments presented as motives for linear design. This is the remarkable feature in Botticelli's art, by which we may, after observing his gradual development, become finally initiated into his music of line, the very core of his genius. The examination of the opposing genius in this respect, Fra Filippo, will help in the understanding.

The fine figure of *Salome Dancing*, in the Cathedral at Prato, which the frate painted while Botticelli was his apprentice, forms an excellent connecting link between the two artists, and explains in one way the continuation of the same art from the older to the younger artist, and also the limit of that art, from which the younger was to deviate. Usually *Salome* is understood as a proof of how Fra Filippo with this figure introduced movement and line-harmony into Quattrocento Art, which was to culminate in the genius of Botticelli. Here, however, I wish to see the figure in the sense of the difference between Botticelli and his master. In spite of all his line-harmony and swift, free movement, Fra Filippo, to my mind, was a realist. Even with his mysticism, of which I will speak later on, or with his excessive love of ornament, his art was confined to realistic representation. However fantastic his combinations are, he portrayed natural objects. In the dancing figure of *Salome* the lines of the draperies run sweetly, but they are lines indicating natural folds, reasonably constructed, and not lines drawn for the sake of harmony. I will endeavour to show later on that realism and rhythmic beauty of line can well be coexistent, although this generally is too hastily considered as incongruous. Fra Filippo's realistic nature did not prevent him from being at the same time

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

an artist in harmonious line. He had a fine linear perception, in the sense that in his far-reaching realism he could unmistakably catch the melody actually present in a dancing figure. Botticelli, on the contrary, was conspicuous in that he reversed the relative importance between line-harmony and the realistic representation in draperies.

In spite of the fact that there are objective laws for the formation of folds, the popular idea of draperies is simply a vague mass which allows of any arbitrary treatment. In pictures otherwise quite realistic there are clothes painted merely in flat planes with floral designs, sometimes even mechanically stencilled. This is an outrage from a realistic point of view, as the most essential characteristic of clothes is that they have folds to a greater or lesser extent. And yet not only was this 'flat' garment a usual convention in the Umbrian School of the Quattrocento, but it also appeared in the realistic Florentines, and a superb example of it is seen in Masolino's fresco in the Church of the Carmine, in the two young men walking, in the middle of the fresco of *St. Peter Healing the Sick*—decoratively superb, and not exciting any feeling of inconsistency in a fresco which shows a far-reaching realism. The same treatment is too common in Japanese painting, especially in the decorative Kōrin School and others, where garments appear as a flat ground on which to draw decorative patterns, so that the draperies look separated from the heads, hands and feet, which peep out as from behind a decorative screen. All this shows how indefinite is the general idea of form in drapery. This indefinite idea seems to have worked on Botticelli's indifference to realism and caused his love for line strongly to assert itself in his treatment of draperies as motives of linear design.

In contrast with the 'flat' I may give some examples of what I call 'linear' clothes, clothes composed entirely of folds. All conventions are systematization of reality, and so in the representation of clothes, as folds are essential to our ideas of them, these linear conventions are commoner than the flat ones. In Egyptian Art and late Attic vase-painting, female costume was drawn entirely in fine parallel lines, and the convention perhaps originated in the thin, easy-falling material used in warm climates. Whether or not Romanesque sculptures, such as those on the façade of Chartres Cathedral, have relations through Byzantine intermediaries with Indian and Chinese sculptures, all of them have costumes carved in rigid lines running parallel, and show the idea of clothes in primitive minds. Even the Byzantine convention of tracing on the Madonna's clothes gold linear patterns, like rigid cobwebs, is a primitive systematization of folds. Indeed, Botticelli, the Renaissance artist of the time of realism, could not be as free in linear treatment of clothes as these primitive Oriental artists. Although I discuss Botticelli's clothes here, laying stress on their linear quality, it should not be taken as such if detached from the general character of Renaissance Art. In the main, Botticelli's clothes were the continuation of Fra Filippo's realism, from which, only as a personal variation, the decorative and linear quality made a special development.

In what way did Botticelli come to differ from his master? That depends on the question where realism stopped in these two artists. Fra Filippo was at heart a realist to whom the law of visual, objective nature was final. All his decorative and mystic qualities worked within this limit and scarcely ever went beyond. With Botticelli, though he was as close akin to Nature as a child of his time, his intimacy with her was of a more decorative kind. He spontaneously transformed visual forms of Nature into sensuous, decorative arrangements. Fra Filippo could be a line-musician, as when he painted a dancing figure, which was in its natural form harmonious. Botticelli was always harmonious, because his eye took in Nature through its selection. Harmony appertained more to his own genius.

Botticelli was not the only Renaissance artist who rendered Nature in such linear translation. There were Don Lorenzo Monaco and Agostino di Duccio. Agostino was as remarkable a designer in line as Botticelli. When we speak exclusively of the conspicuousness of line in a composition, Agostino was much ahead of Botticelli, who is usually considered as the only linear master of the age. Agostino worked in the Tempio Malatesta at Rimini, which was being constructed by Leon Battista Alberti, and certainly he was deeply influenced by the ideas of this powerful art-theorist. According to Alberti's theory, all artists should study classic Art and base their technique thereon. But what he considered as classic was little more than the late Greek statues, Roman sarcophagi, and late Attic vases, usually met with at that time and taken as examples of classic Art. The result was that, in his theory, movement, the very quality in which decadent classic Art was remarkable, was emphatically recommended. This quality Agostino strove to acquire. Fr. Winter is said to have proved that Agostino actually obtained the hint for some of his female figures in relief on the façade of St. Bernardino at Perugia from the vase-painting on a 'krater' in Pisa. (*Warburg*, p. 7.) In Agostino the line movement came rather as an exertion or a study than as a spontaneous expression of his temperament. In fact, his art has a forced feeling which sometimes gives a grotesque appearance to his over-elaborated bas-reliefs and makes us feel that he did not work in entire harmony with himself. He seems to have had some fine sense of line. Several of the decorative reliefs in the Tempio Malatesta are beautiful, among which I may mention the long curtains, carved in very low relief, which are being drawn by two angels. Also some dancing angels are charming. But in these masterpieces the fluent lines of draperies are too conspicuous and artificial and their very fluency jars with the realistic feeling with which the figure was primarily conceived. If I may use an exaggerated expression for the sake of clearness, Agostino appears to me

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

as if he had wound round his chubby Renaissance girls those wiry spiral garments which he borrowed from late Greek statues.

In this respect the entire Sienese School and Don Lorenzo Monaco, who brought its manner to Florence, stand in interesting contrast with Agostino. With the Sienese masters the linear tradition was always to the fore, but what is remarkable in contrast with the acquired, forced way of Agostino, is that their line looks natural and is blended with realistic feeling. As I have to limit my discussion here to draperies, I may remark that Ambrogio Lorenzetti sometimes painted very remarkable clothes, consisting entirely of parallel lines, as in the frescoes of the *Allegories* in the Palazzo Publico of Siena, or in the large altar-piece at Massa Maritima. In them lines are more conspicuous even than in Agostino's garments, but if we take into consideration the time of their production, which was much earlier, Ambrogio's draperies look natural in spite of these artificial lines. The painter must have had a linear eye and conceived Nature naturally in linear translation.

This was just what I indicated as the chief character of Botticelli's linear draperies. In being natural his were different from the purely decorative clothes of primitive and Oriental Art; at the same time, in being primarily linear and decorative, they were again different from Fra Filippo's. Then in comparison with kindred artists, Botticelli was different from Agostino di Duccio, as Botticelli moved in term of lines with natural spontaneity, Agostino with a studied determination. Botticelli finally was found in his conceptions of linear clothes nearest to the Sienese masters, both being artists of the linear naturalism.

Having come to this conclusion, I fear I may be understood as belonging to the group of scholars who think that Botticelli evolved his linear art under the influence of the art of Siena. This idea is becoming more and more popular, as in recent years the Sienese School has attracted greater attention. Twenty-five years ago, when the Sienese School was little noted, Mr. Berenson wrote in his book of Florentine drawings about 'the heritage of line, which through Filippo Lippi and Lorenzo Monaco had been transmitted to him (Botticelli) from the Trecento.' (Berenson, *The Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, Vol. I, p. 66.) Horne, writing in 1908, is more explicit in his intention of connecting Botticelli with the Sienese masters and expressly indicated him as the descendant of Lorenzo Monaco, 'who learned the secret of the nervous, undulating, rhythmical line of the Sienese painters'. (*Horne*, p. 10.) I wish to dispose of this question so far as I am concerned, in saying that I do not concur with those suggestions of a direct historical relationship between them. I do not deny the existence of similarities between Botticelli and the Sienese School: there is one example which is almost disconcerting in its strong similarity, the draperies of the three apostles in Botticelli's *Transfiguration*, of the

Pallavicini Collection in Rome. Even these I explain as a coincidence between similar geniuses. The draperies of these Apostles I account for as showing the same technique of Botticelli's curly lines, appearing as early as in the *Judith* panels of the Uffizi and as late as in the London *Nativity* of 1500, more exaggerated in the Pallavicini panel on account of the extraordinary pose of the figures.

I may best conclude this study with a word about the most wonderful of draperies ever conceived in Art, those of Flora in the *Primavera*. No pen can tell their beauty, so true and so evanescent. The finest of harmonious lines, directly life-communicating, endow the most enchanting of female bodies with a pathos of celestial sensuousness.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

CHAPTER X. THE MUSIC OF LINE · 'PRESENTATION' AND 'REPRESENTATION' IN PLASTIC ART · BOTTICELLI'S LINEAR SENSITIVENESS IN RELATION TO REALISM AND THE GRAND STYLE · BOTTICELLI AS A FRESCO PAINTER · THE DANTE DRAWINGS · ARCHED COMPOSITION · TONDO COMPOSITION

HAVING followed the artistic activity of Botticelli through all its phases, starting from his treatment of things which imposed on him the utmost realism, and gradually arriving at those which allowed him the utmost artistic liberty, we have seen that he was of a temperament remote from realism. Though we saw him working with obvious exertion for realism, and though we found those youthful endeavours fine in their own way, none the less Botticelli ever evinced a tendency to be enticed away from the strictly realistic. This tendency we have accounted for as coming principally from his extreme sensuousness, which with its instinctive selection of pleasure from pain, of the harmonious from the discordant, did not leave him content with the objective representation of Nature. Then we observed that even in his young days, when the sensuous life in him must have been strong, he showed a pronounced inclination to the linear and the ethereal, and this, growing with age, eventually became the dominant feature in his art. All through my study of the artist I have anticipated this domination, even when hidden under his realism. To express this ruling characteristic in terms more exact, it is that, among the many sides of Botticelli's sensuousness, the inner tactile sense was the leading one, and it governed his art with its responsiveness to linear rhythm and harmony. Indeed, he was of such an ultra-sensuous nature that he was often on the verge of falling into sensualism, and it was the strength of his inner tactile sense, the most abstract among all those real, so-called 'lower' senses, that saved him from the snare, and made of him a rare artist endowed with 'ethereal sensuousness'.

Taking the linear quality as the essence of his art, we come to the difficult problem of the relation between the 'Representing' and the 'Presenting' elements in plastic art, which I have already touched upon and wish here to examine more minutely.

At the beginning of his discussion on Botticelli, contained in the *Florentine Painters of the Renaissance*, Mr. Berenson characterizes the art of Botticelli thus: 'Never pretty, scarcely ever charming or even attractive; rarely correct in drawing and seldom satisfactory in colour; in types ill-

favoured; in feeling acutely intense and even dolorous . . . what is it then that makes Sandro Botticelli so irresistible that nowadays we may have no alternative but to worship or abhor him? The secret is this, that in European painting there has never again been an artist so indifferent to representation and so intent upon presentation. Educated in a period of triumphant naturalism, he plunged at first into mere representation with self-obliterating earnestness . . . yet in his best years he left everything, even spiritual significance, behind him, and abandoned himself to the presentation of those qualities alone, which in a picture are *directly* life-communicating and life-enhancing. Those of us who care for nothing in the work of art but what it represents are either powerfully attracted or repelled by his unhackneyed and quivering feeling, but if we are such as have an imagination of touch and of movement that it is easy to stimulate, we feel a pleasure in Botticelli that few, if any, other artists can give us. Long after we have exhausted both the intensest sympathies and the most violent antipathies with which the representative elements in his pictures may have inspired us, we are only on the verge of fully appreciating his real genius. This, in its happiest moments, is an unparalleled power of perfectly combining values of touch with values of movement.'

I have quoted this fine passage at length. In the main I do not hesitate to call it the best appreciation of Botticelli's art in its external aspect, as Pater's essay was in its spiritual aspect. Taken in detail I may have other occasions to disagree with what Mr. Berenson has said, such as 'seldom satisfactory in colour' or 'in his best years he left everything, even spiritual significance behind him'. Here I wish to examine the relation between the 'presenting' and the 'representing' art, which Mr. Berenson takes up as the principal note of approach to the art of Botticelli.

Mr. Berenson appears to mean that these two elements are antagonistic to each other. Logically considered they are. Based on this fundamental idea, Mr. Berenson beautifully analysed Botticelli the 'presenting' artist, both in the *Florentine Painters of the Renaissance* and in the *Florentine Drawings*, especially in the latter, where the Dante Drawings are fully discussed, and credit is due to the writer who for the first time urged the prime importance of the 'presenting' element in Art, hitherto entirely neglected in criticism. Mr. Berenson's opinion is, however, too much at the expense of the 'representing' significance in Art. The logical incongruity between the presentation and the representation does not exclude their coexistence in the dual nature of plastic art.

Man creates Art and appreciates it with his entire nature, which does not consist of mere senses, but also of much higher mental faculties. Although these higher faculties derive their origin from the use of senses, yet in their present state of development they cannot be satisfied with primitive sensations alone. In our visual world, to which plastic art belongs,

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

the concrete form of Nature is so firmly established that an unpleasant feeling comes to us when we see a work of Art in which our fundamental idea of visual Nature is too arbitrarily transgressed. This unpleasant, uneasy feeling is a preventive to artistic appreciation.

Therefore, there are two requisites that must be fulfilled in order to produce supreme Art: realistic representation, at least in so far as it does not transgress our fundamental idea of Nature, and artistic presentation, in the sense that a painting should not in its functions be limited to what is actually represented in it, but that it should go beyond and, making the represented world a starting-point, create a wider and deeper world. It is only when these two requisites are harmoniously combined that we get the highest form of Art; and they can and should be combined, although the limitation of human nature makes the task extremely difficult. All artistic endeavours are nothing but attempts to attain this ideal.

Why is a mere line directly life-giving, without concrete meaning? Because it appeals directly to our sense of harmony and leads us to an idea of harmonious motion, which is no other than life. Harmony, which is the fundamental law of the 'presenting' art, is also the fundamental law of life, and through the harmonious arrangement of lines is a direct way for Art to stimulate life. On the other hand, Nature is ruled by the same beautiful law, Harmony. Celestial movement, and the whole of life-manifestation in Nature, exist and move on this grand law, which, being reflected in man, constitutes Art. Neither in theory nor in practice can the study of Nature be in itself contrary to Art. In representing Nature there can be no reason why the supreme law of harmony inherent in her should not be presented as well. The frequent superficiality in realism is due only to human weakness, not to the theoretical defect of principle.

Let us see how Botticelli the linear designer grew out of the trained realist of the Quattrocento. His first step in Art was naturally to seek for the subject and attitude in which he could satisfy his taste for curved line without doing outrage to anatomy. The inclination of the head of Madonnas and angels was a favourite expedient which I have already discussed. The fresco *Madonna and Child* in the Cappella Vannella at Corbignano, near Settignano, is a very early work, showing an exclusive and strong influence of Fra Filippo, and in this *Madonna* the extraordinary incline of the slender neck is already remarkable, while with Fra Filippo the neck was always soundly drawn, straight and more thick than slender. The *Fortezza's* head leans too much to the left. It is true, Pollajuolo, with the sculptor's habit of distinguishing different planes in his cubic conception of Nature, made the angle of the joint of the neck sometimes too sharp, as he did with other joints of the body. Botticelli must have felt more assured in his favourite manner, on seeing it used also by this great master of realism, but Botticelli's motive, still hidden even from himself, was quite different from

Pollajuolo's. Moreover, in the abrupt bending of the joints Pollajuolo never went beyond anatomical sanction; Botticelli did, if artistically necessary, although never in so exaggerated a manner as his followers. In my view, this question, so characteristic of Botticelli, of over-inclined heads has close connection with his aptitude for tondo-composition, and also with his sentimentalism, two matters which I will fully discuss later on.

Indeed, Botticelli in his realistic days could express his taste for curves only by seeking such subjects as were naturally suited to their presentation, as in the meek and humble pose of the Madonna. He was happiest in drawing running figures in fluttering garments, where he could see a thousand combinations of graceful line. The first running figures by him which we know are in the famous panel of *Judith and her maid returning with Holofernes's head*, in the Uffizi Gallery, a work so much praised that I may be spared the repetition of its beauties. On the whole, I feel that it is held in too high estimation. The figures, to my mind, are much inferior to the *Salome* in Fra Filippo's superb fresco. In the *Judith*, Botticelli's genius seems to be still tied to the realistic formation of folds, and he was unable to improve upon Fra Filippo, who, besides this dancing *Salome*, also painted such a splendid though small female figure in swift movement in the background of the well-known tondo *Madonna* of the Pitti Gallery. Botticelli's own running figures, swift and beautiful, would come later, when he became more independent in Art.

As the finest example I may mention the young woman carrying fuel in the Sistine fresco of the *Purification of the Lepers*, whose grace and expression of movement is felt ever so much more when compared with Domenico Ghirlandajo's similar figure, bringing in a basket of fruit, in the *Birth of the Virgin*, in S. Maria Novella. Botticelli is still strictly natural, but, his eyes already awake to the sense of line as line, could choose from out a running figure the few significant lines and, by merely giving these, express the spirit of running with more persuasion than actual running itself. Ghirlandajo, an excellent decorator but an ordinary soul, laboriously made his draperies flutter, but the figure does not run.

It was with great rapidity that the psychological function of line increased in Botticelli's art. This development was inevitably accompanied by the danger, afterwards realized, of undermining his plastic firmness. Fortunately there were some moments in Botticelli's life when the 'presenting' element, fully developed, could for some time be supported by plastic solidity. The two greatest masterpieces, the *Primavera* and the *Birth of Venus*, approximately marked this golden time, the *Primavera* more dignified with its preponderance of a fine sense of Nature, the *Birth of Venus* more immediately entrancing and ethereal because of its greater line-harmony, which rules the picture as clearly and as lightly as the music which rules the movement of stars. We will compare the Graces in

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

the two pictures. Seen in themselves those in the *Primavera* are infinitely better felt and painted, but we cannot forget that the one in the *Birth of Venus* plays her part perfectly. In the latter picture, detail is sacrificed to the harmonious effect of the whole, in which any part that claims a special attention for itself would be so far a discord. The Grace, with little that is conspicuous in her, is just what she should be, for not only in the original story, but pre-eminently by pictorial law, she is merely serving Venus, attracting your attention to the beautiful central figure. All this is well, but in looking at so large a picture, which you cannot take in at one glance, each figure is also seen independently, and when seen in such a way you will sadly miss in this Grace in the *Birth of Venus* that extreme care with which her three sisters in the *Primavera* were finished. Meanwhile, perfect in themselves, these three figures form an isolated group in the *Primavera*, which you find difficult to assign in the composition as a whole. The general effect of the *Primavera* has something diffused and lacks the clear rule of the integral harmony of the *Birth of Venus*. But I am unwilling to value the *Primavera* less for that reason, as the diffused effect cannot too readily be accounted as a defect—the composition is not better just because its power of concentration is stronger. Moreover, the plastic beauty in the details of the *Primavera* are more than enough to compensate for the want of concentration.

But the comparison of the zephyrs is completely a gain on the side of the *Birth of Venus*. Of the figure of a young woman, such as the Graces, the sense of beauty is not separable from her realistic representation, as she is in reality a beauty. When it comes to the question of the zephyrs, the personification of the breeze, blowing soft and free, the strange figures in the *Birth of Venus*, woven entirely of joyous, running, clinging lines, are exactly suitable.

I cannot help feeling that Botticelli's linear sense was detrimental to his ability as a fresco-painter. With the exception of the *frescoes from the Villa Lemmi* now in the Louvre, an exception as brilliant as isolated, he was never very successful in that material. Certainly the *St. Augustine* of the Ognissanti is a fresco, but it is more an independent picture than a wall decoration.

The first requisite of decorative wall-painting is that balance and stability should rule in all parts of its composition, giving the room an impression of safety and ease. This is proved by the suitability of Egyptian Art, in which immobility rules as the main principle, for decoration of interiors. The old arts of the Near East, Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian, and their descendants, Byzantine and Moslem arts, grew up with similar principles and were well adapted for architectural decoration. In these arts convention tied artistic instinct down to abstract design, which consisted of geometrical arrangements of the law of stability, such as symmetry and

balance. Persian Art is most beautiful, because in the Near East the Persians alone had a delicate love for Nature and felt the beautiful caprices which Nature plays in the formation of flowers and birds. They were at the same time inheritors of the old Assyrian tradition and never forgot to impose the dignified, unmistakable rule of well constructed balance: a grand feeling of stability is evoked from tiny, delicate charm of detail. Persian Art was the ideal inner-decoration.

On the other hand, the main current of European Art, after the Cinquecento, was unsuitable for wall-painting, with the exception of the graceful rococo Art. The Art of the Cinquecento had its guiding principle in two motives ill-suited for wall-painting: the dramatic and the realistic. The unsuitability of Cinquecento Art for wall-painting is best demonstrated in its greatest accomplishment, the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican, where it is side by side with the Quattrocento.

One should not measure the greatness of Art merely by one's first impression. There is nothing so great as the amazement one feels at the first sight of Michelangelo's titanic grandeur in the Sistine Chapel. Because of it, you can hardly see the Quattrocento frescoes in the Chapel, so overpowered are those Quattrocento masters, Perugino, Botticelli, Signorelli, Ghirlandajo and others by Michelangelo, that your estimate of them is apt to be too low. With all my admiration for the genius of Michelangelo, I cannot help finding him too intense, too accentuated for the occasion. His art does not merely cover but project from the walls. Walls that appear to move with dramatic gesticulation, walls so realistically disguised that you feel as if you can step into them, are not agreeable to live within. Now, placing Botticelli in Quattrocento Art, it seems to me that he, being so extremely moving in line-composition and dramatic feeling, was not very well suited for decorative wall-painting.

In spite of Dr. Steinmann's enthusiasm, I doubt if Botticelli was truly successful in the Sistine Chapel. There are reasons for believing that he, because of the fame he had acquired in Florence by the *Adoration of the Magi*, was invited to take command in decorating the chapel, and indeed, as a pure artist, he was superior to any of the others, Perugino, Signorelli and Ghirlandajo, to mention only the best. And yet in the chapel the result of his endeavours did not justify his position. Indeed, exactly by reason of his superiority as a pure artist, he failed as a mural decorator. Let us examine the fresco of the *Chastisement of the Company of Korah*, which most clearly represents him in this capacity. The subject is taken from a highly dramatic scene, translated into a line-composition as moving as the story itself. The company of the false priest gathers round the altar of the burnt sacrifice, and the miracle occurs: out of each censer blow fierce flames to confound and destroy the pretenders. The lightning-like dash of straight and zigzag lines, beginning with Moses' uplifted hand, which points to

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

heaven, and run through the gesticulating hands of the priests, are wonderfully expressive of the immediate and excessive wrath of God. There is a stormy feeling of movement. I will refer to it later on, as an admirable example of Botticelli's 'dynamic composition'. Here in wall-painting, which should present the very opposite character, the 'static composition', its very merit proves its failure.

It sounds curious, but is none the less true, that artists not so highly strung, artists more mediocre, can serve better in mural decoration. For instance, Ghirlandajo; just because of his impartiality, his indifferent nature: in other words, though greatly exaggerated, his dullness. I would not for one moment place his *St. Jerome* in the church of Ognissanti, however much praised by Vasari and others, alongside Botticelli's rival piece, *St. Augustine*. Everything is reasonable in the fresco of *St. Jerome*, everything in its place endorsed by well-balanced common sense. Only it is as dull as Botticelli's *St. Augustine* is anything but dull. As I have said, these two frescoes are frescoes only as regards material, in their nature they are independent pictures, and Ghirlandajo's defect is clearly felt. On large decorative walls, however, this very defect works for repose and becomes the cause of Ghirlandajo's success. I call to mind that the fresco of the *Vocation of St. Peter and St. Andreas*, by Ghirlandajo, appeared to me the finest fresco of the Quattrocento masters in the Sistine Chapel. All the figures placed in the foreground, their even and perpendicular lines support the picture as a colonnade; through this human colonnade you look at the distant landscape, calm and peaceful. In the chapel, Perugino, too, is superior to Botticelli. Ordinarily I would not compare Perugino with Botticelli, though I know the great popularity of the former. His figures are merely sweet. They are isolated from one another, lacking in psychological unity. In the Sistine Chapel, however, where you can get only a general impression of the frescoes from a distance, it is this very isolation and indifferent expression which seem to give a feeling of architectonic ease to Perugino's works, the very quality which was denied to Botticelli because of his superior sensitiveness.

I am inclined to interpret Botticelli's abortive agreement to paint frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa as due to his weakness as a fresco-painter. In 1473 he was called to Pisa 'to see where he was to paint in the Campo Santo'. In 1475 Botticelli was actually working there, as 'Entrata e Uscita' of the 'Opera' and other documents record: 'To Sandro, called Botticelli, painter, lire 130 soldi 10, in part for the painting of a story commenced in the Duomo, in the chapel of the Incoronata, that is the story of the Ascension of Our Lady, which he is making for a paragon, which, if it please, he is then to paint in the Campo Santo.' Horne, from whose English version I have quoted the above, considers that the wardens of the Campo Santo, foreseeing no certain end to the stupendous undertaking

upon which Benozzo Gozzoli had been engaged from 1469, which he took sixteen years to accomplish, probably invited Botticelli to share some part in order to hasten the work. Somehow Botticelli did not even finish his 'paragon', of which Vasari in the second edition says: 'In the Duomo of Pisa, in the chapel of the Impaglita, he began an Assumption with a choir of angels, but afterwards, not pleasing him, he left it unfinished.' It seems to me more probable that the 'paragon' did not please the wardens. Horne understood the abandonment of the work thus, but in a sense different from my interpretation. He says: 'Benozzo had lived and worked nearly all his life away from Florence and its new ideas, and we are apt, in our admiration for the decorative beauty and the admirable design and draughtsmanship of no few passages in Benozzo's frescoes in the Campo Santo, to overlook the half bourgeois, half rustic naïveté of their conception. In comparison with the provinciality of Benozzo's art (for it is as nothing else), the strange, modern ideas of Botticelli must have proved little intelligible to the Pisan wardens.' (*Horne*, p. 35.) This is an ingenious way of defending Botticelli's honour, thus placing his 'strange, modern ideas' above the provincial taste of the poor Pisans. Can this have been true? Did not the same 'provincial' art of Benozzo accomplish such frescoes as those of the Palazzo Riccardi in the most precious of chapels to the admiration of all Florence? And he is really marvellous in his Campo Santo frescoes. You may find what Horne called the 'half bourgeois, half rustic naïveté' if you scrutinize the details of this monumental work. The general impression which is the main object is stupendous. For instance, *Noah's Vintage*. Botticelli must have looked tortured, gloomy and irritating by the side of such a masterpiece of ease and sunny clarity. Contrary to Horne, I prefer to rely on the artistic appreciation of the Pisan wardens in their preference of Benozzo to Botticelli on this occasion.

In other words, Botticelli was first and foremost a painter of pictures. Looking at them your eye cannot help moving on and on along the guiding lines of his rhythmic composition. Ceaseless movement of the eye presupposes a corresponding restlessness of sentiment, leading to a dramatic climax. Botticelli was the greatest artist in dynamic composition.

As the very best among the many which he accomplished in this manner, I would mention the wonderful composition of the *Annunciation* in the Uffizi Gallery. In the autumn you may sometimes see fallen leaves slowly gathered up into the air in melancholy circles, and shivering, you feel the presence of the west wind. This organic response of fallen leaves to the mysterious presence of the wind is just the relation between the angel and the Virgin. Suddenly but softly the Archangel alights; the Madonna starts up. Along the unseen, melodious lines a spiritual stream transmits the solemn measure.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Botticelli's genius in this linear movement is praised usually in connection with the Sienese masters; but where in them can be found such perfect harmony, in which if you change a line all is lost? Simone Martini's *Annunciations* are always excellent in Madonnas, but not always so in Archangels. Even in his greatest masterpiece, the *Annunciation* in the Uffizi Gallery, the linear relation between the two figures is not so intimate as in Botticelli's picture, so that the primitive way of writing the heavenly message 'Ave Grazia Plena . . . Dominus tecum', which issues from the Archangel's mouth in letters of gold, seems to be necessary. In this respect the school picture of the *Annunciation* of Simone Martini's in S. Pietro di Ovile at Siena, usually called a free copy of the one in the Uffizi, looks finer. If one turns to Don Lorenzo Monaco, one finds that this master of flowing line attempted the linear translation of his favourite subject as well as Botticelli did. The finest *Annunciation* of Don Lorenzo, so much appreciated both by Ruskin and Jacob Burckhardt, in the church of S. Trinità, is not, however, very remarkable in linear quality. The *Annunciation with Four Saints* in the Accademia in Florence is a more interesting example, and very characteristic of the painter. But is it so successful as Botticelli's? Far from it, although I place this picture only second to Botticelli's in linear interpretation of the subject. The awed Madonna turning away is beautifully conceived. But the line looks to me to flow more from the habit of technique than from the vibrating sensitiveness of Botticelli. Don Lorenzo was certainly a musician of line, but his sense of harmony does not seem so exquisite as Botticelli's.

Another marvellous composition in line and space by Botticelli is the *Fresco from the Villa Lemmi*, now in the Louvre, Venus with Three Graces, paying homage to the Bride, Giovanna d' Albizzi. The gracefully swaying figures of the marching group carry your eyes irresistibly, from left to right, until you reach the linear climax of the composition, the stately figure of Giovanna, tall and solitary. The decided use of a few strong lines which form the figure of the fair Giovanna, straight and perpendicular, in a composition full of playful curves, is only allowed to genius.

Later on, with the increase of symbolic meaning of pure line, the sad twilight of Botticelli came near. I have already referred to the excessively moving composition of the *Chastisement of the Company of Korah*. Though its effect was injurious as to the monumental and decorative character of the fresco, yet that movement was sustained by realistic soundness, which he still kept in 1481–2. When, however, towards 1490 Botticelli painted the large altar-piece of the *Coronation of the Virgin* for S. Marco, he tried, with the utmost vigour still left in him, to make the four saints as imposing as possible, for in the composition they had to serve as huge pillars supporting the heavenly scene. But, in spite of their great size, they hardly served the purpose, as I have already remarked, when comparing their wavering

attitudes with similar figures of Andrea del Castagno. By the time he painted the *Calunnia* for his patron, Antonio Segni, Botticelli was almost given up to dramatic situations and excessive linear movements. Why should this picture be so much in favour? Historically very interesting, and important as a psychological document of Botticelli's later life, it is, nevertheless, sadly poor as Art. Everything in it irritates with the over-accentuation of curved lines. Even the statues are starting out of their niches with angular gesticulations. The lightning-like shooting out of long arms carries your eyes restlessly from the Innocence to heaven, from the black Envy to the face of Midas and back again.

Indeed, the old Botticelli, with his religious temperament overtaxed by the exciting events of the time, was gradually receding from the world of plastic art proper. Not only are the subjects of his latest works either strictly moralistic or religious, but also the pictorial forms he used showed a soul impatient of the calm contemplation essential to plastic construction. In the panels of the *Virginia* in the Bergamo Gallery, *Lucrezia* in the Gardner Collection in Boston, unity is kept chiefly by the architecture which, elaborately drawn, sits heavily upon the tiny characters swarming and struggling in the lower part of the pictures.

But does this psychological evolution in Botticelli suffice for the understanding of the sad decadence of his art? Does the spiritual agitation of Botticelli in his late years suffice to explain so great a technical deterioration? Though technique has always a tendency to conform to mental condition, it has its own law of development and decadence. To my mind the technical habit which he acquired by illustrating Dante was another important factor, undermining the sound plasticity of his art.

Botticelli was completely in his element when he was working at Dante. His art in its purest essence is given here. Exempt from any exertion outside his natural inclination, he had here the rare opportunity of being completely himself. All his strong points are here, all his weaknesses too: you read them all as clearly as if you were looking directly into his soul. Associated so long and so devotedly with work so congenial to his nature, all Botticelli's characteristics, both strengths and weaknesses, became largely emphasized. His imagination must have swarmed with restless, tormented creatures, his hand became used to compressing as many tiny figures as possible into small spaces, in a sketchy, shorthand, manner. Though all this does not prevent the Dante Illustrations from being a work of the greatest merit, they were really undermining his plastic firmness. In the last phase of Botticelli's life he never painted a picture in grand style. His visions were confused as his technique was restless and trivial. All too complete devotion to a work of trivial size, more literary than plastic, ruined his technical breadth.

Why was Botticelli so essentially himself in the Dante Drawings? They

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

are, in their present unfinished condition, almost without colour. This master of line could never have been more at home than here.

There are some conjectures to the effect that he was dissatisfied with his attempt at colouring, and decided to finish the Illustrations with pen-drawing alone. I agree with Horne in rejecting these conjectures as entirely groundless. But Horne's suggestion seems to me equally impossible. He thinks that 'neither the pigments nor the handling recall the paintings on panel by Botticelli of this period', and he imagines that 'Botticelli might have availed himself of the assistance of some miniaturist. The only craftsmen, so far as they are known by their works, who could have worked so nearly in Botticelli's manner, as the colouring of these assuredly is, were Gherardo and his brother Monte'. (*Horne*, p. 252.) I cannot admit for a moment such free and sensitive handling as is found in the admirable *Inferno*, Canto XV, of the Vatican Library and in *Inferno*, Canto XVIII, at Berlin, as coming from the mechanically polished, lifeless manner of professional miniaturists. As for the difference in colour from Botticelli's panels, difference in material would explain much. Painting on the absorbent gesso-ground of the panel, and that on slippery parchment, produces diverse effects. Moreover, I do not think that the colour scheme and handling are so essentially different from Botticelli's panels. On well-preserved parchment colours appear more glossy and preserve their original brilliance. If we put aside this brilliance, I cannot see much difference in the scale of colour between his panels and these parchment miniatures.

On the other hand, it is quite possible that Botticelli was dissatisfied with the colours. Perhaps it would be better to say that here he evidently enjoyed drawing more than colouring. Otherwise his advance, so great in drawing and so little in colouring, can hardly be understood. He proceeded well with drawing: of the hundred cantos of the *Divina Comedia* he began all except two, and many of these were nearly finished. There are eight pages missing, but as they all occur in the *Inferno* we may safely imagine them to have been nearly completed in drawing. Meanwhile he began to colour only four of the sheets. But the conjecture proves only that Botticelli enjoyed drawing more than colouring. Vasari says '. . . per essere persona sofistica, comento vna parte di Dante; et figuro lo inferno et lo mise in stampa; dietro al quale consumo di molto tempo perilche non lavorando fu cagione di infiniti disordini alla vita sua.' Although confusing Botticelli's Illustrations to Landino's edition of Dante of 1481 with the later ones now under discussion, Vasari preserves for us in this exaggerated description the true image of Botticelli when he was devotedly engaged on Dante. 'Non lavorando' is not true, because we have many pictures, which Botticelli must have painted while he was engaged on Dante, but that he followed his devotion to Dante with the wonderful temerity of the inspired

can well be imagined. His was not such a revolutionary spirit as to break the established custom of the time and finish these miniatures in black and white only. But he could not help following his natural preference, and allowed himself to go on with pure linear fancies at the expense of colour, which he certainly intended and had not the time to finish. This was a rare and fortunate event in the history of Art, and allows us the one opportunity of seeing his genius in its absolute purity.

The fact that these illustrations were of small size was yet another reason for making Botticelli feel at home, although the sheets are exceptionally large for miniature, the actual picture surface being about 12 inches in height by 17½ inches in width. Into this small space he condensed, on the average, some sixty figures, enacting various episodes of the poem in tortuous attitudes and with tragic expressions. In those small figures he was not troubled by his deficient knowledge of anatomy, and could plunge into dramatic and linear fancies without technical impediment. This immediate convenience was injurious in the long run. Accustomed to sketch impulsively such small actors in so great a number, the painter was sure to lose the dignity of the grand style. Mere size is no slight matter. Why are miniaturists so trifling, crowding detail on detail often unnecessarily? Who can say that Botticelli was exempt from this universal influence of size, especially when he worked so long on the Dante Drawings with complete devotion.

And, again, the dramatic situation so abounding in Dante's vision was just the atmosphere longed for by the sensitive soul of Botticelli, which was being gradually agitated as political events became more fierce and in strange contrast with the religious idealism of Savonarola. To all appearance Botticelli threw himself headlong into the restless wanderings through Dante's dream. He recorded his own spiritual tortures and aspirations in the realization of Dante's visions. That the height of dramatic feeling is not suited to plastic interpretation can easily be realized. Botticelli had always a non-plastic temperament which seems to have become accentuated as he grew old, and by the continued coexistence with Dantesque images. If a great work of art is a spiritual revelation, and if man must change after his contact with it, it is no wonder that Botticelli, with his natural propensity to the spiritual, should, by Dante, be converted from a plastic painter into a religious mystic. As a painter, this change must seriously undermine his technique.

Horne, assuming that Botticelli made the Dante Illustrations by order of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, as was recorded by 'Anonimo Gaddiano', dated the work from 1492, when, at the death of Lorenzo il Magnifico, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco came into power, to 1497, the year of his flight from Florence. It is far better thus to allot the date to Botticelli's late years than to his earlier. Dr. Lippmann seems to have thought

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

that Botticelli, after the interruption of his former illustrations for the Landino Edition, caused by his going to Rome, resumed the work immediately after his return, that is about 1482. Horne says: 'From the internal evidence of the drawings themselves it is difficult to think that any of them would have been executed at a date subsequent to the execution of Savonarola.' His assumption that Botticelli ceased to work on Dante because Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco ceased to patronize him sounds probable. As for the 'internal evidence of the drawings themselves', it allows me to place their completion to any time after Horne's 1497, so essentially do they exhibit the character of Botticelli's latest works. His pen growing nervous, and too hasty, became incapable of drawing large figures, and even in small figures strange disproportion occurs, as a head too large of the Ambrosiana *Madonna*, and too small a head of Holofernes in the Kaufmann *Judith*. But he gained instead the mystic depth, which was to adorn the gloomy fall of the artist with a last sad glory. The Dante Illustrations were thus the beautiful suicide of Botticelli's art.

Having seen the Dante Drawings in relation to Botticelli's art in general, we can now proceed to study them in themselves. Indeed, his sensitiveness, shown here exclusively in pure line, is simply marvellous. I wish to study them in their two characteristics, remarkable all through the drawings, and presented more or less together: line indicative of swift movement, and line-arabesque.

To realize Dante's visions, gloomy and fearful, sometimes gleaming bright, through which tormented souls cry aloud and ever hurry to and fro, Botticelli had endless opportunities for drawing swift movement. In fact, nearly all the drawings consist of running figures. He drew them with perfect mastery, as if all his art had received a special training for realizing Dante's creation. As these figures are nearly all nude, he had to be careful in their correct representation. But on this small scale he could allow free rein to his linear inclinations, without peril of too obvious mistakes in anatomy, and some of the figures are like dæmons of swift movement itself. From innumerable examples, I may mention an incident on the bridge in *Inferno*, Canto XXI, where a 'black dæmon . . . with his wings outspread, and light of foot', comes carrying by the feet a magistrate of Lucca, and throws him headlong into the seething ditch below. Botticelli drew the incident in three successive movements, and the straight, dizzy fall of the sinner as the climax of the sweeping arc, along which the flying dæmon prepares to 'thrust him under', is the impulsive flash of a real linear genius.

But Botticelli's line, ever so expressive of the utmost movement, was naturally incapable of expressing two swift successive actions of the person. For instance, in *Inferno*, Canto XXXII, while Dante 'Still was

gazing at the high wall, I heard a voice say to me: "Look how thou passest, take care that with thy soles thou tread not on the heads of the weary, wretched brothers." Whereat I turned myself . . .', and Dante is astonished to find his feet treading on the body of a sinner. To express this swift turn of the head, Botticelli put two heads to the one body of Dante. He had to repeat this same awkward invention in Cantos X and XXIX of the *Purgatorio* and Canto III of the *Paradiso*. This was certainly a clever invention; none the less it was an outrage on the law of plastic art, in order to serve literature. Such a compromise is very symbolic of the non-plastic tendency of Botticelli's late years, when in his spiritualism he strained the expressive possibility of Art beyond its proper limit.

Despite his devotion to the dramatic situations in the poem, which he translated into swift-moving lines, expressive of swift-moving sentiments, and despite his earnest wish to be faithful to the illuminating purpose, yet, when actually drawing, Botticelli seems to have been guided inevitably by another aspect of his supreme line-instinct, a purely decorative one, and ended in making those dramatic scenes, looked at as a whole, pretty line-arabesques. Thus the same sense of line served him in the Dante Drawings in two ways, which are really opposite to each other in mental effect: the one extremely dramatic and expressive, the other decorative and softening. This dualism was always the fundamental nature of Botticelli's art, as I have had occasion to point out. When his nature shines out in its utmost purity as in these drawings, its dualism is forced to show itself more clearly than ever. From combinations of these opposing elements the special charm of Botticelli's art is evolved.

Here again Mr. Berenson proves his keen appreciation, pointing to this decorative feature of the Dante Drawings as their main characteristic and merit, while other critics were studying them only as scholarly comparisons with the texts. Mr. Berenson, however, in his endeavour to bring this essential, but hitherto neglected, feature into relief, seems to have gone too far in his discussion. In order to prove their independent value as line-decorations, he found it convenient to explain how these drawings were 'disappointing' as illustrations. According to him, the failure came in 'partly because his genius was not at all Dantesque, but chiefly because the poem does not lend itself to satisfactory illustration. . . . Dante as a poet is great only as a master of the lyric, or (to make a concession) of the "dramatic lyric", but the lyric is beyond the reach of the illustrations.' (Berenson, *Drawings of Florentine Painters*, Vol. I, p. 64.) This seems to me somewhat of a bold generalization. If illustration is a mere story-telling picture, it would not be very suitable for lyric verse, which being a poetic form of pure sentiment probably contains little matter for narrative. But there is another sort of illustration, the symbolic, for realizing the mental effect of poems without actually telling the story. Even if Botticelli had

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

been only a master of pure line and Dante only a lyrist, there is no strong reason why Botticelli should not have made fine illustrations to Dante.

But for me Dante has a far wider vision than that of a lyrist or 'dramatic lyrist'. Who can be compared with him as a prophetic visionary? It seems to me that few poets lend themselves so much to pictorial visualization. It is difficult for me to agree with Mr. Berenson's views that Dante was not very much 'within the reach of illustration', and that 'Botticelli was not the man for the task'. If, 'as illustrations these drawings will to most people prove disappointing', according to Mr. Berenson, I am one of the exceptions. Horne, with all his admiration for Botticelli, seems to have found them 'disappointing'. But being a good historian, he could defend Botticelli on the historical grounds that old illustrations were really pictorial comments, narrating the succession of episodes faithfully to make the story easily understood; to give the spirit of the poem is a modern idea of illustration with which Botticelli had nothing to do: hence the prosaic character of his drawings, and moreover, Vasari said that Botticelli 'commented' Dante. This is a good historical view which scholars should bear in mind; but as a defence I feel it unnecessary, as I find the drawings themselves admirable as illustrations.

Mr. Berenson can find in Botticelli 'none of the gloom, the chill dread, the passion, the despair, the weirdness of the *Inferno*.' Of the incomparable *Inferno XIII* he says: 'We are in the pound of the suicides, but as here represented it could cause a shiver in none but a child with a feverish imagination.' But I would rather be a child with a vivid imagination and shiver at this 'tangled wood, where decorative dogs leap at decorative nudes, while even more decorative harpies sit upon the branches.' I hope the primitive child still lives in the heart of man, who, I notice with regret, is becoming more and more sophisticated, and to whom only the muscular art in the manner of Michelangelo can appeal as anything sublime and gloomy. Man has ceased to have a mysterious shiver from a beautiful thing. It is not that Botticelli lacked the sense of gloom. To take just one example, I shall be greatly astonished if one does not feel moved in looking at the sinners in *Inferno*, Canto XXIV, coiled round by snakes, though the coil is such a beautiful curve and scatters a fine fretwork over the whole design. Botticelli had abundant feeling for darkness and torture. It cannot be for the sake of the romantic lyricism of Dante, exemplified in *La Vita Nuova*, that Botticelli was devoted to him. Botticelli's imagery in *Inferno*, Canto XV, where a stream of blood flows across the ring of burning sand, and amid a dark exhalation a troop of naked figures who had been 'violent against Nature' run and cry in terror, is one of the most appalling realizations of hell. At the same time, how strangely remote is this gloom in the general impression. It is almost ethereal, and it is this remote feeling which is usually found inconsistent and unsatisfactory for illustrating Dante. To

me it appears as a special merit. This seems to come from the softening effect of Botticelli's decorative genius, which existed along with his tragic quality. Superficially considered, beauty lessens gloomy impression: in reality it deepens it.

After understanding the keynote of the æsthetic effects produced by the drawings in this way, I may mention *Purgatorio*, Cantos XXV, XXVI, XXVIII, as the finest examples of line-arabesque. In the last of the circles of Purgatory, spirits have their lust burnt out by flames which burst from the rocks. We see naked souls running through flame, chanting hymns of chastity, just as swift shadows of fish flit through a silvery fretwork of turbulent water. Flame is such a fine motive for linear fantasy, and it is no wonder that Botticelli took advantage of it both in the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, where fire is chiefly used as the punishment of sinners. It was not only in the Dante Drawings that Botticelli used this decorative flame. In the *Primavera* he made it burst forth from the top of Cupid's arrow, like golden hair, and on the garments of Mercury drew an exquisite design of tiny golden flames on a red ground.

As with flame, water supplies an excellent motive for linear design. Kōrin particularly was fond of the line of slow-moving water, which he wove into such beautiful design that it subsequently formed a convention of his school and is popularly known as Kōrin's waves. It is interesting to notice that Botticelli had special feeling for the line motives of water. When seen foreshortened, the meanderings of a river through a plain present a fine succession of curves, which both Japanese artists and Botticelli loved to draw. Botticelli used this effect many times, in the *Madonna of the Magnificat*, in the *Portrait of the Medal-bearer*, in the *Chigi Madonna* in the Gardner Collection, and others. In the drawing to *Inferno*, Canto XXII, there is an excellent fretting of small waves, as if they are silvery tremblings of the nerves of the sinners who are thrown into them. The white waves in the *Birth of Venus* are extraordinarily beautiful. To my mind they are the merriest waves that have ever been painted. In the small panel of *St. Augustine and the Infant Christ*, in the predella of the *Madonna with St. Barnabas and other Saints*, the very 'Kōrin waves' are painted in the tiny pond, just as in Canto XVIII of the *Inferno*, where, strange to say, the filthy pond, agitated by agonized victims immersed in it, are drawn here and there beautiful concentric designs like those of the Japanese artist. Water presents similar beauties, whether in East or West, in clear streams, or in this filthy pond of hell. Sensitive artists find loveliness everywhere.

How many line-arabesques there are in the Dante Drawings into which the poet's imagery was hauntingly woven by the artist! Mr. Berenson was right in his enthusiasm for the decorative beauty of the tangled and thorny wood of *Inferno*, Canto XVI, where the suicides are punished. The most

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

beautiful scene is perhaps in *Purgatorio* XXX, the greatest surprise of joy in the whole of Dante's vision, where we see with Dante the scriptural pageant: seven angels with symbolical golden candles, the rainbow-coloured smoke trailing from them, and then the twenty-four elders of the church, three theological, four cardinal virtues, St. Paul, St. Luke, and, finally, the 'four of humble mien', all chanting. Joyous angels are scattering flowers, which turn the air into a finely printed Persian textile.

> So now for me amid a cloud of flowers
> That from the angels' hands up-floated light
> And fell within-side and without in showers,
> A lady, olive-crowned o'er veil of white,
> Clothed in the colour of a living flame,
> Under a mantle green, stole on my sight.
>
> (Translated by LAURENCE BINYON.)

A joy painfully keen vibrates through the nervous veins of the drawing. 'Less than a drachm of blood is left in me that trembleth not.' Looking at this finest of designs I seem to experience a beautiful hallucination.

There are so many beautiful designs in the drawings that I must refrain from describing them minutely. Some of the finest are in the *Paradiso* from Canto III to XXI, where blessed souls are represented as floating flames and sometimes as flying babies; and *Paradiso*, Cantos XXVIII and XXIX, with the whole host of angels soaring aloft.

Here let us consider Botticelli's line in its place in the linear art of the world. It was not only in Oriental Art that fine line was given. Greek vase-painters, especially in the white-ground Lekythos, were as line-designers second to none in the world. Their lines are as pure and straightforward, healthy and calm as the golden shafts of the sun. They are intellectual lines in their utmost purity, by the side of which Botticelli's are like trembling silken sheen of the moon.

This distinction between the intellectual and sentimental line is, I consider, a fundamental one. These two qualities of line rarely appear together, except in the confused style of modern Art, in which antique methods are consciously imitated. What I call the intellectual line is the direct outcome of the healthy rationalism of the ancients, which I have already specified (borrowing the terms from Greek æsthetics), as Ethos in contrast with Pathos, the emotional phase of man, which with its nervous movements produced the sentimental line.

As life becomes more and more civilized, inevitably the nervous side of man is also developed and encroaches upon the healthy, unified, 'ethical life' of archaic people, so in the arts of any nation, line develops from the

MADONNA AND CHILD WITH TWO ST. JOHNS
(Berlin, Kaiser-Friedrich Museum)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

serene intellectual to the nervous, from the pure and wiry one, running evenly and establishing a sort of calm and stable skeleton of composition, to the disturbed, accentuated one, at times thick and bold, then weak, relaxed and hesitating. In European Art, the Renaissance line is as different from the Greek line as ideas of life differed after the advent of Christianity, which immersed Europe in an extremely 'pathetic' view of life. Examples of the Renaissance line in its expression of strength we may best see in Michelangelo's drawings. Botticelli's line belonged to its more delicate expression, to the beautiful nervousness of the adolescent Quattrocento. We must also take into consideration the drawing materials. The Cinquecento artist generally preferred crayon, which with its softness permitted rapid and accentuated expression, while Botticelli, as with the Quattrocentists, usually adopted the hard silver point or pen. His *Three Flying Angels*, in the Uffizi Gallery, is the finest example of the precision and purity of the Quattrocento drawing. In using the pen Botticelli preferred a hard and fine one. The preference for those materials is both the cause and result of the modest and reserved line-sense of the Quattrocento.

The foregoing distinction between intellectual and sentimental line was far more conspicuous in the development of Oriental Art. In China, roughly speaking, the Yüan dynasty introduced the modern line of accentuated expression, which entirely distinguished the Yüan and later paintings from the Tang and Pre-Tang works. The intermediate Sung painting, with which I have once associated Botticelli, presented a period of beautiful transition. Japanese Art, always inspired by the Chinese, ran a parallel course, and line of the Tempio period, inspired by Tang Art, is fundamentally different in its solidity and calmness from the Kamakura, which was the first of modern line with emphatically expressive brushwork. Between these two contrasted periods of Tempio and Kamakura, was again a beautiful art of transition, the late Fujiwara or Heian, which in regard to line I associate with Botticelli. This most aristocratic of Japanese Art was the ultimate state of the refinement of the Tempio tradition, predicting in its fine nervousness the advent of the Kamakura Art, which may be compared in spirit with the Italian Cinquecento. The law of human development being everywhere similar, the preceding late-Heian period showed not a little resemblance in spirit to the Italian Quattrocento. On account of his extreme modernity, I have had occasion to associate Botticelli with Utamaro; here, on the other hand, on account of something of archaism in Botticelli, I wish to associate him with a masterpiece of about this late-Heian period, to which the Botticelli of the Dante Drawings bears some spiritual resemblance.

I mean the Shita-ye-gyo, popularly so called, the sutras written on unfinished 'picture-scrolls'. According to tradition, picture-scrolls, illustrating stories of court life, were ordered to be painted for the wet-nurse of

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

the Emperor Horikawa, but she died unexpectedly, and these unfinished scrolls, most of them only in black and white outline, were turned into Buddhistic sutra-scrolls, with Buddhistic texts written on them. I hold this tradition to a great extent true, as there exists those Shita-ye-gyo, the unusual production of which is otherwise difficult to understand, and the painters' style coincides with the date assigned by the tradition. These are so beautiful, that I do not hesitate to call them, together with Botticelli's Dante Drawings, two great marvels in the art of black and white.

It is a strange coincidence that these two works should have been left unfinished, but the resemblance does not stop there. In spite of the difference of subject, tradition and material, the geniuses of line of the East and West seemed to have joined hands. The lines of the unfinished scrolls have the Tempio tradition; and yet the spirit of the New Age about to be born is apparent in them. The line is already expressive, but reticent. In comparison, Botticelli's line looks very expressive, as all European Art appears by the side of Japanese. Botticelli's line occupies, however, a similar position when seen in its proper place. The Quattrocento was strangely shy in its expression. If Botticelli is to be compared with any artist of Japan, so far as the æsthetic effect of line is concerned, he is best compared with the old masters of the picture scrolls. A comparison with the Ukiyoye masters, Utamaro and others, would not be misplaced, but we must remember that the quiet modesty of their line was largely due to the technical restraint of wood-engraving. Otherwise the usual line adopted by these seventeenth- and eighteenth-century artists in Japan is showy, and imitates the pronounced expressiveness of Oriental calligraphy. Mr. Berenson says that 'Botticelli's real place among draughtsmen is scarcely with the great Europeans, but with the great Chinese and Japanese, with Ririomin, Harunobu, and Hokusai'. These comparisons are very good, except Hokusai, who, being an adept in florid brushwork of the ordinary academic school, exaggerated it in his woodcuts.

Judging by the state of the Dante Drawings, I think Botticelli's inclination to pure effect of black and white was unintentionally expressed. The refined late-Fujiwara or Heian period also unintentionally producing the unfinished Sutra Scrolls, must have felt unexpected attraction for the art of black and white, hitherto little favoured. The late Fujiwara and Heike period was indeed the time of refinement, preferring the silent charm of silver to the splendour of gold, and probably being influenced by the unexpected beauty of the 'unfinished sutra-scrolls', a special form of painting was produced, which depended for artistic effect upon the pure line-harmony in black and white, and was followed in subsequent ages. As the utmost technical elegance reached in this way may be cited a large scroll of Makura-no-Sōshi in the Marquis Asano's Collection in Tokio. Indeed, the charm of black and white requires an extremely aristocratic

taste to appreciate it. Europe with its energetic realism has had no time since the days of Botticelli to refine its taste into such extreme finesse. His sensitive art was beyond the general appreciation and was allowed to pass into complete oblivion by the people who loved the grandiose art of the Sei and Settecento. It is not at all curious that when the nervousness of modern man, nurtured in the oppressive atmosphere of the 'fin-de-siècle', discovered Botticelli, a revival of the art of black and white should have taken place.

Having studied the æsthetic nature of Botticelli's line, we proceed to examine his line composition, and observe as a remarkable characteristic his preference for compositions in which arcs of large span predominate. An arc is a segment of a circle which it presupposes and longs for. When an arc traverses a picture and rules it as its guiding principle, there is expressed mysterious feeling, something like the desire of the part for the whole, of the incomplete for the complete; the spiritual keynote of the picture becomes singularly imaginative, and produces a composition most adapted for spiritual intention.

As the most accomplished examples of the kind one may look at Raphael's two greatest frescoes, the *School of Athens* and the *Disputa*, in the Vatican. In the *Disputa*, representing theological wisdom, the painter used upturned arcs as the constructive principle, and our attention is imperceptibly guided aloft along the concentric rows of apostles and patriarchs in Heaven. In the *School of Athens* the firm Renaissance arches in the background divert your attention down to the ground, and there you see and admire the heroes of terrestrial wisdom and Art. Raphael, the soul of the Renaissance, used these arcs with grand and solid effect. Botticelli, with his supersensitive Quattrocento soul, used the same curves with more nervous intuition. Between Dante's Heaven and Hell Botticelli made a very decided use of them, the oppressive effect of the downward curve for Hell and the raising, ascending effect of the upturned for Purgatory and Paradise. In one way this use of curves can be explained as a technical matter of perspective. Dante's cosmography consists of different circles, arranged one below another down to Hell, one above another up to Heaven, through intermediate Purgatory. Botticelli attempted to give this constructive impression, and in Hell you are usually made to look down into a circular confine, the farther edge of which naturally appears as a downward curve. In the ascending to the very Highest through Purgatory, you are always made to look at upper spheres, whose lower edges peep from the top as upward curves. Botticelli's intention may have been in such a structural aspect of Heaven and Hell. His genius made an effective use of them.

There are many fine examples. The ninth circle of Hell, 'the bottom of all guilt', 'where external cold freezes and locks up Cocytus, the marsh

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

that receives all its rivers', is the gloomiest part, farthest from the source of all light and heat, and here Botticelli made the utmost use of downward curves. *Inferno*, Canto XXXII, is especially effective. In the distance at the top you see the heavy feet of the four giants chained at the entrance of the pit, and you feel far into the deep. At the bottom, immersed in frozen marshes, are lying numerous naked bodies of sinners, eating each other. It is dark. You step on them, without noticing it. As is inevitable with Botticelli, these bodies with their silvery outlines weave a beautiful arabesque, and the whole scene is prevented from being disagreeably oppressive. Within this beautiful limit, how miserable these sinners look, far from any hope of salvation! The curved confines are pressing their sins down as inexorably as the Last Judgment.

As contrasting examples from *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, where human souls aspire to lofty heights, I place *Paradiso*, Canto I, as the finest. Dante has finished his journey through Purgatorio, and 'pure and made ready to mount up to the stars', he flies up, guided by Beatrice from the 'divine forest' at the top of Purgatorio. As the introduction to the heavenward journey through Paradise there could be nothing better. So consumed was Dante by 'the inborn and perpetual thirst for the Kingdom', that he did not notice that he was being wafted lightly from the ground. The two are lost in the aspiring contemplation of the 'Eternal wheels'. The first circle of Paradiso is indicated by a small circle showing its lower edge at the top of the picture. It is a part of the solemn whole, which, along its sweet-flowing, upturned lines, cannot but guide our eyes and souls to the same perfect sphere of which we, together with Dante, have just obtained a glimpse. That smallness of the arc indicates that hope, though now sure, is still afar. We ourselves gaze upwards with the ardent gaze of the two heavenly pilgrims.

If the spiritual longing for the higher is essential for religion, the upturned arcs must be useful to composition with religious purpose. Paintings on the concave spaces of cupola or apse naturally take this arrangement by perspective of circles, as seen from below. There are many examples of Byzantine mosaics, and, not far removed from Botticelli, Fra Filippo Lippi's last fresco at Spoleto, the splendid *Coronation of the Virgin*, is also an example. Among works of Botticelli's followers are pictures in which good use is made of this curved composition. I am inclined to think that these conceptions were due to the master. Among the four *Trionfi* painted by Jacopo del Sellajo, formerly in the Oratorio of S. Ansano, now in the Museo Bandini at Fiesole, only the *Triumph of Religion* is worthy of attention, because of this Botticellesque composition. Francesco Botticini's large *Assumption of the Virgin* in the National Gallery is the grandest example of the sort, and it seems to me that Botticini received the idea from Botticelli, though Botticini in a free manner drew

in details in this large picture. The apostles round the tomb are very Botticellesque, and the entire composition is too soul-elevating to be entirely by Botticini. The master nearest to Botticini in temperament, though infinitely greater, is Andrea del Castagno, and Botticini's art is conspicuous in its mundane vigour, which is incompatible with the high spirituality obvious in the National Gallery *Assumption*. From Vasari onwards, writers on Art, till corrected by modern connoisseurs, mistook this *Assumption* for a genuine work of Botticelli. The picture is now generally pointed to as a proof that old studies in Art started from uncertain grounds. But the error was not a laughable one. It was not only by the similarity of the names that Vasari confused Botticini with Botticelli. Botticini was never so near to Botticelli as in this *Assumption*. Either Botticelli designed the picture, or at least Botticini received the idea from similarly beautiful compositions in the Dante Drawings, *Paradiso*, Cantos XXVIII and XXX.

From a survey of compositions in large curves we arrive, as their natural continuation, at the question of tondo composition, where we expect and are satisfied to see Botticelli as the greatest genius of the world.

There is a theory that Botticelli got the idea for tondo composition from the 'full-blown rose'. (Cf. George Rose, *The Renaissance Masters*.) Of course, this theory is entirely fantastic. The use of a circle for painting the Madonna originated most probably in architectural decoration, and up to the time of Botticelli, though rare in painting, it was not uncommon in bas-relief, so beautifully accomplished by Donatello. Botticelli was not its inventor. He saw a rare opportunity for line-composition in it, and being also susceptible to religious sentiment inherent in its form, took up the old motive. He perfected it to the full, as no one else ever did before or after.

In accordance with the main character of the circle, consisting of centre and circumference, all tondo compositions can be reduced to two classes, either the 'central', when the main interest of the composition is in the centre, or the circumferential, when the composition is constructed with main reference to the circumference. Indeed, Botticelli with his two masterpieces, the *Madonna della Melagrana* and the *Madonna del Magnificat*, exhausted all the possibilities of tondo composition in both ways.

The 'central' composition is most suited for religious paintings, that is to say, wherein to place the object of worship. A circle is complete in itself: it is frequently the symbol of the universe, of the harmonious whole. If you place the object for worship in the centre of a circle, you give it a feeling as if it were situated in the very centre of the universe. You can give no better feeling to a religious image. In Buddhist Art, which is always more symbolic than Christian, the nimbus never took so realistic a form, common in Europe, as a real mirror, foreshortened in perspective, floating dangerously above the head, but instead was always

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

a large circle or an oval, encircling a sacred being with a feeling of supernatural perfection. This is the true function of the nimbus, which Italian primitives certainly felt and knew. It is a pity to see it disappear with the progress of realism. Taking another example, infinitely more complicated, of religious feeling in a circle, let us consider how the subject of the Adoration of the Magi was suitable for the tondo form with the Madonna and Child seated in the centre. Botticelli painted it in the National Gallery tondo, and Ghirlandajo in the Uffizi panel. As the grandest conception of the Adoration in this form we may take Leonardo's unfinished altar-piece, now in the Uffizi Gallery. Although the panel is in square form the composition is thought out as a huge tondo. With what solemn effect is the circle of people gathered round the Madonna and Child! Leonardo the master-soul discovered the true meaning of the story. He made the three Magi and their retinues the representatives of the whole universe, drawn into its very centre to do homage to the new and true King.

Besides this suitability for religious purposes, the 'central' composition must be said to be the simplest and the most natural of tondo compositions. Nearly all Madonna tondos of the Trecento and the early Quattrocento were of this central type. Botticelli was remarkable in following the same method and reaching its highest developed form with his *Madonna della Melagrana*. The feeling of perfection there expressed is immense. It is a pity that the tondo is hung in one corner of the Botticelli Room in the Uffizi, on one side of the *Birth of Venus*, which has on its other side the *Madonna del Magnificat*. It should be hung by itself and centrally, the central feeling being so essential to it. Great pictures are really windows through which you look into the inner world: you realize it in the *Madonna della Melagrana*. With wonder you look into a perfect world and believe in it, where angels gather so lovingly round Our Mother and sing her praise. Or rather, it is not you who look at them: it is they who are looking out of the remote perfect world into you, with deep and silent eyes of mercy.

How this 'central' composition appealed to the popular sentiment of the Madonna-cult is well shown by numerous Madonna tondos composed on the same principle. I will mention three of the most successful of the Botticelli School and compare them with the master's.

The tondo in the National Gallery, *The Madonna and Child with St. John and an Angel*, is worthy of its popularity. The feeling of centralism is very happy. The placing of the beautiful figure of the Madonna in the centre, making the two side figures stoop to her in homage, greatly helps the effect of concentration of the picture. In its general character the tondo is one of the best school-pictures and is worthy to have been in the possession of the fine architect and admirer of Botticelli, Giuliano da San Gallo, as is to be inferred from his name, which appears on the back of the picture.

But examined more closely, the tondo reveals its weakness. Not only is the execution coarse, but the linear construction lacks the master's vitality. Indeed, at the first glance our attention is so much absorbed with the beautiful face of the Madonna, and in particular with her sad eyes of distant look, that we hardly notice how indifferently the child is placed on the mother's bosom. A feeling of mechanical indifference may be noted throughout. The Madonna's knees are especially unsatisfactory. The straight folds of the thick garment fall in a wilful and heavy manner. You are not quite convinced that the Madonna is standing. Botticelli never failed in clear explanation of tiny details. His technical execution, which, even when realistically weak, was carried out in a polished artistic manner, so that all parts worked up to contribute to the main beauty in the centre.

The tondo *Madonna and Child with Eight Angels*, of the Ratschinsky Collection, in the Berlin Museum, is certainly a very fine picture; when, however, it comes to the question of its authenticity, I as decidedly deny it to be by Botticelli as Dr. Bode accepts it. Even putting aside the definite differences of brushwork, far more trivial and faithful in realistic intention than Botticelli's own, there is something in the curve-formation of the composition which prevents it from being by the master's hand. In its general effect there is little to find fault with. It is a good picture, but with little of the subtle spacing peculiar to Botticelli. The posing of the angels' heads is specially uninteresting. Botticelli, with the natural boldness of a genius, always made angels incline their heads in several ways and with sharp angles, giving a charming surprise to the great principle of concentration. Usually his pupils imitated this dangerous characteristic without due delicacy, and losing the essential harmony, made the angels incline their heads awkwardly. The tondo *Madonna and Child with many Angels*, in the Borghese Gallery at Rome, is a remarkable example of such awkwardness, which I have already discussed in relation to the treatment of hair. The Ratschinsky Madonna has not this awkward impression. It is more uninteresting than awkward. Not only there is no flash of Botticelli's genius in the work, but also there is no distorted reflection of genius, which makes it all the more remote from Botticelli. The painter of this Madonna, certainly a good artist of considerable personality, studied Botticelli's tondo compositions and produced this painting in his own spirit, which was not very near to Botticelli's. His relation to Botticelli is similar to that of another pupil of entirely different type, Raffaelino del Garbo, who, after the manner of the master, but with a totally different interpretation, produced one of the most beautiful of the Botticellesque tondos, that in the Glasgow Gallery, the *Madonna and Child with St. John and Two Angels*.

The third fine school tondo, composed on the 'central' principle, is the

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Berlin one, the *Standing Madonna with Seven Angels*. This is an exceptionally fine composition among school-works, so that critics are almost unanimous in attributing at least the original design to Botticelli. However, I doubt it. Curiously enough, there are many traces in this tondo, which remind one of Botticelli's classical paintings, the *Primavera* and the *Birth of Venus*, especially the first, so much so that one is almost tempted to ask if it is not an adaptation of the *Primavera* into a Madonna painting.

No one will fail to observe at the first glance the similarity of proportion, pose and physiognomy between the *Madonna* and the Venus of the *Birth of Venus*. But more than that, if you consider the whole silhouette of the *Madonna and Child* you will be astonished to find that it is almost exactly identical with the Venus of the *Primavera*, the Child's hand raised in benediction corresponding to the speaking gesture of the Venus. The Venus of the *Primavera* has a meek and melancholy expression, and scholars have had no small difficulty in establishing a compromise between this sad expression and the usual character of Venus in classic sources, and Dr. Warburg concluded that the Venus, as the ruler of Spring, is here relating sadly the transience of the happy season. Venus with this expression might naturally be transformed into the Madonna.

The *Primavera* transformed into a *Madonna* tondo is not so extraordinary as its verbal incongruity might persuade one to think. The *Madonna*, formerly in the Decock Collection in Paris, of which Mr. Berenson published a photograph in *Dedalo*, June 1924, side by side with the Venus of the *Primavera*, shows that the Paris *Madonna* was faithfully copied after the classic goddess. The two Botticellesque embroideries, one in the Museo Civico at Orvieto, the other at Florence, have each of them a similar Ascension of Christ, whose slender figure was curiously enough studied and adapted from the Venus of the *Birth of Venus*. Pupils must have examined every corner of the good works of the master to seek for convenient details which they could patch up for their purpose. In the Berlin tondo the seven angels are carrying the seven candles of the Apocalypse, and are usually pointed out as a proof of the authenticity of the picture, which could only come from the mystic erudition of Botticelli himself. The idea must surely have come from him, who loved biblical allegory and used it with beauty and effect in the Dante Drawings. As this tondo shows in execution Botticelli's late manner, the pupil might well have seen the drawings to *Purgatorio*, Canto XXIX, and those following, where these seven angels appear. But at the same time stylistically the angels in the Berlin tondo are strongly reminiscent of the seven figures that stand round the Venus in the *Primavera*. The unusual number seven, put in with such symmetrical arrangement, might primarily have come from the *Primavera*, and been transformed into the seven angels of the Revelation, suitable for the attendants of the Madonna. The two angels

in the extreme left as you face the picture show together a similarity to the farthest Grace on the left hand in the *Primavera*, and if you imagine one figure made from the two angels in the extreme right, the head of the one farther from you, and her right arm continuing down to the left arm of the nearer angel and her body, it will nearly approach the figure of the Primavera, seen from a slightly different angle. In the Dante Drawings, in *Purgatorio*, Canto XXIX, where are the seven angels with candles, Botticelli tried that strange invention, one Dante with two heads, to indicate swift movement. In the Berlin tondo did the pupil utilize the same idea and, putting two heads to one torso of the original, and also with some other modifications, made up two perfect figures? In addition, in the Berlin tondo, some of the angels are clad in transparent garments. To allow parts of the beautiful body to appear through the draperies was contrary to the idea of representing spiritual beings at this time. Botticelli invariably used to clothe his angels to the wrist and to the neck. Therefore, though the use in this tondo of transparent gauze is slight, yet it may just possibly be traced as an inheritance from the master's nymphs.

All these affinities between the Berlin tondo and Botticelli's classical pictures may also be held as proofs that he painted the tondo. He might have remembered details in his old pictures and repeated them in later works, as he often did. The final decision depends on the beauty of the work itself. If the Berlin tondo were beautiful as a whole and worthy of the genius of the master, whatever relation I might establish between it and his other pictures I should not doubt its authenticity. Except that the execution is too broad and coarse to be by the master, even in composition, there are some portions which are discordant with Botticelli's genius. The curve of the draperies of the left leg of the Madonna is over-exaggerated and too ugly for Botticelli. But the parts which trouble me in the picture, as least harmonious to the whole scheme, are the two naked cherubs crowning the Virgin. True, Botticelli was fond of chubby children in his pictures, but never in Madonna panels, least of all as architectural decoration of grotesque characters such as were freely used by Pinturicchio in the Apartamento Borgia of the Vatican. Of Botticelli's circle, Filippino as an artist of the Cinquecento used them; otherwise they are rare. I can only call to mind one Botticelli School picture which contains naked babies as grotesque decorations, the *Standing Madonna and Child* in the Castello at Poppi and its replica in the Museum at Leipzig. In the Berlin tondo the two naked babies are very obtrusive, diminishing the effectiveness of the Infant Christ, as naked as they and only slightly larger. Artistic economy, which is the surest sign of genius, and is especially noticeable in the extreme refinement of Botticelli, is marred by these unnecessary decorations. These babies at the top of the picture remind one particularly of the flying Cupid above the head of Venus in the *Primavera*. This

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Cupid serves here as a halo, so to speak, of Venus; in the tondo the babies are trying to play the same part, crowning the Virgin.

It seems to me that although the Berlin tondo is soundly composed, there is little trace of Botticelli's subtlety of spacing in it. Turning back to the *Madonna della Melagrana*, how well posed and well placed is the child! Its relation to the whole circle is so subtle and organic that the babe looks like the new bud, the centre, the life and hope, which it really is. That is true Botticelli.

From the æsthetic analysis of the 'central' composition we are naturally led to the appreciation of the other type, which I called the 'circumferential'. Indeed, these two compositions are in contrast to each other only in appearance; they are both governed by the same principle, the harmonious division of the circle. Let us examine it with the *Madonna del Magnificat*, which I believe to be the finest example of 'circumferential' tondo composition in existence.

The secret of tondo composition lies in the harmonious combination of crescents; unless the artist feels the subtle charm in the form of the crescent moon, he is not essentially qualified for tondo composition. It is a happy coincidence which teaches much, that Botticelli gave exquisite evidence of the mystic charm he felt in the crescent moon, which may be seen in the Dante Drawings, *Paradiso*, Cantos III and IV. There Dante sees spirits in the sphere of the moon:

> As from transparent glasses polished pure,
> Or water shining smooth up to its rim
> Yet not so deep as to appear obscure,
> The bright spot of a face returns so dim
> That pearl upon white forehead not more slow
> Would on our pupils its pale image limn,
> So I beheld faces that seemed a-glow
> To speak, and into the other error fell
> From what made love 'twixt man and fountain flow.
>
> (Translated by Laurence Binyon.)

Botticelli's imagery of these verses is as beautiful as Dante's own. Faint shadows almost melting into the white night, form themselves into a beautiful curve of the new moon! Botticelli felt and expressed with infinite delicacy the mystic influence of the moon on human sentiment.

Looking at the *Madonna della Melagrana*, you are struck by its subtle divisions into varied crescents, both thick and thin, and entering into each other. But if we turn to another masterpiece, the *Magnificat*, the combination of curved spaces is still more wonderful. Its extreme delicacy is forcibly felt when compared with the copy of it in the Louvre. In the copy

the angel in the extreme left is omitted and the whole harmony is lost. In the original the two white hands of the angels are upraised not only to sustain the golden crown of the Virgin, but they really support as well the grey stone arch of the window, which in the copy, without this support and other beautiful expedients, such as the gold-embroidered gauze, gives a depressing effect to the composition.

I have already rejected as fantastic the theory that Botticelli's tondo composition originated from a 'full-blown rose'. It is a beautiful parable, however, and well describes the æsthetic nature of the *Magnificat*. The organic relation of petals in a flower is the only one to which you can compare the intimacy of line and line, arc and arc in this picture. And the lines, so harmoniously related, cannot but produce a feeling of smooth, constant movement to the eye. You will have no small difficulty in hanging a large photograph of the *Magnificat* correctly on the wall, as the lines roll round so that you cannot clearly see which is the exact top. You may try to find it by the distant horizon; all the same you will not be entirely certain. Indeed, this excess of movement inherent in tondo composition was a stumbling-block for inferior artists. Piero di Cosimo's tondo, the *Holy Family with Angels*, in the Berlin Gallery, is an example of how easily a sense of stability is lost in a tondo composition and is apt to make this most charming pictorial form disastrous.

I think that Botticelli with his unparalleled instinct for line felt this danger, and unconsciously provided against it. The tondo *Madonna and Child with Three Angels* in the Ambrosiana at Milan is a work of the late 'nineties, and Botticelli's hand being meanwhile accustomed to draw small, quick-moving figures of the Dante Drawings, not only painted the three angels in excessive movement, but also endowed the whole composition with too pronounced a sense of caprice. If it had not been for the strong line of the stone-bank traversing the tondo like a secure horizon thrice accentuated by the sky-lines of distant hills running parallel to each other, the picture would have lacked too much the sense of ease and safety indispensable in religious pictures. It is wonderful to think that, exactly at the time when the painter became addicted, as a kind of nervous malady, to swift movement, his sense of line made a necessary reaction and re-established the endangered balance by drawing a bold straight line cutting the tondo in two. Raffaelino del Garbo, painting numerous tondi after Botticelli's manner, invariably adopted this scheme of keeping the composition in balance. Among Botticelli's imitators the one remotest from him was perhaps Raffaelino, whose artistic nature can best be seen from the fact that he was also influenced by a master entirely opposed in character to Botticelli, Pietro Perugino. In contrast with Jacopo del Sellajo, who was like the bizarre representative of Botticelli's nervousness, Raffaelino del Garbo had a sounder sense of Nature and used to infuse a Peruginesque

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

stability into Botticellesque compositions. It is significant that nearly all his tondi have a stone-bank on which the Madonna sits attended by angels.

Considering the subtle beauty of the *Magnificat*, I am inclined to take it as the climax of 'circumferential' tondo composition. Compare it with the school work of Donatello, the *Madonna and Child* in the Duomo at Siena, which serves as a representative of the treatment of circular compositions before Botticelli. Though here is evinced a harmonious division of the circle into crescents, yet in it there is still a primitive simplicity most effective in itself, but as yet on the way to further development. Compare Botticelli again with the numerous tondi produced after him, taking Raphael's *Madonna della Sedia* of the Pitti Gallery as the best example. It is a most admirable composition, there is no doubt about it. But I do not think that the psychological effect of the circular form was so esentially felt by Raphael as by Botticelli. Raphael, with his Cinquecento grandeur, and with his massive modelling in full chiaroscuro, which is at the expense of linear effect, could do well without the circular form. The circular form could also be used with a bright powerful expression like the sun, and Michelangelo, with his gigantic massiveness, composed his *Sacred Family* tondo in the Uffizi. I do not say that the tondo composition was entirely unsuited for the Cinquecento art. But the linear sentimentality most essentially inherent in it made it more proper to the art of the mystic and delicate Quattrocento. Having been exhausted by the genius of Botticelli, it was endlessly repeated by his pupils and gradually disappeared in the sixteenth century.

I wish to close this short study of tondo composition with another reference to the Dante Drawings. In the *Paradiso* Botticelli showed his infinite resource in tondo composition. Nearly all the scenes are represented with only two figures, Dante and Beatrice in a circle, and this particular treatment is sometimes blamed as being monotonous in comparison with the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio*, so full of episodes, or more frequently praised as the more symbolic interpretation of the poem of Heaven and Hell. I do not know to what extent either of these comments holds good, as the whole of the *Paradiso* drawings are in so unfinished a state. It seems to me that certainly the blame of monotony would be out of place, as Botticelli roughly indicated many allegorical figures of stars and zodiacs, which he evidently intended to put into the drawings. If we reconstruct in imagination those numerous star-spirits dancing, in fantastic line arabesques, around the clear heavenly circle, which, as a crystal ball, contains the two lover-souls, Dante and Beatrice, mingling in intimate curves, Botticelli's imagery is anything but monotonous. Moreover, those two figures are admirably placed in the circle. In Canto VI the two lovers approach their heads intimately in the centre and let their spiritualized bodies be wafted into the heavenly ether, with other soul-flames floating

upwards. I especially love Canto XXI, where Dante and Beatrice are about to mount the ladder, leading from the seventh heaven of Saturn into the sphere of fixed stars. The parable of music in describing plastic art is a snare for inaccuracy, none the less I cannot help comparing this picture with a development, with variations, of some grand musical motive. Into a beautiful circle the straight lines of the ladder thrust themselves like a sudden thunderbolt of a bold theme. You are astonished, but, before you recover from the shock, begins a whole series of lovely variations . . . they are baby angels, startled and flying hither and thither, in the words of Dante, 'as by their natural habit, the daws together, at the break of day, bestir themselves to warm their chilled feathers, then some go away without returning; others turn back to whence they started; and others, wheeling make a sojourn.' Botticelli drew the two lovers climbing half-way up the ladder and then erased them. These shadow-like forms clinging to and yet floating off from the ladder, and in a harmonious distance from the principal figures, add an extra beauty. They are like responding echoes heard afar off, melting into misty distance. Though imperfect in their present state, I would call the *Paradiso* drawings the secret treasure-house of Botticelli's tondo composition.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

GIOVANNA TORNABUONI AND THE GRACES
(Paris, Louvre)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

PART III

THE SENTIMENTAL BOTTICELLI

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

CHAPTER XI. RUSKINIAN PRINCIPLE OF ART AND IMPRESSIONISM · BOTTICELLI'S 'SELF-PORTRAITS' · BOTTICELLI'S INTELLECTUALITY · POLIZIANO AND BOTTICELLI · PSYCHOLOGY OF SENTIMENTALISM · 'LA BELLA SIMONETTA' · BOTTICELLI'S MADONNAS · SENTIMENTALISM AND LINEAR ART

IF a picture is to be a real work of art, it must contain two pictures. These 'two pictures' are the expression of the double existence of man, body and soul. In opposition to the Ruskinian view of Art, the Impressionist painter Whistler once sharply remarked that a picture is a thing to be seen with eyes, not a thing to be read as a book, with the brain. This does not, however, prevent a picture from being appreciated with eyes and also with the soul. In the case of plastic art the eye is the entrance to the brain. In this sense, Whistler was right in his bold proposition of the primal importance of the eye in the appreciation of painting. But, on the other hand, the eye is important only as a passage to the soul. A picture which is just a 'banquet of the senses' and has no appeal to the spiritual life of man, is not Art.

This view of mine, again emphasizing the importance of the spiritual content of Art, is not a return to the Ruskinian principle. From the sense-organs to the mind there are two ways of communication, direct and indirect. The way most generally recognized is the indirect one, through intellectual association. Ruskin took only the intellectual passage into consideration, hence the cult of subject-painting, topographical, literary or religious, which he considered the only species of picture which could be spiritual. Hence, also as the artist's protest against this belief, Impressionism, which is the cult of visual sensation, pure and simple, the negation of subject-painting in Art. But really Impressionists went too far, and while merely attacking the tyranny of the subject, thought that they had extinguished the spirituality of Art. In advocating the twofold significance of Art, I must not be taken as upholding the exclusive cult of subject-painting. I maintain the superiority of spiritual Art, not from the intellectual side, but from the symbolic, which, working through the subconscious, has hitherto been neglected in Art-criticism.

Impressionism has really done great service to Art, in that in real practice it has revived the art of the senses in the place of the art of ideas, which had been monopolizing artistic energy under the guidance of literary men. Impressionists tried to reduce painting to combinations of sensations, but by this they did not kill spiritual Art. The senses are the

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

starting-point of higher mental activities. That there is no concrete idea illustrated in a painting does not prevent it from being spiritual. There may be nothing but a painted apple, and yet, with its colours and its architectonic construction, there is no reason why it should not make our senses vibrate, so as to make us feel something in it very deep, possibly undefinable and therefore all the deeper.

Thus in my vindication of the spiritual in Art is a fundamental difference from the principle of Art at the time of Ruskin, although there are some points in common. The spiritual proceeds, in my view, from two sources: the intellectual (which I recognize, only not so exclusively and emphatically as literary critics did) and the sensuous, the mysticism of the senses, which Impressionists felt and used practically, while in theory they did not notice it, any more than did the critics, against whom they revolted. Comparatively speaking, I attach much greater importance to the symbolism of the senses than to intellectual spirituality, and for that reason I have examined the sensuous aspects of Botticelli's art far more fully than is usually done. He also exhibited a striking literary aspect in his art, and hitherto the studies of his spiritual side have been little more than explanatory of his subjects in painting from literary sources. One of the reasons why Botticelli has attracted so much attention to literary men, is that his art contains material for literary research. I approach his art differently. I do not exclude the study of his literary side; but my chief aim, after having observed the various expressions of his sensuous nature, is to discover in what way they make their appeal, first to the senses, then deeper, to the inmost soul.

One picture contains two, as I have said. But the perception of, and belief in, the inner world behind the actual picture depends upon individual character. One critic may see a picture and no more. For another a picture may be a window to the soul. Let us not say which is better or worse, as judgment proceeds from a fundamental difference of the world in which one lives.

In spite of the independence of individual taste, however, there is a fashion among critics and scholars, as among artists. Just as the Impressionist and post-Impressionist tendencies are now in vogue among artists, so in Art-criticism I have indicated how the Morellian method of style criticism is all but monopolizing public attention. This is a tendency of modern times almost too deep-rooted to be called a fashion, which has done great service, in that at least it has enabled us really to see a picture. But the Morellian method has its own snares, as a scientific study of Art. For students of science there is nothing so inconvenient as the feeling which is subjective and beyond calculation. It seems to me that modern critics, in their efforts to see pictures and know them, make an unconscious effort not to feel them, not to admit the existence of the inner world behind.

There is nothing which teaches us more on this point than Mr. Berenson's essay on Leonardo da Vinci. No critic is so thoroughly Morellian, and his method is admirably scientific. On the other hand, there is no painter who felt, saw, and established so surely the existence of the inner world behind the real as Leonardo.

It was, indeed, in front of Leonardo's unfinished *Adoration of the Magi*, in the Uffizi Gallery, that the belief in the 'two pictures' became firm in my mind. Perhaps you can more easily see and believe in the mystic existence in Buddhistic paintings. But when it comes to the question of the dual worlds, physical and spiritual, I can think of no better proof than the art of Leonardo, whose insight into the inner was as penetrating as his visual comprehension of the surface was sure and unmistakable. Indeed, his realistic delineation of Nature was so perfect that, looking at his picture, one is too much possessed by its purely pictorial qualities, feeling that the entire Leonardo is there, while his real greatness lies in the immense, infinite world which extends behind.

I think Mr. Berenson felt it. Here lies his rare merit as an Art-critic. In his method he is so thoroughly scientific, but at the same time he has a genuine sensitiveness to beauty. Reading his studies one may feel the need of too much mental exertion in following his stylistic analysis, and then suddenly comes a fine appreciation, not only rare in writings on Art in general, but also little expected from a mind so scientifically developed.

Mr. Berenson, with this artistic sensitiveness, seems to have felt the existence of something behind the pictures of Leonardo. But that something was not congenial to him. It is surely wrong of Mr. Berenson to attribute the world-wide admiration for Leonardo merely to the 'hypnotic suggestion' of rhetoricians. He says of the famous *Mona Lisa:* 'For, brought up almost exclusively on words, I easily yielded to incantations and talismanic phrases (of Walter Pater and others). They put me into states of body and mind not different from those produced by hypnotic suggestion, and I should have stayed under the spell, if only I had been kept away from the object. But the presence of the object disturbed coma and prevented quiescence. Its appeals grew and grew until finally it dared come into conflict with the powers of a shaman so potent even as Walter Pater. My eyes were unglamoured and I began to look. What an enchanted adept died in me when I ceased listening and reading and began to see and taste. What I really saw in the figure of Mona Lisa was the estranging mirage of a woman beyond the reach of my sympathies and the ken of my interests, distastefully unlike the woman I had hitherto known or dreamt of, a foreigner with a look I could not fathom, watchful, sly, secure, with a smile of anticipated satisfaction and a pervading air of hostile superiority.' When the picture was stolen from the Louvre and the news reached him, he was inclined to be sorry, but 'to my own amazement I

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

nevertheless found myself saying softly, "If only it were true", and when the news was confirmed I heaved a sigh of relief.'

Mr. Berenson did well to confess so frankly. True criticism should be a confession. I was brought up on Art and Nature. Coming from a distant land, almost unprepared, I saw Leonardo. I still adore him.

Mr. Berenson tries to explain that the strange 'something' existent in Leonardo is an element detrimental to his artistic value. He calls this 'something' the 'over-meaning'. 'For it is probably over and beyond what the artist himself had in mind and certainly what he could hope to convey with precision.' Of that there is no doubt. Mr. Berenson continues: 'For the over-meaning is due to the fact that, be what may the immediate instrument of the artist, his ultimate instrument is the heart. And the heart is of a mechanism so subtle, so varied and so uncertain as to baffle any precise calculation of its working, and to put it beyond the reach of accurate control.' This is also perfectly true. 'How many of us not following out the post-hypnotic suggestion of the rhetoricians would agree upon what is behind Mona Lisa's look? Its over-meanings are not only as many as there are spectators, but more still, for it will appeal differently to the same spectator at different periods of his life, and in different moods.' Exactly, although the conclusion Mr. Berenson draws from all this is opposite to mine. He says: 'If the artist has no control of the over-meanings, except of the most elementary kind, it would surely be wise of him to avoid those intricate and uncertain expressions which lay themselves out to manifold contradictory interpretations and to confine himself to the simplest looks and attitudes.' I consider quite otherwise. The more 'over-meanings' there are in a painting, the greater it must be as Art. A painter paints a face with some definite intention. Must we, spectators of other generations, therefore be circumscribed by the painter's intention? Each of us may see his own longed-for image in it, and be happy. What is *Mona Lisa* to me, and what is her intended expression to me? If she has an indefinable 'something' in her which allows each of us to indulge in the free wandering of his own soul, all the better for the picture as Art. This is the very infinity to which all works of Art aspire.

The *Mona Lisa* was 'a foreigner with a look I could not fathom'. A significant phrase! Therefore Mr. Berenson found her hostile and disagreeable. For the same reason she charms me. The response to this unfathomable something in artistic estimation becomes thus a matter of individual taste. The fact that I attach the primary importance to this mystic infinity in Art is bound up with the whole system of my ideas on Art and life. The subconscious activity of man seems to me more genuine and precious than the conscious. I think infinitely more of feeling than of intellect. If the 'over-meaning' comes subconsciously, as Mr. Berenson seems to think, from the heart, which 'is of a mechanism so subtle, so

varied and so uncertain as to baffle any precise calculation of its working and to put it beyond the reach of accurate control', to me it is all the more welcome. But let me put aside this question of subjective taste. At least I have been able to prove, from a critic who is averse to the idea, the existence of the inner world behind the visual picture. This is sufficient support for the main argument I have been pursuing in my study.

What I wish to point out is that Botticelli was an artist who belonged to the category of Leonardo. Leonardo was far greater. All parts in him were great and well balanced. Therefore in him, although the spiritual element is so sure, yet it is in its place, firmly supported by realistic basis, and so the whole of Leonardo's art gives a feeling of soundness and health. Compared with him, Botticelli is smaller, nervous and pathetic, one in whom the spiritual, too easily released from realistic bonds, comes unmistakably to the surface and rules with its mysterious movement. Leonardo's spirituality was profound; Botticelli's obvious. The study of Botticelli could never be complete unless his spiritual side were fully discussed.

Indeed, in spite of the modern determination to see and study Art, instead of feeling it, this extreme spirituality of Botticelli's art is still a pitfall for critics. It was not only at the time of Walter Pater and Ruskin that writers fell into romantic fancies. If it comes to the question of writing an entire romance of Botticelli's paintings, such as the *Romance of Sandro Botticelli*, the writer is free to do what he likes. It is deplorable that some modern writers, studying Botticelli with an apparent intention of scientific investigation, fall into poetic fancies and formulate new theories therefrom. Those who love Botticelli are all, to some extent, poets. But it is a gross mistake, if one thinks the facts can be ascertained by subjective imagination. With poetic intuition one may approach the spiritual life of the painter. At least one may claim to do so, and there is no logical way to refute it. As for the determination of objective facts, such as chronology and iconography, all the references to the history of civilization are useless, if they are merely to give historical semblance to subjective imagination. It seems to me that the greater part of the writings on Botticelli's life and art are in the nature of historical poetry.

The question of Botticelli's self-portrait explains how great a part imagination plays, even in historical research. Dr. Steinmann suggested as a portrait of the artist, the head in the right-hand corner of the Sistine fresco, the *Chastisement of the Company of Korah*, and that head is frequently referred to as authentic. It looks out, but not very clearly, from the fresco, and wears a cap frequently worn, but not always by painters. But the chief ground for Dr. Steinmann's attribution was that he felt he saw in the face the artistic personality which he conjured up in his imagination from

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Botticelli's beautiful and sad works. Rarely does such an artistic personality correspond with the real man.

It is injurious to historical reconstruction, that all writers who are interested in Botticelli should be so subject to imagination and build up elaborate theories upon weak foundations. Horne, who had a determined air not to fall into sentimentality, and therefore showed himself an exceedingly sceptical historian, as in the treatment of the 'La Bella Simonetta' question, willingly admitted Botticelli's 'self-portrait' in the Uffizi *Adoration of the Magi*. This 'self-portrait' is now so completely taken for granted that Dr. Bode's rejection of it came as a surprise. But Dr. Bode had his reasons, though they were not so conclusive as he thought. The fact is that just as there was no definite reason for confirmation, there was no absolute reason on the part of Dr. Bode for rejecting it. Historically considered, nothing is certain about it. The one thing certain is that all lovers of Botticelli are desirous of visualizing the image of the artist who charms them.

Of this 'self-portrait' in the Uffizi *Adoration*, Horne merely says that 'it has long been recognized as a portrait of Botticelli himself'. How long has it been recognized? There is no documentary proof of it so far as I know. If it is true, it is very curious that Vasari did not mention it. He was usually so fond of pointing out iconographic details in pictures, and especially so in his description of this *Adoration*, which he did not hesitate to mention as the finest work of Botticelli. Moreover, the Medici portraits contained in the picture were, subsequent to Vasari, taken as standard portraits and were copied as such by painters of his circle. Then why should he not have known of the so remarkable 'self-portrait' of Botticelli in the picture he so minutely studied and praised, and why should the second edition of Vasari's 'Lives' contain a woodcut by Christofano Coriolano from a Vasari-school copy of Botticelli's portrait, painted by Filippino in the Cappella Brancacci? Indeed, the figure in the *Adoration* panel is very remarkable, and anyone would be inclined to attach some special importance to it. It therefore becomes all the more improbable that Vasari should have failed to notice so remarkable a fact. Horne rejected Dr. Steinmann's dictum regarding the 'self-portrait' in the Sistine fresco as entirely groundless, but he himself has little ground for maintaining his own theory. Comparing the figure in the *Adoration* with Filippino's portrait of Botticelli, Horne says: 'Botticelli paints himself of a nature scarcely less sensuous, but of greater intellectual power and force of character, such as his works show him to have been.' (*Horne*, p. 41.) 'Such as his works show him to have been' is dangerous ground.

Dr. Bode's refutation is more historically definite. He considers that the figure, dignified and healthy, in the *Adoration* does not correspond either to the authentic portrait by Filippino or to the social position which

a painter occupied in the Quattrocento. Botticelli was a man of poor health, as was shown in Vasari's Life and in Filippino's portrait. Dr. Bode's objection to the healthy figure in the *Adoration* cannot therefore be conclusive. Botticelli's own view of himself might have been different from Filippino's view of the master. Botticelli might have been weak, but why should it have been impossible for him to paint himself as he would like to be, especially in a votive picture? Filippino's fresco was painted in the year 1482, so Botticelli might have changed to a certain degree in the interval of a few years that had elapsed since he painted this *Adoration*. The reference to the social position of the painter seems to be a better reason for rejecting the supposed portrait. Dr. Bode thinks that the humble place in which Benozzo Gozzoli painted his own portrait in the fresco of the Riccardi Palace is the due position a painter occupied in the society of the patron's family, while in the *Adoration* 'Botticelli' stands out among the illustrious company with his whole dignified figure. This sounds plausible, but again is not conclusive. The figure is unusually dignified, but is placed among the retinue, and looks out from a corner, and apparently does not participate in the solemnization. It is not impossible that the painter painted himself in this position. As to his being too dignified for a painter, the figure really belongs to the whole composition, which must have been thought out as of primary importance. Even if we imagine that the face represents that of the painter, we have no need to take his dignified air as equally appertaining to the same man. To sum up the question, there exists no positive reason for establishing the figure in the *Adoration* as the self-portrait; on the other hand, there is no definite reason for denying it. Dr. Bode is praiseworthy for treating the matter strictly on historical grounds, while other historians allowed their fancy to roam.

This question of the self-portrait is only one of the many instances of how one is apt to be deluded into a sentimental love of Botticelli, and to deviate from historical accuracy. We shall see more imagination presented as historical hypothesis when we come to study the sentimental side of Botticelli's art in 'La Bella Simonetta'. Indeed, when one thinks of all the fantastic anomalies written on Botticelli one cannot help sympathizing with modern critics who try to approach him with a determination not to be sentimentally touched. They at least see pictures with open eyes, and so far they are better than those poetic souls who, no sooner do they get a glimpse of the picture, than they wander off into dreamland. None the less, a painting has, as its essence, a spiritual existence. Without open eyes, the study of Art does not so much as begin; but without a genuine feeling heart it is mere pedantry.

I have already indicated that the mental processes, through which the

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

sense-experiences are communicated to the mind, are divided into the intellectual and the symbolic. Botticelli had both these mental activities, although it must be clearly understood that the mystic and symbolic was infinitely stronger, and constituted the core of his spiritual life. In our gradual approach to it, let us first examine its intellectual side.

Vasari, born in Botticelli's lifetime, must have transmitted something of his true character, when he tells us of Botticelli's infancy, that 'he was the son of Mariano Filipepi, a Florentine citizen, by whom he was diligently brought up, and caused to be instructed in all those things which are usually taught to children before they are placed at the workshops. Although he readily learned whatever he had a mind to, he was nevertheless always restless; nor would he content himself with his schooling at all, either with reading, writing or arithmetic; so that his father, weary of this wilful humour, in despair put him to the craft of a goldsmith . . .' This shows the nervousness of an infant genius, and there is no indication in any account of Botticelli's life of any special intellectual culture he might have received. In the *Denunzia*, given by Mariano Filipepi in February 1457 (1458, new style), we find the description of young Sandro: 'Sandro mjo figlolo detta dannj 13 sta allegare ede malsano'. Horne reads the word 'allegare', literally, bookbinding, as a mistake for 'allegere', and understands the whole sentence as 'Sandro, my son, of the age of 13, is at his books, and is in ill health'. Horne's reading 'allegere' seems to be supported by the existence of another copy of the same *Denunzia* of 1457, apparently by the same hand, in which Horne finds the discussed part written as 'all . . . egere' (cf. *Horne*, p. 346). On the other hand, Dr. Bode seeks for a solution in the right understanding of 'allegare', which stands incontestably in the original *Denunzia* and, in agreement with Dr. Warburg's study, which Horne seems to have overlooked, says that 'legare' meant also the fixing of jewels, and was so used by Vasari in the Life of Antonio Pollajuolo, and understands the passage in the sense that Sandro was studying at the time goldsmith's work. This is a question of language, which I refrain from approaching, only I may say Dr. Bode's construction sounds better and also better corresponds to the story told by Vasari that Botticelli was put with a goldsmith when he was a boy. If this interpretation be right, the intellectual culture young Sandro received under the paternal roof becomes scantier.[1]

[1] Prof. A. Venturi, in his recent book on Botticelli, p. 97 (Roma, 1925), revives this difficult question how to understand 'allegare'. He reads the word as 'allegere', that is 'reads', according to his English translation. But strangely enough, Mesnil, whom Prof. Venturi seems to quote as his support in contradicting Horne, had no alternative but to read the word 'allegare'. And Mesnil says: 'A-t-elle rapport à l'art de l'orfèvre? Je n'ose point faire de conjecture à cet égard, ne l'ayant rencontrée nulle part ailleurs'. This hesitation on the part of Mesnil lends weight to the Warburg-Bode interpretation of goldsmithy work, the same word being used by Vasari to express it. (cf. Jacque Mesnil, 'Quelques Documents sur Botticelli', *Miscellania d'Arte*, 1903.)

That Botticelli was possessed of a high literary culture is an opinion now almost current among scholars. I doubt it very much. Vasari was obviously dissatisfied with Botticelli's devotion to Dante; he did not give vent to such dissatisfaction when he described Brunelleschi's and Michelangelo's 'famigliarissimo Dante'. Vasari's feeling might be explained by the fact that Botticelli was prevented by that devotion from his proper work as a painter. But all the same it sounds as if Vasari did not find that literary devotion of the artist very worthy and adapted to his genius. The interesting repartee, which Botticelli's neighbour made in answer to a charge of heresy: 'egli è vero, che io ho questa opinione dell' anima di costui, che è vna bestia. Oltre cio non pare a voi, che sia heretico, poi che senza hauere lettere, o apena saper leggere, comenta Dante; e mentoua il suo nome in vano?' (*Vasari*, second edition) is, of course, a joke, and should not be taken literally, and yet if Botticelli's literary accomplishment had been acknowledged and his devotion to and study of Dante had stood in high esteem, in those days of enlightenment, even in joke, such words 'without having letters or hardly knowing how to read' would not have occurred. We know for certain that Botticelli 'knew letters' well, especially as we may perhaps take the beautiful handwritten text of Dante on the back of the Drawings as Botticelli's own. But he never gives me an impression of a great intellectual soul, like Brunelleschi or Michelangelo, to whom Botticelli is too frequently compared, simply on account of his devotion to Dante. Devotion, yes; but from devotion we cannot immediately conclude that Botticelli was a great scholar of Dante.

It seems strange to notice that those who maintain that Botticelli was a great scholar are themselves great scholars. It may be argued that only scholarly minds can understand the intellectual profundity of Botticelli's culture. It seems to me more probable that scholars projected their own learning into the instinctive actions of the artistic mind of Botticelli and made out of him quite a different being. When Dr. Kern suggested that Botticelli must have been a great scholar of perspective, I feel that it was Dr. Kern who was the great scholar, and could analyse and demonstrate with geometrical diagrams the beautifully natural compositions, which were most probably the spontaneous work of the artist. Dr. Warburg's admirable study of the literary sources of the *Primavera* is a proof of his erudition, and it should not give the impression, as it does, that Botticelli sought for literary authority for his picture so elaborately as did his critic. It is a pity that, except in Pater's and Ruskin's romantic fancies, no simple intuitive mind has written on Botticelli. All the special students in modern times worthy of careful study were men of erudition—Dr. Uhlmann, Dr. Steinmann, Dr. Bode, Prof. A Venturi, Mr. Berenson, and most of all Horne, and Dr. Warburg. Certainly, Botticelli had sufficient literary traits to attract scholarly investigation. But one must not forget that he was

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

above all an artist, full of caprice and invention. A conscientious historical study cannot allow any whim on the part of the painter: every face in the picture must be identified. Every pose and situation must be provided with literary references. The result is that writings on Botticelli are heavy reading, full of references and quotations, that have little to do with Botticelli's art. Scholarly works on Botticelli have endowed him with too erudite an atmosphere. In his own works he was an artist.

His literary taste had more of poetic tendency, and I doubt if it was ever that of a scholar. Botticelli always longed for spiritual authority for his poetic fancies, and, I think, all the literary accomplishment he might have acquired was limited to this. In the *Madonna del Magnificat* he relied upon the hymn to the Virgin; in the *Enthroned Madonna with St. Barnabas and other Saints* he inscribed on a marble tablet that most beautiful Incantation to the Virgin from Dante: 'Virgine madre Figlia del tuo figlio.' In the *Madonna with two St. Johns* of the Berlin Museum he quoted various phrases from the twenty-fourth chapter of the Book of Ecclesiasticus (cf. *Horne*, p. 138), and he represented them in the picture with almost religious fidelity. All these show Botticelli's taste for allegorical references. But the sum of his literary culture is quite another thing, as we can never know to what extent the artist had to follow the instruction of those who ordered his pictures. I am not sure either to what extent his knowledge of Dante was superior to that of any Quattrocento lover of Dante. Botticelli was asked to draw illustrations for Landino's edition of the *Divine Comedy* which appeared in 1481. But illustrators are not necessarily special students of the book they illustrate. It is quite possible that in those early drawings Botticelli followed the ideas of the famous editor of Dante, and they may have formed the basis for the later and finer drawings, which are nearly the same in interpretation, but richer in episode. Did not Botticelli, however, in following the injunctions of the scholarly Landino, become himself as accomplished a Dante scholar? Possibly to some extent, but the drawings are wonderful for the poetic sympathy of a simple credulous mind, and for the beautiful representations in pictorial imagery; I can find in them little of scholarly erudition or of intellectual solidity. Vasari says that Botticelli 'commented' on Dante. This I cannot accept literally, though Dr. Steinmann did. I think more compatible with Botticelli's character is Horne's opinion that Botticelli made a 'pictorial' comment of the poem, according to the custom of the time.

I doubt, too, whether Botticelli actually studied classical literature to any great extent for the most discussed classical paintings. To speak of the *Primavera*, though in the conception of Venus and other figures Lucretius and Horace were found by comparative studies of Dr. Warburg and Horne to be more akin to Botticelli's picture than Poliziano's verses, and though in the age of Lorenzo il Magnifico those ancient writers were

'among the modern literature of Europe . . . newer and younger than Dante', according to Horne, yet Botticelli's instinctive, unmethodical way of life does not lead me to suppose that he rummaged scholarly volumes for pictorial motives. Moreover, there was Poliziano, not merely the best poet and greatest scholar of the time, but ever a willing adviser to artists. Poliziano's poems, so full of beautiful imagery, with vivid and sensuous description, must surely have appealed to Botticelli. The fragmentary resemblances so abundant between Poliziano's *La Giostra* and Botticelli's *Primavera* have been frequently pointed out. Indeed, nothing so much invokes Botticelli's pictures, richly carpeted with flowers, as Poliziano's jewel-like verse. I do not deny a connection between Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* and Botticelli's *Primavera*, as the similarities in the conceptions of Venus and other ancient deities are too striking. But I am more inclined to see this possible connection through the scholarly intermediary of Poliziano, whose brain, brimful of classical authors, comparing different versions of Greek mythology, must have finally chosen and given the conception, situation and moral of the *Primavera* to the young artist. The painter, then unencumbered with scholarly research, could give himself up to the pictorial realization of the poetic idea.

Unless we make the most of Poliziano's advice, the difficulty of understanding the picture seems to me to be too great. Even after Dr. Warburg's elucidation its ultimate meaning is as enigmatic as ever. Dr. Warburg, noting the melancholy expression of Venus, thought that she ruled Spring, but sadly announces the quick transition of the happy season. Dr. Bode, while praising Dr. Warburg's study, thinks that 'das Bild ist recht eigentlich das hohe Lied von neuen Glauben, von der Freude am Leben, am irdischen Dasein; es schildert das "Reich der Venus", den Triumph der Liebe, die der Frühling in der ganzen Natur erweckt, die er auch im Menschenherzen doppelt mächtig anregt', thus, contrary to Dr. Warburg, interpreting that the picture has an entirely happy sense. Coming to the interpretation of detail, while Dr. Bode understands Botticelli as representing in the blue-coloured wind-god 'the icy North wind' that nips the first flowers of Spring and the fair Flora fleeing from his cruel grasp, Horne, appreciating the labour of Dr. Warburg, as well as Dr. Bode, takes the wind-god as the amorous zephyr of Spring, the blue colour indicating his airy nature. It seems to me that all these contradictory interpretations, by scholars who are in agreement as to historical sources, permitting all kinds of subjective meanings, come from the probable fact that the picture was conceived in a subjective way (possibly from Poliziano), not directly depending upon any particular passages by authoritative writers, such as literary scholars are wont to quote.

My view is that Botticelli had not a great literary culture, but that his nature preferred to be dependent on literary authorities. So it can be

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

imagined how faithful he was in his representation of given subjects. His Dante Illustrations could well serve as the pictorial 'comment' of the complicated poem. We have also seen that in the Berlin *Madonna with Two St. Johns* he tried his utmost to represent all the different plants enumerated in the text. Such extreme faithfulness in following texts could not but compromise his quality as a painter. When Botticelli was invited to paint in the Sistine Chapel, the great honour seems to have made him more than usually conscientious, and he became so scrupulous in following the given subjects that he overcrowded the compositions with episodes, over-elaborated the detail with topographical or iconographical interest, which was always pleasing to the patrons; the result was that the pictorial value of the frescoes was much injured. When a story is lost, a picture faithful to it is in danger of becoming unintelligible, and in fact, till Dr. Steinmann discovered the historical sources, it was not known what the *Purification of the Lepers* represented. The unintelligibility of the *Primavera* must be understood in the same way. With the brain that conceived it the story died.

Such being the intellectual characteristics of Botticelli, what was their influence on his art? Botticelli was a painter of narrative all through his life, faithful and painstaking, the more so as he grew older. But this characteristic was never a strong point. Paradoxical though it may sound, it is rather when he failed in his literary intention that he showed himself really great. That glorious failure came from other parts of his genius more congenial to Art.

Let me make this point clear by a comparison between the *Primavera* and the *Calunnia*. The *Calunnia* was painted in the 'nineties, when Botticelli was both spiritually and technically addicted to the narrative purpose of Art. He faithfully followed Leon Battista Alberti's description of Apelles' lost picture, and tried hard to revive it. Looking at the *Calunnia* we feel too well the painter's purpose. We want to know what those sinister looking people are doing in their strange excitement. This curiosity disagreeably rules the whole impression. You cannot satisfy it in the picture, and you want an explanation. It is sufficient proof that the picture was a failure. Moreover, the pictorial quality was not good enough, either to solve or to charm away this intellectual inquisitiveness. With the *Primavera* the case is just the reverse, and exactly as the *Calunnia* is a pictorial failure, so the *Primavera* is a great success. The subject may be unintelligible, but who cares? The pictorial qualities are so harmonized and perfect in themselves that you do not feel the existence of an unsatisfied curiosity. I may even say the obscurity of the meaning adds to the mystic beauty of the picture.

Following up the intellectual side of Botticelli, we come in touch with

MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ANGEL
(Milan, Ambrosiana Library)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

that other side, which mainly constitutes his greatness as a spiritual painter; I call it here the emotional, in contrast to the intellectual, although I called it before the symbolic, indicating its non-intellectual, non-logical process of communicating sense-experiences to the mind. The emotional character of Botticelli seems to have come chiefly from the extreme vividness of his senses. Indeed, as we were studying the various phases of the 'Sensuous Botticelli', we continually felt that his sensuous qualities did not stop at the senses alone. They were gradually making up the spiritual atmosphere, for which our heart ever longs. If we are to study Botticelli as a spiritual painter, we must pay more attention to this emotional side than to the intellectual. The emotional and the sensuous were the same, and also the intellectual and the realistic, only seen from different standpoints.

Botticelli's emotional life divides itself naturally into two, the sentimental and the mystic. By nature the same, they appear in different ways. The sentimental is the psychology of the young adolescent age, which, if it does not weaken so much as to disappear, resolves itself into the mystic in later life.

What is the basis of youthful sentimentality? Is it not the first movement of sensuousness in its subconscious state? Is it not the tearful, disturbed state of mind, which comes from the first acknowledgement of dualism in man? This shy acknowledgement of the sensual existence produces a pathetic yearning for the spiritual. We observed a nervous aspiration in the *Birth of Venus*. It is in young, virginal love that the adolescent sentimentality converges, and such a love seems to have been the guiding spirit of our painter. When Mr. Berenson remarked that *La Vita Nuova* would have been a better subject for Botticelli than the *Epic of Heaven and Hell*, did he feel this also? In the Dante Drawings we can feel a particular pathos with which Botticelli welcomed the entry of Beatrice into the poem. I sympathize with his ecstasy, when he beheld with Dante in the *Purgatorio*, Canto XXX, the longed-for Beatrice appearing in the heavenly pageant. The angels scattering flowers well embody the gladness in Botticelli's heart. The happy pair flying heavenward in love (*Paradiso*, Canto I), Love's transfiguration, are the most beautiful and noblest figures of lovers we can dream of.

In my view, the famous question of 'La Bella Simonetta' must be seen in the personal light of Botticelli's own sentiment. Why should Horne have tried so hard to kill the beautiful legend? His great antipathy is justifiable when we take into consideration what extravagances were written on the beautiful legend under the guise of historical essays. Ruskin, in his notes to his *Ariadne Fiorentina*, published in 1876, quoted as containing 'the probable truth' a letter by a Mr. Tyrwhitt, which is very strange as an historical hypothesis: 'Now it seems agreed by Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Pater, etc. (and I am quite sure of it myself as to pictures mentioned)—first that the same slender and long-throated model appears in *Spring*, the

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Aphrodite, *Calumny* and other works. Secondly, that she was Simonetta, the original of the Pitti portrait.

'Now I think she must have been induced to let Sandro draw from her whole person undraped, more or less; and he must have done so, as such a man probably would, in strict honour as to deed, word and *definite* thought, but under occasional excesses of passion of which he said nothing, and which, in all probability and by the Grace of God refined down to nil, or nearly so, as he got accustomed to look in honour at so beautiful a thing. . . . Her lover Giuliano was murdered in 1478 and Savonarola hanged and burned in 1498. Now, can her distress and Savonarola's preaching between them have taken, in few years, all the carnality out of Sandro, supposing him to have come already, by 'seventy-eight, to that state in which the sight of her delighted him, without provoking ulterior feelings? All decent men accustomed to draw from the nude tell us they get to that.' It upsets all these suppositions, seeing that Simonetta died two years before her lover was murdered. Savonarola began his prophetic career in Florence really from his preaching in the Duomo, in Lent of 1491. As the *Birth of Venus*, stylistically considered, must have been painted somewhere in the middle of the 'eighties, neither Simonetta could have shown 'her whole person undraped' to the painter, nor Savonarola have 'taken all the carnality out of Sandro' by this time. Such fragrant disregard of historical data and the unnecessary moralizing influencing the historical conclusion are enough to anger such a conscientious historian as Horne. As late as 1904 a writer in the *Connoisseur* published a romantic picture of the daily life of Simonetta, which is astonishing in its vivid description—entirely groundless. Though it is a little dismaying to find such poetical essays in an art-journal, they may be regarded as fantasies which we share more or less in the wish to preserve beautiful legends. I may regard M. de la Sizeranne, Frau Kurz, and many other writers on Simonetta in this poetic light, although nearly all of them pretend to be historical. But grave historians are sometimes no less romantic. In the study of the Quattrocento in Florence, one is amazed to come across all sorts of fair women described as Simonetta. In Chantilly there is a profile with her name on the frame, the picture is by Piero di Cosimo; in Domenico Ghirlandajo's fresco of the *Birth of the Virgin* in Santa Maria Novella, the young maid bringing in the presents and the young woman in the *Madonna Misericordia* by the same artist in the Ognissanti are indicated as Simonettas. Waldmüller, in his study of Leonardo da Vinci, described the full-length drawing of a young maiden as a sketch of her, and the drawing of a young girl with profuse hair in the Uffizi is also mentioned as Simonetta. Of Botticelli I may almost say that nearly all the beautiful women in his pictures have been called Simonetta.

Vasari says: 'In the guardaroba of the Duke of Cosimo are two heads

of women by Botticelli's hand, which are very beautiful; one of these is said to have been the "inamorata" of Giuliano de' Medici, the brother of Lorenzo, and the other Madonna Lucrezia de Tornabuoni, the wife of the same Lorenzo.' As the famous profile in the Pitti Gallery came from the Medici Collection, it was identified as La Bella Simonetta, and Dr. Warburg thought he saw the same physiognomy in the front view of the face of La Primavera, which I feel difficult to admit. In the *Primavera*, Primavera, Venus and Flora are in their turn called by her name; in the *Birth of Venus*, both Venus and the Grace; in the Sistine frescoes 'Zipporah', in the cassone panels of the Story of Nastagio degli Onesti, the bride, have all been called Simonetta. J. P. Richter thought that the only authentic portrait of Simonetta was in the *Mars and Venus* of the National Gallery, but this seems to me only a personal impression of the critic. If Richter was right, St. Catherine of Alexandria in the *Madonna and Child with St. Barnabas and other Saints* must also be Simonetta. Moreover, as these paintings are stylistically concluded to have been painted in the years somewhere about 1485 or later, even if they contain Simonetta's 'authentic portrait', it cannot have been painted from her in life. It is astonishing to hear that some of the vindictive women in the *Calunnia* have been suggested as her. All these are illusions born of the romantic desire to see the true portrait, just as Savonarola's portraits are frequently pointed out in later works of Botticelli. Then there are female portraits expressly called Simonetta, as many as five of them, in the Berlin Museum, the Frankfurt Museum, Herr Kappel's Collection (now belonging to Dr. Noah) at Berlin, in the National Gallery from the Cohen Bequest, in Sir Herbert Cook's Collection at Richmond, and the drawing for the Frankfurt profile in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. We may remember that of her famous lover, Giuliano de' Medici, there are four versions, in the Berlin Museum, the Bergamo Gallery, Conte Lazzaroni's Collection in Paris, and Mr. Otto Kahn's Collection in New York. From all these confusions I must draw my own inferences.

On this occasion I agree with Dr. Bode, who supports the legend, in opposition to Horne, who tried to deny it with unjustifiable ardour. The Chantilly profile by Piero di Cosimo has an inscription on the frame: SIMONETTA IANVENSIS VESPUCCIA, and Dr. Bode is right in refuting Horne's theory that these words were added later, after the picture was seen by Vasari, and described as Cleopatra. It cannot be, as the letters are in the character of the fifteenth century. When Simonetta died, Piero di Cosimo was only fourteen years old, and so the picture is an ideal portrait painted long afterwards. This at least proves that after her death at an early age she became a poetic figure existing in the imagination of Botticelli's fellow-painters. The Simonetta legend is not altogether an invention of modern romanticism, as Horne would have it.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

At the same time there is no portrait except one, which I am going to propose later, that we can conclude as having been painted directly from her. Besides being chronologically impossible, as has been shown, Piero di Cosimo's picture at Chantilly could not be anything but an imaginative one, as the profile shows Piero's female type, which frequently recurs in his works. It was, indeed, on account of the pronounced type that the picture came to be recognized as Piero's. The other painting, which we may infer more or less from documentary evidence possibly to contain her portrait, is the fresco of the *Madonna della Misericordia* with the Vespucci family, mentioned by Vasari and others as containing the portrait of the famous Amerigo. Brockhaus thought that this fresco dated from 1480, with other frescoes of Ghirlandajo in the same church, but Prof. A. Venturi gives it to the last ten years of the fifteenth century. Anyway, the fresco could not have been painted in Simonetta's lifetime, and so even if we are to imagine the young lady kneeling on the left of the Madonna to be a representation of her, there is little ground for supposing it to be her real portrait. Where is Simonetta's portrait, which Vasari saw in the Guardaroba of the Duke Cosimo? Horne says that in the inventory of the same guardaroba taken in 1553 there is no mention of it, but only of the portrait of Lucrezia, this time correctly described as the wife of Piero de' Medici, although the painter's name is not given. The Pitti profile, at first eagerly identified as La Bella Simonetta because it came from the Medici Collection, is now accepted by few. I can see no reason for accepting it as Simonetta, although I do not like the reasons for its rejection generally given. From Milanesi down, all scholars are unanimous in considering her costume too plain, and unworthy of so famous a beauty. Dr. Bode, representing this view more definitely, calls her 'keineswegs schöne oder anmütige Dame, deren schlichte, ganz schmucklose Tracht auffällt', and agrees with Uhlmann in taking her as the other portrait seen by Vasari, representing Clarice Orsini.[1] I wonder to what extent such objection of insufficient beauty or plainness of dress can establish fact. Dr. Bode, Mr. Berenson and many others call the Pitti portrait ugly, but, of course, this proves nothing, as with the same right of individual taste I call her beautiful. And as to the plain 'schmucklos' costume, we must not imagine that Simonetta was always wearing quantities of pearls in her hair, nor that she was always clad in nymph-like dresses. She was, after all, the wife of a citizen. The maiden in the Ognissanti fresco of the *Madonna della Misericordia* wears a plain garment and ties her hair in a

[1] Dr. Bode calls her 'Mutter Lorenzos', but really Clarice was Lorenzo's wife. Vasari says he saw the portrait of Madonna Lucrezia, the wife of Lorenzo, but as I have said, this mistake was corrected in the inventory of the guardaroba of the year 1553 to Lucrezia, the wife of Piero de' Medici. So there remains only a slight possibility of Dr. Bode's identification being supported by Vasari's authority.

simple way. No matter whether the lady in the fresco really represented the wife of Marco Vespucci or not, the fact that a lady of the same family should be represented in a painting as wearing a plain costume at least weakens the reason against the Pitti profile being Simonetta on account of the plainness. If the objection may be taken that the Ognissanti fresco is a religious picture, it is well to remember that Ghirlandajo did not always represent young girls in religious pictures as simply dressed. As to Dr. Bode's objection that the Pitti profile is of a woman of about thirty, too old to be Simonetta, it is again merely conjecture.

What are the reasons which prevent me from accepting this Pitti profile as Simonetta? There is no positive proof for identifying her either with Simonetta or Clarice Orsini or 'the mother of his (Giuliano's) son, afterwards Pope Clement VII, a lady of the Gorini family', as Horne suggests, or with anybody. Moreover, the style of the picture forbids me from dating it during Simonetta's lifetime. The broad, bare, already highly conventionalized brushwork, engrossed more with linear feeling than with the real description of the actual materials, especially the wiry treatment of the hair, imitates Botticelli's style after the time of the *Birth of Venus*. However, on the other hand, the picture seems to have been painted from the living model. In its conventionalized treatment there is a tenacious sense of reality; the modulation of the lines of the long neck could only have been drawn from Nature, though we know it to be exaggerated, yet its impression is both possible and true. The same reason makes it difficult to believe the picture to be a copy from an early Botticelli.

That this profile was rejected as being too plain for Simonetta explains well that even among grave historians she lives completely as a poetic being. Why not more so for Botticelli, who, with his extremely imaginative nature, lived actually in the same atmosphere, in which her beauty no sooner shone than died, and poets vied with each other in bewailing her. All the Florentine poets—Lorenzo il Magnifico, Bernardo Pulci, Francesco Nursio Timideo, and above all Angelo Poliziano, wrote elegies in precious languages. If the early death and the funeral with the open bier were such events in Florence, as we gather from Lorenzo's private letters, we can well imagine that Botticelli, still young, was deeply impressed by them, thrice deeply as he lived not far from the Borgo Ognissanti, where the Vespucci Palace stood, and he might have had intimate recollections of her. Moreover, a painter would be deeply impressed by the event which moved his patrons so much; Lorenzo composed as many as four elegies on her death. From this deep impression on the young sentimental soul of the artist it is but natural that a poetical image should be conjured up.

Of the so-called portraits of La Bella Simonetta, of which five exist, all point to the same Botticellesque inspiration, as I have mentioned. I have recently come to the conclusion that the beautiful profile, formerly in the

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Kappel Collection, now belonging to Dr. Noah, Berlin, is the work of Botticelli. In point of execution the picture seems to have been painted by the master at a time not long after the *Primavera*. Can it really be the portrait of Simonetta? I think I must admit it as such, as Dr. Noah's portrait corresponds with the Bergamo portrait of Giuliano de' Medici not only in composition (the bust placed in front of a window), and in technique, colour-scheme and tiny brushwork, peculiar to Botticelli at this period, but also in size, both of them measuring a little more than 40 cm. by 60 cm. They might have been companion pieces, although the fact that both the figures turn to the right and do not face each other, as in the case of *Montefeltro portraits* by Piero della Francesca in the Uffizi Gallery, makes it somewhat difficult to class them as companion pictures, strictly speaking. The existence of Giuliano de' Medici's portrait looking to the right in Mr. Otto Kahn's Collection, New York, and of 'Simonetta' looking to the left in K. Friedrich Museum, Berlin, may offer as a possibility that originally there were companion portraits by Botticelli, of which either Dr. Noah's 'Simonetta' or the Bergamo Giuliano was a part of the original pair and the other a reversed replica by the master. Indeed, I do not go so far as definitely to propose these two portraits as companion pieces, but I may be allowed to suppose that either these are companion pieces, or at least they suggest, together with other freer and later versions by the master himself and by pupils, the original existence of companion portraits, of which the male part is historically known as that of Giuliano de' Medici.

Then who could this lady be? Giuliano's portrait now exists in four versions. The lady, whose companion portrait to his exists in five different versions, must have been as celebrated and as dear to popular memory as Giuliano himself. And also she must have been very intimately associated with Giuliano. Who else could she be, except the famous 'inamorata' of the gallant Medici?

Supposing that Dr. Noah's profile is Simonetta, can it possibly be her real portrait, the portrait painted from her in life? It is possible. As I have pointed out, the portrait must have been painted by Botticelli at about the time of the *Primavera*, which I give to some years after the Medici tournament of 1476, and although Simonetta died soon after the happy event, yet in point of style, both Dr. Noah's lady and the *Giuliano* at Bergamo are admissible in Botticelli's career before the death of Simonetta. If we are to seek for Simonetta's authentic portrait, Dr. Noah's profile is the only possibility.

This is only a possibility, so far as we know. Life is, however, full of impossibilities, the more so history, long past, of which we know very little. Therefore the question of La Bella Simonetta does not interest us so very much in the way of searching for her authentic portrait, as in the

proper way of understanding the painter's interest in her image as a sentimental motive for his art. Indeed, although Dr. Noah's portrait may be a real portrait of Simonetta by Botticelli, she is so completely an image of Botticelli's creation that, unless we make special efforts for historical reconstruction like a professional historian, she immediately charms us away into a world of poetic imagination. She is real in her portraiture, all the same she is so strangely entrancing and vague. In any study of Botticelli as an artist the question of La Bella Simonetta arouses greater interest as a typical example of the sentimental psychology of the master than the question of an actual personality.

I have spoken of the ethereal sensuousness of Botticelli. It came out in his religious works, in the decided preference for the Virgin. For a temperament such as his, there could be nothing so appealing as this frail beauty, La Bella Simonetta, whose early death could but enshrine her image more vividly in his poetic soul. We know Simonetta died of a consumptive illness, which makes the earthly existence almost transparent and lets the mystery of death appear. Such a mysterious beauty was the image Botticelli loved. Poliziano's poetry, by which Botticelli was chiefly inspired for Art, was full of her, disguised in the land of nymphs. We know nothing certain about the real relation between Simonetta and Giuliano de' Medici, whether it was only a 'formal' one, necessary to the ceremony of the tournament, such as Horne would have us believe, or a more serious one as the word 'inamorata' used by Vasari usually conveys. Horne says of the *Mars and Venus* in London: 'upon the death of Simonetta in 1476, Poliziano had laid aside his "Stanze" unfinished; and at the time at which this picture was painted, *c.* 1485, Botticelli could no longer have had any reason for celebrating the loves of Giuliano and his mistress'. Why not? Both of the lovers were long dead; they live simply in poems and in poetic souls, without any check or disillusionment from their earthly lives. Even memories thereof are fading fast. Simonetta remembered in her young frail beauty, consecrated in the stories of love, etherealized by her early death, and all faded into a pathos of long, long ago, could not this be the image cherished in Botticelli's soul? This sounds sentimental in a serious study of Botticelli. But it seems to me that he was a man of rich sentimentality.

Seeing the question of 'La Bella Simonetta' in this psychological way, and recognizing the romantic significance of it as important to the poetic genius of Botticelli, one will readily believe as very natural to human mind that Botticelli painted the three masterpieces of classical subjects, the *Primavera*, the *Birth of Venus*, and the *Mars and Venus* from Poliziano's poems, where linger the images of Simonetta and Giuliano. I have no difficulty in seeing the presentments of the two famous lovers in Botticelli's art as his own poetic images. The case is a little different with Giuliano.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

He was a man of public importance; his features were strongly impressed on people's memory and could not undergo poetic transformation so easily as Simonetta. The sentimental yearning of the feministic soul of Botticelli was certainly inclined more towards the nymph. Simonetta in all her portraits is always a nymph and nothing but a nymph, although these portraits are possibly repetitions from an original one, as I have demonstrated. Richter, while he imagined he saw the 'authentic' portrait of Simonetta in the *Mars and Venus* of the National Gallery, definitely denied that Giuliano was represented in the person of Mars, 'because', as he said, 'it will destroy the poetic charm'. Why should it 'destroy the poetic charm'? The real reason is: Giuliano's features are historically unmistakable. Even Botticelli's imagination could not metamorphose him into a poetic being. Richter is quite right in being unable to identify Mars with Giuliano. Certainly Botticelli did not intend it. This does not, however, prevent us from accepting the *Mars and Venus* as a realization of the romantic inspiration by the famous lovers through Poliziano's poems. And is not Venus Simonetta? She is not certainly the 'authentic' portrait of Richter, but even for us, who know what her real portrait is, this Venus is not very different from Simonetta. That Giuliano's features were not attempted by Botticelli in Mars, shows that neither did the painter attempt Simonetta's features in Venus. Yet Simonetta and Venus are alike. All this shows that Botticelli, pictorially describing Poliziano's poems, did not intend to portray historical persons, but Botticelli the poet painted the beautiful creations which he himself and all the lovers of Quattrocento sentiment longed to see. One seeks for Simonetta and sees her everywhere in Botticelli.

This is the proper key for understanding Botticelli's paintings produced under the amorous inspiration of Giuliano and Simonetta. One would be disappointed in looking for real portraits in them; one would be amply repaid in endearing poetic images: the peculiar charm is that the real and the poetic were sometimes very near to each other. Now is the proper time to approach the three masterpieces and compare them with their literary sources.

Of the *Primavera*, though there are many passages in Poliziano which have relation to the picture, I cannot help thinking that the following gives the main idea:

Giuliano goes hunting in Fiesole and, losing his way, finds in the depth of the forest a beautiful lady:

'Ell' era assisa sopra la verdura
Allegra, e ghirlandetta avea contesta
Di quanti fior creasse mai natura,
De' quali era dipinta la sua vesta,

E come prima al giovan pose cura,
Alquanto paurosa alzò la testa:
Poi con la bianca man ripreso il lembo,
Levossi in piè con di fior pieno un grembo.
Già s' inviava per quindi partire
La ninfa sopra l' erba lenta lenta,
Lasciando il giovanetto in gran martire
Che fuor lei null' altro omai talenta'.

The charmed youth cannot bear to let her leave, he speaks, and she answers. Time passes fast. Evening comes:

'Cer poi che il sol sue rote in basso cala
E da quest' arbor cade maggiar l' ombra,
Già cede al grillo la stanca cicala, . . .'

In this shadow of the evening wood, the beautiful lady must depart, and as the white and slender form goes slowly away, flowers spring up under her feet.

'Feciono e' boschi allor dolci lamenti,
E gli angelletti a pianger cominciorno:
Ma l' erba verde sotto i dolci passi
Bianca gialla vermiglia azzurra fassi.'

This is the most important event in the whole romance, the first encounter of the lovers, and there is nothing in the whole poetry of Poliziano which evokes so vividly the figure of the Primavera as painted by Botticelli, crowned with a garland, her lap full of flowers, which drop profusely on to the ground and scatter stars among the grass, in the silent dusk of the vernal wood. Objection may be taken that this serves only for the identification of the figure of the Primavera, but we must bear in mind that she is the focus of interest. I cannot understand why Dr. Warburg, and many writers who follow him, prefer to call the picture the Reign of Venus, instead of the old and symbolic name of Spring. The Venus is the central figure in the literal sense, but she is in the background. She rules the whole philosophically, as if she were invisible. It is more natural to name the picture from the actual impression of the concentrated interest in the figure of the Primavera.

In the *Mars and Venus* and the *Birth of Venus* the connection with Poliziano's *La Giostra* is more apparent. Though Horne says that the love of Mars and Venus was not an uncommon subject, why is Mars represented in the London picture as sleeping, a treatment which Horne himself confesses 'remains unexplained'? And why is Venus represented in a white dress, when she is usually represented nude? It seems to me that

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

the usual reference to the passages in *La Giostra*, where Giuliano dreams of his lady of the tournament as the motive for the picture, is very good. Venus appears and 'she divests his lady of the armour of Pallas and leaves her robed in white'. (*Giostra* ii, 30–32, quoted from J. P. Richter's Lectures on the National Gallery.) It is well known that Giuliano carried the standard of Pallas in the tournament. It is plausible to imagine that his lady had disguised herself as Pallas and secured his victory. After the victory the Goddess of Love comes, and divesting his lady Simonetta of Pallas's armour, leaves her 'robed in white'. All this Giuliano dreams. In the *Birth of Venus*, even Horne admits that the subject was taken from Poliziano, but being reluctant to admit any reference to the Simonetta legend in the picture, confines the influence of Poliziano's poem to the description of the *Birth of Venus*, which is described as a decorative relief over a door of the Palace of Venus. This limitation seems unnecessary. Simonetta says of her native place thus:

'Mia natal patria è nella aspra Liguria
Sopr' una costa alla riva marittima,
Ove fuor de' gran massi indarno gemere
Si sente il fer Nettunno e irato fremere.

'Ma perch' io in tutto el gran desir t' adempi
E' l' dubbio tolga che tua mente rompe
Maraviglia di mie bellezze tenere
Non prender già, ch' io nacqui in grembo a Venere.'

There are good reasons for supposing that Simonetta was born in the villa of her Genoese parents, at Porto Venere, the very place where Italians believed Venus to have arrived after her birth in the Mediterranean. Is not this a happy coincidence for La Bella Simonetta (who was thought of more as the Goddess of Beauty than as a human being) and likely to impress Botticelli, who loved allegory?

These references to Poliziano's verses in the formation of Botticelli's classical pictures are old. Here I have reconsidered them critically: Horne rejected them almost entirely. Horne seems to have fallen into error by his very strength as an historian, which led him to treat the question of poetic genius in the literal light of historical event. The Simonetta question should rather be studied as a typical aspect of Botticelli's sentimentality, and no reason would be found for destroying so beautiful a legend.

'One face looks out from all canvases,
One selfsame figure sits or walks or leans. . . .'

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

La Bella Simonetta was Botticelli's own Simonetta, his Eternal Feminine.

In referring to Botticelli's Madonnas, I propose to regard them again in the light of sentimental psychology, more especially the beautiful Madonnas of his earlier career.

What is the basis of Madonna worship? Why was it so widely popular in medieval times? For the minute study of it I refer the reader to Prof. Hirn's *Sacred Shrine*. I will here confine myself to its most salient aspects. Madonna worship seems to have grown up as an inevitable compensation of Nature in man for the ascetic tendency of Medieval Christianity, which in theory at least attempted to deny sensual existence. However celibate and secluded the life of a priest, the Natural Man could not be driven out of his body. With the Madonna, Woman could penetrate into cloisters, and soothe hungry souls with feminine tenderness. Men are, after all, sentimental creatures. They do not always want doctrine: they long for soft feminine sympathy. The Madonna cult is the worship of the virgin, of the woman mature, but beyond the flesh. It is also the worship of motherhood, but the motherhood of Immaculate Conception. In the character of the Madonna there is a strange mixture of chastity and sensuality. It is the worship of warm chastity. If there ever existed a painter whose nature was adapted for representing the beautiful sentiment of the Madonna, it was Botticelli.

It was the Madonna who could really be the ideal type, to which the Sentimental Botticelli aspired. Following the fashion of the time and also urged on by the sensuous ardour of his youth, he had painted pagan deities with resplendent beauty, but with a shy conscience. His medieval soul ever yearned for other beauty. It is not because Simonetta and Giuliano died tragic deaths that Botticelli intentionally painted the memories of them in extremely melancholy colours. Rather without knowing it himself, he was seeking for the Madonna in the Venus. When the tide turned to the Cinquecento, artists saw Venus in the Madonna.

The sentimental keynote in Botticelli's Madonnas was once and for all defined by Walter Pater. In spite of his historical misconceptions he still remains the sensitive genius, who could best sympathize with Botticelli. Only his method of expression is not completely satisfactory. With all his poetic turn of mind, why did he not understand Botticelli's art with more emphasis on the simple subjectivity of the artist? Pater beautifully imagined the psychology of the Madonna, with references to history and doctrine, and admired Botticelli for his fine expression of it. I would rather understand it as Botticelli's own sentiments projected into the Madonna, whatever theological references may be. Once devoted to Venus, Botticelli made her strangely sad and chaste. The same nature turned to the Madonna, whose character was congenial and nearer to his aspiration.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

I do not mean that Botticelli did not meditate upon the psychology of the Madonna. He sometimes inscribed on his works quotations, bearing on the Madonna, and tried to illustrate them: the *Madonna del Magnificat*, for instance, with the hymn to the Virgin, or the *Madonna with St. Barnabas and other Saints* with the first line of Dante's famous incantation of the Virgin, 'Vergine madre, figlia del tuo figlio'. (*Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII.)

Maiden and Mother, daughter of thine own Son,
Beyond all creatures lowly and lifted high,
Of the Eternal Design the corner-stone!
Thou art she who did man's substance glorify
So that its own Maker did not eschew
Even to be made of its mortality.
Within thy womb the Love was kindled new
By generation of whose warmth supreme
This flower to bloom in peace eternal grew.
Thou art here to us the full meridian beam
Of love in heaven: below, to mortal sight,
Hope, that for ever springs in living stream.
Lady, thou art so great and hast such might
That whoso crave grace, nor to thee repair,
Their longing still without wing taketh flight.
Thy succour doth not only him up-bear
Who prays, but in thy bounty's large excess
Thou oftentimes dost even forerun the prayer.
In thee is pity, in thee is tenderness,
In thee magnificence, in thee the sum
Of all that in creation most can bless.

(Translated by Laurence Binyon.)

This is too beautiful a passage for anyone who loves Dante at all not to notice, and Botticelli showed the attraction he felt by inscribing the first line in the picture itself. At the end of *Paradiso*, Canto XXXII, Dante describes his vision of the Virgin Mary, thus:

I saw rain on her such an ecstasy
(The sacred minds had borne it, blissful load,
Commissioned through the heavenly height to fly)
That all I had seen on all the way I had trod
Held me not in such breathless marvelling,
Nor so great likeness vouched to me of God.
And that Love which at its first down-coming
Sang to her: *Hail, O Mary full of grace!*
Now over her extended either wing.

The divine song echoed in every place
Answered from all sides of the Blessed Court,
So that serener peace filled every face.

(Translated by Laurence Binyon.)

Horne thinks that Dante gave the fundamental idea of the Madonna to Botticelli, and that we must take these passages as the mental basis for understanding his Madonnas. Again, Dr. Steinmann rightly lays stress on the influence of Savonarola's sermons on the Madonna upon Botticelli's religious sentiments. Italians, with their imaginative nature, are apt to visualize and languish for the beautiful Madonna in their religious life. Savonarola, with his Southern temperament, frequently raised a passionate voice to the mercy of the Mother of God. I do not deny that Botticelli meditated upon the mental alternations of Our Mother between heavenly joy and earthly pain. But I doubt that Botticelli the painter illustrated them in his works.

He may have attempted it. If so, he failed. The Madonna enthroned with St. Barnabas and others, if we consider her as an attempt to represent the immense feeling expressed in Dante's verse, is little short of a failure. That Madonna is so simple, a helpless young mother, sadly resigned to so great a position, surrounded by prophets and ecclesiastical dignitaries, far from being the 'Queen who can'st all that thou wilt', as Dante also addressed her in the Canto from which I quoted. And of the Madonna del Magnificat, why should Botticelli have conceived her as so sad in her 'Exaltation' (Luke i)? Dante's passage, which Horne proposed as indicating her 'actual sentiment', says: 'I saw rain on her such an ecstasy'. I much wonder, where is 'such an ecstasy'? But above all, if we consider Botticelli's merit chiefly as illustrating Christian texts, we cannot understand why he did not refrain from giving the Mother of God so unmistakable a sisterhood with Venus. The fact is that Botticelli was such a subjective, visionary soul that, try as he could, he had to pursue for ever the same 'Eternal Feminine' of his own longing. We must look at all the beauty, all the sadness, all the weakness of Botticelli's Madonnas in this personal and sentimental light.

This is the reason why there is little change of expression in Botticelli's numerous Madonnas. What I said of his Simonettas applies equally to his Madonnas. I regret that, because of historical mistakes, Walter Pater's excellent interpretations of Botticelli's Madonnas are now treated as fancies, at least by professional critics. Starting from Vasari's story of how Botticelli perpetuated in the altar-piece of the *Assumption of Our Lady*, which he painted for Matteo Palmieri, the heresy held by his patron, that the human race is 'an incarnation of those angels who, in the revolt of Lucifer, were neither for God nor for His enemies', Pater beautifully interpreted

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

the 'peculiar sentiment with which Botticelli infuses his profane and sacred persons, comely, and in a certain sense like angels, but with a sense of displacement or loss about them . . . the wistfulness of exiles conscious of a passion and energy greater than any known issue of them explains, which runs through all his varied work with a sentiment of ineffable melancholy'. For Botticelli, indeed, even the Madonna, though she holds in her arms the 'Desire of all Nations', is one of 'those who are neither for God nor for His enemies; and her choice is on the face. . . . Her trouble is in the very caress of the mysterious child, whose gaze is always remote from her. . . . Once, indeed, he guides her hand to transcribe in a book the words of her exultation, the *Ave* and the *Magnificat*, and the *Gaude Maria*, and the young angels, glad to rouse her for a moment from her dejection, are eager to hold the inkhorn and support the book; but the pen almost drops from the hand, and the high cold words have no meaning for her.' It was not Pater alone who took Vasari's story of Botticelli's heresy for the characterization of the artist. Emil Gebhart also used it with a delicate insinuation, peculiar to the beautiful writer of *l'Italie Mystique*. We know now for certain that the *Palmieri altar-piece* was painted possibly after Botticelli's design by Francesco Botticini, so that we have no means of ascertaining if Botticelli maintained Palmieri's dogma or not. Probably not, from the fact that Botticelli was invited to paint in the Sistine Chapel by the Pope 'within a few years of the scandal which followed upon the exposure of Matteo Palmieri's heresies', as Horne says. (*Horne*, p. 122.) All the same, this heretic idea of the descent of Man from the neutral angels, when God and Lucifer fought, is so near to the modern pessimism contained in Botticelli's works, that Pater's and Gebhart's essays are for lovers of Botticelli most worthy of consideration. I imagine that Pater's real train of thought was just the reverse of that in his writing: not that he developed his interpretation of Botticelli's Madonnas from the dogma of Palmieri's heresy, but that he got the sentimental impressions of spiritual 'exiles' actually from the pictures, and simply connected them with the beautiful heresy as an afterthought.

Taking Botticelli's Madonnas essentially as the expression of his sentimental aspiration, we can well understand how, in his pictures, saints and prophets are least pleasing when compared with his Madonnas. In their profound and vigorous characters they present excellent opportunity for intellectual interpretation, suitable for the genius of Michelangelo or of Dürer, not for the beautiful Botticelli. Indeed, Botticelli went one step farther in sentimentalism than in his Madonnas. He was loveliest when he painted angels. The large *Coronation* of the Uffizi shows clearly what subject was most congenial to him. The lower part of the painting, where are four male saints, is dull, as if the painter was but little interested in it. The spectators' attention is irresistibly drawn to the upper part, where is

LA CALUNNIA
(Florence, Uffizi Gallery)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

the loveliest circle of angels ever painted, almost dazzling in its ever-changing beauty. Compared with the excessive pleasure of painting those heavenly creatures, even the Madonna must have been uninteresting to him, especially as she is not here represented in her maternal love with the Child, but in the austere ceremony, to which such severe genius as Orcagna and his brother Nardo, or so pious a soul as Fra Angelico, were suited. I cannot help feeling somewhat disappointed when I look at Botticelli's pictures which have no angels. Indeed, in spite of his fame as a painter of Madonnas, I am not at all sure if I can assign to him the greatest place in that respect. The Madonna is a grand subject, worthy of great and deep interpretation. After being charmed by the sweet melancholy of Botticelli's Madonnas, ethereal because of their beautiful frailty, who would not miss the more complete celestial innocence of Fra Angelico's Maiden Mother, or, if more human, the nobler and healthier human Mother of Giovanni Bellini? Yet even these are not the highest, which may be found in the austere dignity of Giotto's, and the queen-like serenity of Piero della Francesca's Madonnas. Botticelli's soul was more at home among those beautiful angels who surround Our Mother, and are immersed in young and sentimental devotion. He was not strong enough to exhaust so grand a subject as the Madonna. He could accomplish one distinguishing feature of her, and that one he felt and expressed with incomparable depth and delicacy. He was like the sweetest of melodists playing one chord from the symphonic psychology of the Madonna, that one sentimental chord which vibrates in every soul. The popularity of Botticelli's Madonnas, surpassing that of any greater painters, is an excellent proof of the predominance of sentimentality in Madonna worship.

In painting sentimental Madonnas, Botticelli may best be compared with the sweetest of Sienese masters, Simone Martini, specially in the small Madonna of the *Annunciation*, once in the Stroganoff Collection, now in the Hermitage at Petrograd. The sentimental sweetness, if translated into artistic form, appears best in the melodious curved lines, and both Simone and Botticelli were the sweetest of line-musicians. I have already mentioned my difficulty in seeing so much sweetness in Don Lorenzo Monaco's line as is pointed out. Simone's sense of line was far more harmonious than that of Don Lorenzo. But even in my association of Simone with Botticelli, I find the latter far sweeter in sentiment and more harmonious in line-rhythm.

Botticelli's taste for, and skill in, tondo Madonna composition can also be understood in relation to his sentimentalism. Born from a common source in Botticelli's nature, the preference for sentimental beauty, and the love of curved line, could not but combine and work upon each other with mutual effect. His figures always droop their heads and give an enchanting curve to the whole form. In tondo composition the circular

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

limit forces the lateral figures to lean their heads toward the centre. It was Botticelli alone, among the many tondo painters, who made an ideal use of this formal obligation, expressing by it the feeling of devotion, essential for religious pictures.

This drooping head of Botticelli's figures, which I have discussed in relation to his weak anatomy, is really the outcome of his sentimentalism, and so in the school-pictures, which were immensely popular chiefly for this quality, the sentimental pose of inclining the head was sometimes curiously exaggerated. St. John the Baptist in the *Baptism of Christ*, in Mr. Berry's Collection in Florence, is one example. It is inexplicable that the saint, leaning so much, does not fall over. The Madonna, stooping to let young St. John embrace the Infant Christ, in the Pitti Gallery, is another example. It seems as if the young slender body of St. John is bearing the whole weight of the Virgin, who is falling rather than stooping.

These are the exaggerations of pupils. I wonder to what extent Botticelli was responsible. In small pictures of his late period, when his nature, turning to mysticism, came out, as in the predella of the Uffizi *Coronation* or that of the *Madonna with St. Barnabas and other Saints*, or in the *Last Communion of St. Jerome*, in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the figures sometimes incline too much; in the large panels, however, in which he had to consider balance in composition, the architectonic sense and the anatomical accuracy he had once learned under great realists never deserted him altogether. The figure of the stooping Madonna in the Garden, in the Dreyfus Collection in Paris, may have come from Botticelli's own design, as the curve of her figure is worthy of him, and, moreover, the existence of another picture with the same figures, once in the Bonnat Collection, points to the existence of an original painting by the master. But it is again a small picture and evidently of the late period. The exaggerated stooping pose is, as it were, the trade-mark of Botticelli's bottega, not necessarily of Botticelli himself. I cannot understand why such indifferent school-pieces with impossibly leaning figures, such as the Corsini tondo, the tondo at Turin, the *Flight into Egypt*, in the Musée Jacquemart-Andrè in Paris, or the *Holy Family* at Pistoja (with its replica at Lille), should be referred to as Botticelli's own designs. If it was the imitators who exaggerated the curves so as to overstep the anatomical rationality to such a disagreeable extent as to disturb the harmonious feeling peculiarly Botticelli's, then I cannot think that the design was his.

Horne, in his persistent assault on the sentimental love of Botticelli, with his 'aria virile' theory as the weapon, often refers ironically to the popular admiration of those Madonna tondi, 'into which', he says, quoting Pater, 'the attendant angels depress their heads so naively'. Although in Pater's days the school-works passed for Botticelli's own without challenge, and Pater might have formed this beautiful phrase from the

exaggerations of imitators, yet curiously enough we too, who perhaps treat the question of authenticity too severely, think the phrase applies well to Botticelli's Madonna tondi. Indeed, our first thoughts of Botticelli's art are those angels who naively droop their heads. Why is this so striking in our ideas of Botticelli? Luca Signorelli, Botticelli's contemporary, who was also very fond of tondo composition, made his figures droop their heads, if not more, at least as much. And yet who would visualize drooping figures, when the name of Luca Signorelli is mentioned? The gloomy feeling which made of Luca a deeper thinker than Botticelli and a born interpreter of Dante's Hell, does not permit a sentimental view of him. Joseph and the shepherds, in his fine tondo in the Uffizi, lower their heads in deep reverence before the Infant. The Mother looks down—in what profound thought! The depth and gravity, ruling the painter of the fearful Orvieto frescoes, did not connect him necessarily with circular composition, and the meek drooping figures most adapted for it. Signorelli's real importance as a tondo painter is not valued as it deserves, while those tondi of sentimental sweetness, Botticelli's and della Robbia's, attract much attention.

These circumstances show the close relation of sentimentalism to curved line, hence the adaptability of tondo composition for sentimental Madonnas. Likewise it proves how Botticelli came to be the representative tondo painter, in the popular idea. *The Madonna and Child with many Angels*, at Dresden, has been put into quasi-circular form, and looks natural. As we do not know the original form of the picture, this form given to it might tell us the natural tendency of the Botticellesque Madonna to create a circular composition. But more significant is the Uffizi drawing of *Adoration of the Child*, also cut into oval form, which we must say, though regretting the cutting, is the natural form for the composition, Joseph and Mary leaning towards the centre, the one in sleep, the other in reverence. It need hardly be said that there are many school-tondi, painted after this original drawing, which look far better in the circular form than in the square.

After establishing youthful, almost feminine sentimentality as one of the fundamental characteristics of Botticelli's art, it seems natural that he should have been actually 'discovered' in the nineteenth century, when romantic sentimentalism reigned as one of the guiding spirits. Though it is wonderful, yet it also was natural that the succeeding ages after Botticelli's death should have ignored him completely. How could it have been otherwise, when academic art with its absolute admiration for the Cinquecento art ruled the world? Horne says that the few notices on Sandro during all these three hundred years after his death were solely because Vasari mentioned him. If anything was said of him, it was like 'Sandro Botticelli, Fiorentino, cervello stravagante, e bizzarro', as in the *Abecedario Pittorico* of Pellegrino Orlandi; first published in Bologna in

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

1719. (*Horne*, p. x.) It is interesting not to find Botticelli's name in the list of the 'eccellenti pittori', which the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand I, published in the beginning of the sixteenth century, in order that 'neither the city, nor the land itself is to be despoiled of (their) masterpieces'; there were enumerated Michelangelo, Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, Beccafumi, Rosso Fiorentino, Leonardo da Vinci, Francia Bigio, Perino del Vaga, Pontormo, Titian, Francesco Salviati, Bronzino, Daniel da Volterra, Fra Bartolommeo, Sebastiano del Piombo, Filippo di Fra Filippo (that is, Filippino), Correggio, Parmigianino, and Perugino. When the decree was renewed in 1610, only Sogliani, pupil of Bartolommeo, was added. (Richter: Lectures on the National Gallery.) How completely the Quattro- and Tre-cento artists were ignored! This shows the tendency artistic taste was taking in subsequent years. The world had to be shaken before it was able to recall Botticelli from oblivion. As long as the same taste continues, it is no wonder that even in the present century there are some who feel for Botticelli 'ces repugnances naturelles' of M. Rosenthal.

The eccentric psychology of the 'fin de siècle' produced for the first time in Europe the necessary sentiment for appreciating Botticelli's art. It was the modern poets who sympathized with him. Rossetti was not only among the first to appreciate the master, but was also among the first to buy Botticellesque pictures. He acquired the beautiful *Esmeralda Bandinelli*, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, in London. Walter Pater was another whose poetic instinct penetrated to the core of Botticelli's art, in spite of the scanty materials at his command, and as early as 1870, when Botticelli was still so ignored that Ruskin, his future champion, could only see in him 'strange hardness and gloom', and when Pater himself had to ask, apologizingly, in his essay, 'Is a painter like Botticelli, a secondary painter, a subject for general criticism?' Soon the extraordinary cult followed, as modern sentimentalism, finding Botticelli at last, enshrined him as its prototype. Then followed all sorts of superficial popularity. The world is now in reaction to sentimentalism.

I wish to vindicate the sentimental love for Botticelli. I have already explained that the 'aria virile' theory cannot be regarded very strongly, even as historical criticism. We must well remember that the existence of so many school-copies of Botticelli's sweet Madonnas, and so few of his comparatively virile works, is a practical proof that in his time the appreciation of Botticelli did not depend principally upon his 'aria virile'. This we can well establish, if we study the contemporary copies and versions of Botticelli's works. But more than such historical justifications, let me ask, in the name of Art and Humanity, why should we be ashamed of our sentimental love, if it truly comes to us? Before being afraid of superficiality, fear lest you should be false to yourself in the love of Art.

PART IV

THE MYSTIC BOTTICELLI

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

CHAPTER XII. RELIGION AND ART · CATHOLIC ART · SAVONAROLA · EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF BOTTICELLI · HIS MYSTIC COLOURS · DISCORDANT USE OF COLOUR · SENTIMENTALISM AND MYSTICISM · THE MYSTIC NATIVITY · BOTTICELLI'S LATER LIFE

SENTIMENTALITY is of youth: it is destined to pass. Who can definitely say that he has outlived his youth? And so those young, idle tears may still flow from old eyes, from eyes that have seen the world. Nevertheless, youth passes: its transient nature adds to its charm. Although in such a prodigious genius as Botticelli, beautiful sentimentality together with sensuousness remained longer than is ordinary, yet as he became old, it had to give place to other mental faculties. Indeed, sentimentality never left him entirely, but gradually ceasing to form the main motive of his art, melted into a pathetic atmosphere, which enveloped his later works, and made them strangely touching in spite of their austere mysticism.

Botticelli was no exception to the general law of mankind, and his intellectual side developed with age. As for his sensuous and emotional side, which was the main feature of his genius, youthful sentimentality gradually turned into religious mysticism. This phase of his development adorned the end of his life with a rare glory.

To my mind the intellectual preoccupation, which became greater as Botticelli grew old, was more a curse than a blessing to his art. I have already mentioned that there were two circumstances which particularly strengthened his intellectual attitude toward Art: his devotion to the Dante Illustrations, and Savonarola's influence. I have fully discussed the effects of the Dante Drawings on the artist, even to the technical degeneration of his art. I will now turn to the question of Savonarola and see how his doctrine was detrimental to the sensuous psychology of artistic creation.

The Dominican Friar proclaimed with his fiery tongue: 'Ye women that glory in your finery, in your hair and your hands, I tell ye that ye are all hideous! . . . Note some devout person, either male or female, that hath the Divine spirit; note him, I say, when engaged in prayer, and in the flush of Divine beauty and on his return from prayer: then will ye see the beauty of God reflected in his face and his countenance almost as that of an angel.' (From Sermon on Ezekiel; cf. Villari, *Life and Times of Savonarola*, p. 499.) This may be excellent as moral precept, but, if literally

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

followed, will produce little to the gain of Art. Savonarola's denunciation is still severer in the Lenten sermon in 1495 upon Amos and Zaccharia: 'Look, what customs has Florence; in what manner the Florentine women give in their daughters! They bring them forth on show, and deck them out so that they appear as nymphs; and first of all they bring them to Santa Liperata. These are your idols which you have placed in my temple! The images of your gods are the images and similitudes of the figures which you cause to be painted in the churches; and then the young men go saying of this and that figure, this is the Magdalene, and that is Saint John. For you cause the figures to be painted in the churches, in the similitude of this or that woman, which is most wrongly done, and in great contempt of the things of God. You, painters, do ill, albeit, if you knew the scandal which comes of it, and that which I know, you would not paint them. You set up all the vanities in the churches. Do you believe that the Virgin Mary went dressed in this manner, as you paint her? I tell you that she went simply dressed and veiled, like a poor woman who is pained if her face be seen: and thus, Saint Elizabeth went simply dressed. You would do a great, good work to destroy these figures that are thus dishonestly painted, for you make the Virgin Mary appear dressed as a harlot, and naught is heeded, unless it redound to your own honour.' (*Horne*, p. 272; also cf. *Villari*, p. 499.) The logical conclusion of this puritanic train of thought was the famous 'Burning of the Vanities', which took place on the Shrove Tuesday of 1496–7, and also on the same day of the following year. It is not only with Medicean antipathy towards Savonarola which Prof. Villari mentions with emphasis, but also with an artist's impatience with this prohibition of innocent finery, that Vasari wrote of all such religious fanaticism with irrepressible bitterness. He said, in the *Life of Fra Bartolommeo*, how Savonarola, 'crying out every day in the pulpit, that lascivious pictures and music and amorous books often lead the thoughts to evil actions, was persuaded that it was not right to have in the house, where there are young girls, painted figures of naked men and women. Wherefore the people, being fired by his words, during the following Carnival, when it was the custom of the city to make bonfires of logs and other wood, in the public squares, and on the evening of Shrove Tuesday to burn them amid amorous dances, in which a man and a woman, taking each other by the hand, turned round and round, singing certain ballads, Fra Girolamo brought it about that on that day so great a number of paintings and sculptures of the nude, many by the hands of excellent masters, together with books, lutes and song-books, were brought to that place (and burnt), that the loss was very great, and especially to painting; for Baccio brought all the drawings which he had made from the nude, and Lorenzo di Credi also followed his example, and many others who had the name of Piagnoni.'

We can well imagine the shock Botticelli must have received from Savonarola's fiery sermons, seeing that the invectives applied completely to the artist, and also seeing his inflammable nature, on which his brother Simone's complete devotion to Savonarola sheds a strong side-light. Horne, from various historical sources, as sound as interesting, concludes that Botticelli's conversion to the cause of Savonarola dated from after the friar's martyrdom in 1498. This seems to me a proper estimation, but in order to bring out this conclusion strongly, Horne endeavoured to lessen the friar's influence on Botticelli before that date, which had certainly been exaggerated before Horne's protest. To my mind, Horne's conclusion does not alter the supposition that the spiritual shock of the sermon on Botticelli's sensitive mind was very great. It is true that he was at this time still in intimate relation with his patron, Lorenzo di Pierofrancesco de' Medici, as we can conclude from an interesting fact that Michelangelo addressed a letter from Rome 'on the 2nd day of July, 1496', to his patron Lorenzo di Pierofrancesco through Botticelli, in order that it should not be intercepted by Lorenzo's political opponents. This Lorenzo was a great enemy to Savonarola's cause, so that the confidential intimacy with Lorenzo, sufficient to make him an intermediary in private correspondence, makes it difficult for us to imagine Botticelli's open conversion to the party of Savonarola at the same time. But we must weigh the importance of a patron's favour at a time when Art could only develop under the patronage of a rich Mæcenas. It does not make Botticelli less human to suppose that he, while receiving spiritual shocks from the friar's invectives, still continues to vacillate, and hesitate to cut the intimate relation with Lorenzo, of such practical importance. Moreover, we know that Botticelli, with his easy-going temperament, did do conflicting things at the same time. After Savonarola's tragic death, and after Botticelli's conversion to the cause of the martyr, wonderfully enough his bottega was the gathering place of 'un Accademia di Scioperati', the naughty idlers, who, finding Savonarola's influence an impediment to their dissolute life, had been chiefly instrumental in bringing about his downfall. It seems strange to me that Horne, with his logical brain, should have left unnoticed this inconsistency in Botticelli's character, simply admitting the fact because Botticelli was fond of jokes and pleasantries common among those idlers. Horne repeats twice that this gathering must have occurred before Simone, Sandro's brother and a zealous follower of Savonarola, joined the painter in the same house, that is before 1494. But the story of the Academy of Idlers in Botticelli's house had its source in the same Simone's 'Chronicle', where he mentions 'a record which I made on the 2nd November 1499'. On that evening, Sandro the painter 'related, in my presence, being at home by the fire . . . how on that day in his workshop in the house of Sandro, he had been discoursing with Doffo Spini, about

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

the case of Fra Girolamo.' This Doffo was 'one of the chief persons who had always been chosen to examine' the friar. Indeed, Sandro's acute questions, recorded by Simone, show his sympathy with Savonarola; they were couched thus: 'Wherefore did you cause him to die in so infamous a death?' and made Doffo confess, 'if this prophet and his companions had not been put to death, and had they been sent back to San Marco, the people would have put us to sack, and we should have been cut to pieces.' Simone concludes in his record of that day thus, 'Then they fell to speak of other matter which there is no need to repeat'. Botticelli's relation to Doffo Spini seems to have been friendly. It is simply wonderful that Botticelli could have associated on intimate terms with such a perfect rogue, and this puts, I confess, not a little difficulty in the way of my grasping Botticelli's character, and so far no scholar has helped me in this obscurity. For the present it is sufficient for my main argument to recognize the existence of illogical conflict in Botticelli's practical life, and I believe that in spite of the intimate relation with Lorenzo di Pierofrancesco, which Botticelli did not sever, he was spiritually greatly influenced by Savonarola.

Fra Girolamo's denunciations of artistic finery of the age must have been painfully felt by Botticelli, and though I have no positive proof of this, I may point out that neither had Horne proof for his special denial that Botticelli might have been among the 'many others' of Vasari's narration, who followed the example of Lorenzo di Credi and Fra Bartolommeo to bring and burn 'all drawings he had made from the nude'. Mr. Berenson thinks that the scarcity of Botticelli's drawings in existence is a sign of his popularity, his drawings having been eagerly sought after by imitators, and made use of till they were entirely worn out. That is a good explanation, only I am not sure that it explains all. We note that whereas Botticelli painted many and important works of classical subjects obviously requiring many preliminary drawings, there are only a few that remain—a small *Pallas* in the Ambrosiana, which may be taken also as *Fortezza*, another *Pallas* in the Uffizi, and the British Museum *Abundance*. But these were only nominally classic: the *Abundance* could well be transformed into the Sistine fresco as the young woman carrying fuel in the Purification scene, and the Pallas could be imitated and transformed into an angel announcing the play in the popular 'Rapresentazione' of the time. (cf. Kristeller, *Early Florentine Woodcuts*, Vol. II, pl. 5.) I am inclined to regard the scarcity of Botticelli's classic drawings and the non-existence of the nude to the fact that they were destroyed under the influence of Savonarola.

Indeed, it is not difficult to imagine that Savonarola's reproof surprised Botticelli at the vital point of his art. As we have seen, his art consisted primarily in exquisite arabesques of sensuous refinement. Savonarola would not have them. They were temptations. Away with them, and let us

constitute Art which will ennoble and instruct the soul. With literal faithfulness, Botticelli tried to realize this ascetic pronouncement of the friar. As I have said, the moral panels, *Virginia*, *Lucrezia*, *St. Zenobius*, were ruins of Botticelli's art. Stripped of the beautiful enchantments of Nature, Botticelli appears miserable. It is not right to say that Savonarola's activity was entirely injurious to Florentine Art. But it required the power of Michelangelo's character to be strengthened, purified, and deepened by so vigorous a lash. Botticelli had not that strength.

Beside the intellectual development in the old Botticelli, which was directly injurious to his art, there was another transformation which was taking place in the deeper roots of his nature, in his sensuous-emotional side. To arrive at a full understanding of this phase, which in my view was the vital part of his later life, I must enter somewhat into the psychology of religion.

Whatever may be said of the sociological origin of religion, in the consciousness of civilized man, religious aspiration is born out of the dual existence of body and spirit. The spiritual, which is above death, must depend for its earthly existence upon the sensuous, while the sensuous is uncertain, or, rather, certain to perish. The dissatisfaction of the spiritual with this earthly life, and its yearning for something unchangeable and eternal, are the main motives of religious desire. How to reconcile the two incompatible, coexisting elements, forms the essential question of our religious life. In spiritualistic religions, as in Christianity or Buddhism, which take the soul as master, the religious life in its practice resolves itself into the question of the worth of the body.

Therefore, in order to establish a religious life, there must be these two elements, the soul and the body. Only where these elements are both strong is the great example of religious struggle presented. That the spiritual element is indispensable, goes without saying: without it there can be no question of religious aspiration. The sensuous needs some explanation to be fully admitted as an indispensable constituent for religious life.

Given a strong aspiration for heaven, it is only when the earthly tie is strong that there can come to man the soul's sadness and a burning desire for higher things. Where sensuous desire is feeble there is no need for religious struggle. Either man is already a heavenly being for whom there is no necessity for religion, or, more probably, he is only a lukewarm mediocrity, who experiences no mental struggle, not because his body is pure, but because his spirit is stagnant. If we look truly into the lives of the saints there are many who suffered painfully from the tenacious grip of sensuality, and who gathered all their desperate strength to conquer it. Hero-worshippers vainly transform them into angelic beings, with little

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

earthly existence. Had they really been so, the lives of the saints would have been most unsuitable models for earthly sinners. Their very perfection would bring despair.

Thus the religious life in its practical aspects centres round the all-important question of the flesh. The solution lies only in two ways, the negative and the affirmative.

The negative attitude, or asceticism, is the simplest, most primitive attitude which religion can take. The flesh is the arch-enemy, the impediment to spiritual liberty: it immediately follows that to reduce sensuous life to its minimum is the surest way of securing the maximum of spiritual life. If the soul is chained down by a fleshly tie, let the tie be cut. In every religion of spiritualistic tendency is always some shade of asceticism, most of all in the highest developed forms of spiritualistic religion, in Christianity and Buddhism.

What is the affirmative solution? Its justification is beyond logic, it lies in the mysterious depth of human existence. What, after all, is the object of religious desire? It can be no other than to attain to some celestial, that is, unearthly happiness sufficient to make us forget the conflicting, unsatisfied, painful dualism of life. If this actual happiness can in any way be attained, there can be no question whether the method be logical or not. There is in our senses that mysterious intoxication which leads immediately to spiritual ecstasy. You have only to smell incense, or to enter into a lofty, gilded dome, or to hear sweet music, and without reasoning you may easily fall into a happy dream. In every religion there is something of this sensuous ecstasy used as an inducement to spiritual exaltation. This is indeed a dangerous matter. The history of religion tells us how all sorts of sensual orgies stole into religious rite in this way. Austere priests discovered the danger, and ascetic life was restored with reactionary ardour. Every religion in the world has had these two opposing principles curiously mixed together.

Although Christianity was transplanted from its Oriental birthplace to the mild climate of Europe, and developed its harmonious doctrine, none the less it has never lost, as the characteristic of spiritualistic religion, the contrasted view of body and soul. It was from the different solutions of this duality in life that the fundamental schism arose in Christianity, and produced Catholicism and Protestantism. Christianity, aiming at the soul's salvation, had always an ascetic tendency, which repeatedly appeared in iconoclastic movements, from the old Byzantine till the recent Puritan. As I have already said, Art, whatever its spirituality, owes its existence to sensuous elements. It follows, though it sounds strange, that the logical attitude of Christianity is to suppress Art. But how is man to live a natural life without sensuousness, and therefore without Art? To take the case of Savonarola, he was one of the most austere of idealists in his attitude

toward the desires of the flesh, toward 'vain' beauties pleasing to the senses; hence his severe invectives against female adornment, which brought about the 'Burning of the Vanities'. Even this Savonarola, when he visited Paradise in his prophetic vision, saw the Virgin Mary surpassingly beautiful, and in describing her beauty could not help recounting 'the exact number and quality of the precious stones with which the Madonna's throne was set'. (*Villari*, p. 320.) The Catholic Church, which developed in the artistic Latin race, admitted the sensuous ecstasy of Art into itself, into the glorification of the soul. It erected sublime cathedrals, which with their deep shadows at once immersed the tired body and spirit in pleasant coolness. It instituted gorgeous ceremonies, full of incense, candles, music, golden vestments, young vigorous images of saints and Madonnas, so that devotion to beauty should coincide with the desire for heavenly bliss. Protestantism was a return to the stern simplicity of salvation through ascetic principle, doubly strengthened by the degeneration of the Catholic Church. Moreover, modern rationalism was another reason for the Reformation. Symbolic salvation through sensuous mysticism, on which the system of Catholic rite and Catholic art depend, was, as we have seen, beyond logical exposition. The first awakening of modern men to the right of Reason, especially in the severe North, could not but protest against the non-intellectual principle of Catholicism, and the subsequent movements of modern rationalism were turning churches into moral lecture-halls. I have already indicated that the non-intellectuality of Catholicism was not its weakness, but its strength.

The last years of Botticelli's art were under the influence of Catholic mysticism. This is what I meant by the change in his emotional side. In his younger years his superabundant sensuousness distilled a sentimental atmosphere, which made his works infinitely sweet. Ordinarily, this sentimentalism would soon disappear, as sensuous life weakens with the advance of years, and to a certain extent it was so with Botticelli. On the whole, however, it was his peculiar merit that the sensuous-emotional side, instead of weakening and giving the mastership to growing intellectuality, was ever strong and turned him from a sentimentalist into a beautiful mystic. We have observed how the moral and historical pictures of his late years were uninteresting. But they are not entirely uninteresting, because he never became solely a moralist. We may assign the dryness of the general conception of these pictures to the external influences, which we have studied, while his true nature still crept out in a variety of dainty details. The decisive change must have come over him with the spiritual upheaval, caused by Savonarola, the way to which had long been prepared. The development from the sentimental to the mystic is natural.

This gradual transition is the most beautiful aspect of Botticelli. He was

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

never an entire sentimentalist: a mystic depth was ever present, growing but hidden and far away. The external appearance is so entrancingly beautiful that you lose yourself in its intoxication, but even so you feel the existence of something deeper and remote. Botticelli's sweetness is a profound sweetness. This is what makes his Madonnas so irresistible.

Indeed, sentimentalism is nothing but a youthful and sensuous phase of the religious mind. In the young mind the sensuous does not grossly assert itself; it does not come into apparent collision with the spiritual: it envelops the soul with dreamy harmony. There is an irresistible joy, of the approach of maturity, but at the same time there is foreboding of future trouble. Then the senses are awake and begin to show their reality, independent of, or rather in opposition to the spirit. Human life begins with this vital struggle between them, and if fortunate, mysticism is its salvation. In Botticelli, who carried a young heart to the grave, sentimentalism and mysticism were one, running through the whole expanse of his life in compensating coexistence.

Botticelli's whole career gives me the impression of a beautiful sinner repenting. We know that he had goodness of heart. All the bottega anecdotes, which Vasari preserves, show his kind, easy-going character. Botticelli's wonderful jokes are entirely devoid of malice, which was too abundant among the quarrelsome Florentines. There is, indeed, one incident which may give proof to the contrary. That is an entry, on the 18th February 1497–8, of Botticelli's name in the register book of 'promissio de non offendendo' of the Florentine Municipality, to the effect that 'Sandro di Mariano, alias di Botticello, should not offend in word or deed, etc., Filippo di Domenico del Cavaliere, hosier.' (cf. *Horne*, p. 278.) Horne thinks that this might be one of 'no few disputes and quarrels' which, the contemporary historian, Nardi, says, were bred in Florence after Savonarola returned to the pulpit to preach, on the 2nd of February, in defiance of the Papal excommunication. If Horne's proposition is right, Botticelli's good nature is more proved than injured by this entry in the Municipal register of quarrels. But even if, on the other hand, it was the same quarrel with his neighbour, the cloth-weaver who, according to Vasari, with his 'fully eight looms, not only deafened poor Sandro but caused the whole house to be shaken, which was not more stoutly built than it need have been', and who, when asked many times 'to remedy this annoyance', exasperated Botticelli with his reply that 'in his own house he would, and could, do that which best pleased him', the quarrel is no reason for doubting the artist's good nature. The confidence which so irritable a being as Michelangelo placed in Botticelli, in addressing a letter to his patron through him, may be regarded as another indirect proof of Botticelli's trustworthy heart. Again, Botticelli lived all his life contentedly and harmoniously under the paternal roof, even after the death

THE MYSTIC NATIVITY
(London, National Gallery)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

of his parents, and when his brothers Giovanni and Simone successively became heads of the family. Simone seems to have been a good and even credulous character. He was on the best of terms with Botticelli. They bought property conjointly (*Horne*, p. 266), shared a common love of Dante (*Horne*, p. 271), and were both devoted to the cause of Savonarola. Horne mentions an interesting letter which Simone wrote from Rome in the year 1482, to his brother Giovanni, which throws not a little light on the character of the writer and hence on that of Botticelli. As the materials for the knowledge of Botticelli's character are so scanty, I quote this letter, which at least shows the family atmosphere in which Botticelli had not only been brought up, but always lived with evident contentment: 'Yesterday our Lord sent a letter to the Monsignor of Novara to read, which Messer Marchionne, a merchant of Germany, a man worthy of belief and well known here at Court, wrote him; and it relates how, in Bohemia, spirits have appeared in human form, and they summon persons to be present in a wood within three days, as if before one who is their chief; and they that go thither return afterwards, and are unable to recount anything, like those who have lost their memory. And these spirits summon not persons unless they be heretics, of which there are many here. This seems to be a great miracle, if it be true. I also have seen the letter, and I know it to be by the hand of Messer Marchionne, a man of credit and affairs, and he has, moreover, from eight to ten thousand ducats in receipts. Bonsiano Costi knows him and so do many merchants who are here: and soon it will happen this way.' We may willingly excuse Simone, who was brought up from his youth as a clerk in a bank at Naples, for taking the commercial success of Messer Marchionne,' from eight to ten thousand ducats in receipts', as evidence of his trustworthiness in spiritual matters. The same whole-hearted trust is most clearly seen in his 'Chronicle', which Simone wrote with a complete, even childish, devotion to Savonarola, and in which he was never tired of telling how all those who withstood the friar met with the most violent death.

I cannot for a moment doubt that a good and humane atmosphere surrounded the painter's family. And then I perceive that Botticelli's good nature was far from being clever and saintly: it was probably innocent and simple. Vasari repeatedly deplores Botticelli's way of living by chance, describing, for instance, his spendthrift life during and after his work for the Sistine Chapel thus: 'hebbe da' l Papa buona somma di danari; i quale ad vn tempo destrutti, e consumati tutti nella stanza di Roma, per viuere a caso, come era il solito suo; e finita insieme quella parte, che egli era stata allogata, e scopertala, se ne torno subitamente a Fiorenza.' Vasari considers this 'living by chance' the cause of Botticelli's poverty in his last years, and concludes the general characterization thus: 'che egli amo fuor di modo coloro, che egli cognobbe studiosi dell' arte: e che guadagno

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

assai, ma tutto per havere poco governo, e per trascuratagine, mando male.' Though documentary evidence denies the extreme poverty of Botticelli's last years, yet we can well imagine 'per vivere a caso', or 'per havere poco governo' to be true. His good nature, with little control, must have been full of human follies. With such a weak character, coupled with extreme sensuousness, there was every reason for him to fall into temptation, especially at the time of the Renaissance, and in company of idlers, with whom Botticelli was fond of associating. He was very human with all his weaknesses. With his soul keenly awake, he perhaps had occasion to repent, and so be sad. Was it not the sinner's consciousness of his secret soul, which received Savonarola's lash so acutely, and accomplished the complete conversion?

It would be going too far to connect this sinner's psychology of Botticelli directly with his pictures of Mary Magdalene. But I cannot help remembering the predella in the Johnson Collection in Philadelphia, which describes the four principal events of Mary Magdalene: Christ preaching, whilst the beautiful sinner slowly approaches in sad mien from behind the listening crowd; the Feast in the House of Levi, where she prostrates herself in front of Christ, and washes His feet with precious oil and wipes them with still more precious tresses. *Noli me tangere* is a love-scene. When a woman's heart is truly touched, and devotion is complete, who can distinguish the earthly from the spiritual love? With sudden surprise, she starts to cling to Him. The austere voice of the deeper world calls out: *Noli me tangere*. It is the tenderest and saddest scene. And lastly her Ascension.

Quite recently, on the occasion of my discovery of a new Botticelli, the *Trinity with St. John and Mary Magdalene*, in the collection of Viscount Lee of Fareham, in London, I found that the Johnson panels were the predella to the new picture, and they together make up the famous altar-piece which Botticelli painted for the monastery of Sant' Elizabetha delle Convertite, which has long been deplored as lost. This monastery was founded in the fourteenth century 'for the receipt of certain courtezans, who through the preaching of Fra Simone da Cascia had been moved to follow the example of the Magdalene'. (*Horne*, p. 317.) Although the predella was not actually finished by Botticelli, it shows his beautiful soul at a moment unusually inspired. (cf. my article, 'A Newly Discovered Botticelli', *Burlington Magazine*, April 1925.)

The other Magdalene is in the mystic picture, which Dr. Bode called 'das göttliche Strafgericht an Florenz', the picture with the Cross erected high in the centre, the Magdalene prostrating herself at its foot and embracing it, while an archangel holds an animal by the hind leg: a lion according to Dr. Bode, a fox according to Horne. From the stormy cloud, through which dæmons peep, burning brands rain down on Florence as

in the fierce vision of Savonarola, and angels flit about with shields blazoned with the Cross, symbolical of divine wrath.

This damaged picture, which was contained in the Aynard sale in 1913, is now in the Fogg Museum, Cambridge, U.S.A. Dr. Bode believes the picture to be Botticelli's own 'Improvisation', and Horne takes it as Botticelli's design executed by others. Horne considers that the Christ on the Cross was too realistically treated to be by Botticelli himself. This objection does not seem very strong, as the few existing *Crucifixions* by the master and his pupils, especially the large school-piece in the church of S. Giovannino at Remole near Florence, belong to the same rather realistic type, which Botticelli seems to have remembered from Andrea del Castagno. I always took the picture to be a genuine Botticelli, and the recent inspection, after it was thoroughly cleaned at the Fogg Museum, gave me a greater conviction of its authenticity. The figure of the Archangel is almost an exact copy, reversed, of Beatrice in the Dante Drawing to *Paradiso*, Canto XXI. The general stormy effect with the full use of shifting chiaroscuro is so different from Botticelli's known works that I cannot easily admit so ingenious a proposal as Dr. Bode's 'Improvisation'. I am inclined rather to consider the effect principally as due to the oil, which medium Botticelli employed on this occasion. And if one examines the picture as it now is, it is anything but 'Improvisation'. Not only the whole conception is Botticelli's own inspired by Savonarola's vision, but the execution was originally as carefully considered and almost as minutely finished as the London *Mystic Nativity*. As Simone wrote in his 'Chronicle' with fanatic belief that Fra Girolamo preached as a prophet and as one sent by God, foretelling the scourge that should come upon all Italy and exhorting every one to repentance, did Botticelli also conceive and paint this as his own repentance and hope? In all Botticelli's figures, I can think of none which speaks of his soul so unmistakably as this Mary Magdalene. The beautiful sinner, all the more beautiful in her awe-stricken penitence, clinging to the Cross as the only support on this earth, which itself belches fire, her gaze wistfully turned heavenward. I feel I see symbolized the pained and still beautiful soul of Botticelli.

All through his art there runs a persistent current of solitary sadness. Even in crying, struggling agonies which he was fond of painting in dramatic settings, a solitary Botticelli, silent and melancholy, predominated, which placed him in strong contrast with painters of strong passions, Orcagna or Michelangelo. Botticelli was to the last an artist of the pathetic, not of the heroic.

The silent, mourning procession of the Seven Virtues through the wood of the Earthly Paradise (*Purgatorio*, Canto XXXIII)! Therein seems to be the real Botticelli. A moment ago joy and hope were in every man's heart, beholding the divine pageant with the symbolic chariot of the Church.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

When the chariot was tied to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Jove's bird swooped down through the tree, and smote the chariot with all his might. A she-fox leaped into the body of the triumphal chariot, and there appeared a shameless harlot in it, with a lustful giant; each kissed the other. Oh, omens of the degeneration of the Church, enough to make us weep!

> *Deus, venerunt gentes:* thus, now three,
> Now four, with voice and weeping alternate,
> Began those ladies a sweet psalmody;
> And Beatrice, sighing and compassionate,
> Listened, with look so altered, at the cross
> Scarce was the change on Mary's face more great.
>
> (*Purgatorio*, XXXIII. Translated by Laurence Binyon.)

With their heads hanging, covering their faces with their hands, in sad mien they go through the woods.

Or look at the poor blind spirits in *Purgatorio*, Canto XIII. They were once envious men on earth. 'The envious eyes that once found food for bitterness in all sights of beauty and joy, must now in penance refrain from drinking in the gladness of sea and sky and human love. Their lids are drawn together with such a suture of wire as is used to tame . . . the hawk. . . . They lean one against another in mutual love and for mutual support, and upturn their sightless countenances like the blind beggars that gather round church portals.' (*Purgatorio*, XIII, Argument.) Poor souls, they look so miserable, yet they are so resigned to sightless fate that Dante, pierced by compassion, said, 'I seemed to do them wrong as I went my way seeing others, not being seen.'

Botticelli's art is the exposition of the whole gamut of human sorrow. It seems as if Providence, in preserving that enigmatic picture, usually called *La Derelitta*, in the Pallavicini Collection in Rome, wanted to show us the pure crystal of his sadness. It is dearer to us in its spontaneous, unfinished state. It is curious that both Prof. A. Venturi and Dr. Steinmann, who enthusiastically pronounced *La Derelitta* a genuine Botticelli, when even its antiquity was doubted, assigned it to a very late period. They seem to see in it a technical similarity with the *Calunnia*. I cannot think so. If I could have agreed with them as to the late date, I would have been able to see, as did Dr. Steinmann, even quoting Shakespeare, the sad old soul of Botticelli exactly in this dejected form, crouching before the closed door. The picture seems to me, however, to date from about the middle of the 'eighties, its mellow colour reminding me of some of the pictures of 'Amico di Sandro', who, according to Mr. Berenson, derived

the manner from early Botticelli. Also the treatment of the hair, and of the hand and feet, is very similar to that of earlier *Adoration* panels. The picture is soundly conceived in composition: its like you cannot find in Botticelli's late wavy style, exemplified in the *Calunnia*. I also maintain that the *Derelitta* was left unfinished, though in a photograph it looks complete. A photograph brings out the brownish transparency of the cast-off clothes in the foreground, dark and strong, and the whole picture looks rightly focussed; in the original, however, that part is hardly painted at all, the outlines cut on the gesso ground showing too clearly through. Usually his pictures are minutely finished, especially his small works. The figure of the Derelitta is remarkable for its lack of finish.

The sentiment, however, is complete, there is nothing to add. Many imagine that the picture was illustrative of a lyric sentiment of the artist. It does not seem possible, as the idea of a lyrical picture for conveying the personal sentiment is modern and foreign to the Quattrocento, especially to Botticelli, who never deviated from dependence on some literary source in his main pictorial motive. I consider that he painted the picture from some subject, now lost, and spontaneously infused his own sentiment into this most congenial figure; when the picture went so far as to contain this sentiment, he stopped short, as he frequently did in the Dante Drawings. And as we moderns cherish this personal sentiment as the main object in Art, even to the neglect of the subject, we have come to regard this unfinished, subject painting as complete and as Botticelli's own lyric. Dr. Bode speaks of Botticelli's 'Improvisation' in the *Mystic Crucifixion*. I would rather take this *Derelitta* as the technical example of it.

Botticelli must have painted that grandest of compositions, the *Pietà* in the Alte Pinakothek at Munich, in 1490 or thereabouts. The authenticity of the picture has frequently been contested, and no wonder, because the execution of the picture is very coarse. One may only think how awkwardly golden nimbuses are placed above the heads of sacred persons. The standing figures in the background are curiously disproportionate and stiff. And yet, just as in the case of the *Annunciation* in the Uffizi Gallery, with which the Munich *Pietà* is most intimately associated in point of technique, the coarse execution does not prevent us from admiring the monumental conception of the whole, which distinguishes itself even among the greatest masterpieces of this most profound of religious subjects. The extraordinary pose of Christ's body, drawing a strong curve, which spans the entire length of this rather lengthy panel, gives a tragic grandeur to the saddest of scenes. Botticelli must have liked this pose, and repeated it in the *Dante Illustrations*, Inferno XXXIII. There is no better painting than this *Pietà*, which explains how Botticelli, sometimes towering above his beautiful sentimentality, attained to the very height of the tragic as a grand artist.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Botticelli appears to have been haunted, in some indescribable way, by death, and was sad and gloomy under its vague shadow. It was merely an inarticulate presentiment, and young and lively, he gave himself up to the gay poetry of life. Was it because of his bad health that a foreboding of death permeated all his life, even his gaiety, with a grey pathos? This is his peculiarity. He could not bear to see the vigour of life in harsh contrast with the cruel certainty of death. Only those who have a tenacious sense of life can regard death in the light of cruelty. Botticelli rather saw life and death in harmony, and was sad. He loved as his own ideal 'La Bella Simonetta', through whose transparent beauty the mystery of death peered. Botticelli was a sad poet, who, trying to sing the triumph of life, ended in writing its elegy.

It seems natural that he should have felt a mystic sympathy with death. There is a picture of a death scene, which in its small form is the perfect miniature of the whole of Botticelli, in which his mystic sense revealed its most genuine glory: the *Death of St. Ignatius*, according to Horne, a part of the predella to the *Enthroned Madonna and Child with St. Barnabas and other Saints*, in the Uffizi Gallery.

St. Ignatius was the Bishop of Antioch, and a martyr. The legend tells that, 'during the many torments to which he was subjected at the hands of the Emperor Trajan, the saint never ceased from calling upon the name of Christ, and when his torturers asked why he repeated it so often, he replied, that he might have that name written upon his heart, and therefore could not cease from calling upon Christ. After his death, certain curious persons who had heard this, wishing to find out the truth of it, plucked his heart from out his body, and cutting it open, found written across it, in letters of gold, the name of Jesus Christ.' (Horne's English version from *Catalogus Sanctorum*, Horne, p. 116.) On a black night, the saint lies dead; two men steal in, the young man with a sword opens the dead man's breast and tears out his heart, showing it to the turbaned old man. In the dark, the heart of the saint glows with the deep lustre of a ruby.

In the Uffizi Gallery the saint is called St. Ambrose, and Dr. Bode accepts him in his recent book. Whatever be the story, the mysterious conception and presentation of the painter remain. It seems incredible that this picture, which is like the purest essence of Botticelli's mystic genius, should have hitherto attracted so little attention. As it is very noticeable in colour, I wish to examine Botticelli as a colourist in reference to it.

The greatest injustice is still being done to him as a colourist. All sorts of conflicting judgments have been passed on all his qualities, and there is not one obscure characteristic in him but has found some enthusiastic devotee. So far as I know, critics were for once united as regards Botticelli, and that is, in depreciating him as a colourist. Beginning with the famous

adjective 'cadaverous', which Pater gave to the *Venus* of the Uffizi, all sorts of terms, 'bizarre', 'cold', 'harsh', 'crude', were used to point out the discord that rules Botticelli's colours, and it is not wrong to say that this 'decided' inferiority of Botticelli as a colourist gave critics the best motive for appreciating him as an artist of line. I feel, however, that Botticelli presented the same rare genius in colour as in line, though he was more devoted to the latter. He felt more at home in line, and so in the Dante Drawings he made infinitely more progress in black-and-white than in colour. Yet his strange genius was no less remarkable in colour.

In the whole of the Uffizi Gallery there is no painting which to my mind is so completely charming in colour as the *Primavera;* in the vast Louvre as the Lemmi frescoes. In their present state, these two pictures have a cool, bluish grey, more an atmosphere than a colour, which makes them extremely touching. The same may be seen in the Ognissanti fresco of *St. Augustine:* it bathes the old saint in a shadowy twilight, serene and melancholy, which looks especially lovely in contrast with the hot colour-scheme in Ghirlandajo's *St. Jerome*. As to the *Primavera*, if you look at it on a misty afternoon, so frequent in winter in the Arno Valley, you will feel as if the silvery mist coming from the nymph's wood makes the whole room hazy. Though this grey is preciously Botticelli's own, yet it is to a great extent the work of time, and we cannot conclude from it anything very definite as to the painter's sense of colour. We can, however, safely assume that Botticelli was not a bad colourist, as the work of time has common influence; the same influence did not endow other painters with Botticelli's precious grey. In the Sistine Chapel, where time must have worked on all masters impartially, Botticelli's frescoes look superior in colour. In the *Life of Moses* the white garments of the shepherdesses, and in the *Purification of the Lepers* the garments of the young acolyte and the young woman carrying fuel, stand out in silvery sheen from the general atmosphere of sober grey. Though I do not find Botticelli so very successful in the Sistine frescoes, yet as regards colour I prefer his in the Chapel to that of the other Quattrocento masters.

I admit that some of Botticelli's works in their present state are bad in colour: the large *Coronation of the Virgin*, the *Madonna Enthroned with St. Barnabas and other Saints*, and above all the *Madonna del Magnificat*. But we must remember that these paintings are ruins in point of preservation. They are over-cleaned and over-varnished; all the delicate nuances of tone which make dainty detail are gone, and their surfaces shine like a mirror. The special charm of tempera painting is its opaqueness, which gives even the strongest of colour-schemes a certain milky tone. The same colour gives quite a different impression if changed from opaque to transparent, and this is exactly the change which took place in all the large pictures in the Uffizi. The over-cleaning and over-varnishing, now popular

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

in almost all large galleries in Europe, are the ideal methods of destroying the special charm of opaque tempera, made more mellow by time. It is unjust to judge of Botticelli's colours from those pictures. One may learn from them the colour-schemes he used, but whether he was a great colourist or not depends upon what effect he could produce from them. When well preserved, Botticelli's pictures, at least of his best years, give a different impression. The grey livid atmosphere of the Berlin *St. Sebastian* will be found inseparable from the sweet melancholy of the beautiful martyr. There are few chromatic charms in all Quattrocento paintings comparable to the gold and violet, dim but gorgeous, of the *Madonna della Melagrana*, or to the sad, faint light upon the sky seen through the archway in the *Derelitta*. Pater's comment on the *Venus* as 'cadaverous' I accept as rhetorically effective in describing the pearly grey of a shy maiden's body, all but lifeless to vulgar eyes. Put it against the animal vitality of Rubens's women, and you will realize the precious charm of the pearl.

After these general remarks in defence of Botticelli as a colourist, I will show that there are some special effects in colour which have hitherto drawn little attention in Art-criticism, and to which Botticelli showed extraordinary sensitiveness: the mysticism in colour. Botticelli's art was an art of 'presentation'. It began to be appreciated in its linear character in recent years. Its parallel merit in colour still waits to be understood. Colour works on us in two opposing ways: in harmony, and in contrast, or I may even say, in discord. Harmony means colours melting into one another, softening the independent effect of each, approaching grey as the final solution. By discord, or contrast, I mean arrangements of colour, in which each works in its purity and heightens the effect of the other by independence or even by hostility.

In the development of European painting only the harmonious function of colour has been duly noticed and encouraged, while the discordant aspect has been singularly neglected. The reason seems to be that oil-colours were the standard material, and they were excellently mixed, to produce neutral shadow, either brownish or greyish, which has long been considered the main element in constructing a picture. The European sense of colour brought up in this tradition produced a special use of grey in the nineteenth century, in Edouard Manet, Whistler, and Eugène Carrière, the last of whom depended for the effect of his work solely on the sentimental use of pale brownish grey. Along with this preference for grey, there grew in Europe the undue neglect of what I call here the discordant use of colours, which generally is put aside as bizarre and crude.

Unmixed, pure colours have a strange effect upon the mentality. The superstition about precious stones may have come from the elemental brilliance of colours, which they have in common with Nature's primary

substances, the clear sky, deep water, fire, and above all, blood. Implements of religion, in which something of the supernatural must be conveyed, have mostly those pure colours, impossible in the ordinary course of life. The same reason explains the superiority of Byzantine mosaics for the interior decoration of churches, and of the Trecento pictures with gold backgrounds for votive images. Who will not accept as tremendous the religious mysticism realized in medieval stained glass, for instance, of Chartres, which burn in violet beauty in the depth of the cathedral's night. Then why should not the same mystic effect be attempted in religious paintings?

Of course, Botticelli was an artist of the realistic Renaissance. The unearthly colours of stained glass were only suitable for the equally unearthly figures painted for medieval windows. There is nothing so ill-adapted as stained-glass or brilliant mosaic for modern realistic designs. Botticelli's pictorial conceptions are too realistic for the medieval colour-scheme to be always successful. My aim is not to place Botticelli the colourist on the same lofty plane as Botticelli the artist of line, but to point out even among his comparative failures the existence of a rare genius as a mystic colourist.

I have already mentioned Botticelli's grey. Though it was largely due to the work of time, yet he seems to have felt and used the effect of grey for softening the harshness of his mystic colour-scheme up to his middle years. The cool pale grey enveloping the world with hazy intimacy is the proper atmosphere for sentimental pathos, and when his sentimentalism began to give place to mysticism, Botticelli seems to have lost the greyish tone. It was psychologically a natural change, but an historical explanation may be also proposed. The grey in his early pictures may be attributed to Fra Filippo, who was remarkable for his harmonious tone in a scale of greenish brown. Botticelli's real nature as a colourist was of mystic brilliance, which began to assert itself strongly when his spiritual experience was approaching mysticism. How his variegated colours worked from the grey of Fra Filippo's tradition can well be studied in Botticelli's earliest known work, the oblong *Adoration of the Magi* in the London National Gallery.

In mystic effect he knew two colours especially well, and he seems to have exhausted their spiritual effects. They were black and gold. Theoretically, neither of them is a pure colour. They contain light and shade, and their psychological functions are richer. But they are among the pigments for painters, and Botticelli knew how to use them with special significance.

His frequent use of gold is noticed by various writers, but curiously enough all writers refer to it merely as a proof of the 'Giottesque' archaism in Botticelli. Of the *Coronation of the Virgin*, which is painted on a ground prepared with polished gold leaf, it is declared that as the painting was

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

intended for San Marco, Botticelli adopted the manner of Fra Angelico. It is quite possible, but from such pure external explanations the real excellence of Botticelli's genius escapes. In the Trecento pictures, before the Renaissance movement changed paintings into natural representations, painters thought of the direct psychic effect of colour as of primal importance, and used gold effectively for religious images as if they were really resplendent, or as if they were dwelling in a supernatural, golden world. Not that Botticelli reverted to this gold background merely on account of his archaism, but also because his mystic soul felt its original effect and used it. Gold was congenial to his mystic tendency, and later in his life, when the same tendency was gradually intensified, he made use of it with a technical perfection, which was only equalled by Mantegna. As showing his fine skill in painting in gold, I would mention the battle painted in imitation of an antique bronze relief in the *Madonna and Child with Young St. John* in Mr. Rockefeller's Collection in New York. It was this technical perfection which made Horne accept the battle scene as Botticelli's own, while I ascribe the entire picture to the master. Frequently he used gold, even for the general modelling of figures, giving high light and relief with it, and on such occasions his brushwork was of extreme delicacy, as in the entire surface of the garment of the *St. Augustine* in the Uffizi Gallery, to give just one example among many.

In the Sistine Chapel Botticelli's frescoes in their present state are remarkable among all the others for the effective use of gold. Vasari relates, in the Life of Cosimo Rosselli, how he, 'conscious of his want of invention and design, had sought to hide his defects by covering his work with the finest ultramarine blue, and other bright colours, and by heightening the lights of the picture with a great quantity of gold; so much so that there was not a tree, a blade of grass, a piece of drapery, nor a cloud that had not been thus lit up', and that Cosimo was quite successful in 'dazzling the eyes of the Pope, who did not understand much about such things, although he greatly delighted in them', and who, giving the prize to Cosimo, ordered the rest of the painters to cover their pictures 'with the finest blues . . . and to heighten them with gold'. We know little about the truth of Vasari's story, but certainly gold is very freely used in all the frescoes. Cosimo Rosselli might have charmed the inartistic Pope by his trick, but when all were ordered to use much gold, Botticelli's true genius might literally have shone out. Especially in the frescoes of the *Young Life of Moses* and the *Chastisement of the Company of Korah*, I like the golden robes of Moses, which shine out like a decorative distribution of glory. But with the use of gold Botticelli performed the greatest feat in his last phase, when his soul, turning more and more to religion, yearned literally for the golden spiritual light. I do not hesitate to call the small *Transfiguration*, in the Pallavicini Collection at Rome, which few have noticed except its

discoverer, Dr. de Nicola, the finest example of the effect of gold in religious mysticism. The taste for it is, however, inseparable from religious feeling, and without this inspiration a mere abundance of the metal weaves no mystic spell. The famous *Calunnia* seems to teach with its cold glitter that the 'discordant' use of elementary colours is only justifiable under the mystic shadow of religious spirituality.

With the study of Botticelli's black, we come back to the *Death of St. Ignatius*, in which we see its typical use. How a profound, unearthly feeling is vital to miraculous scenes, and how without it they become childish legends, and how this unearthly feeling is well kept in the *Death of St. Ignatius*, can well be seen in comparing this predella with the predella of Francesco Pesellino in the Uffizi and in the Louvre, where miraculous curing of the sick and dying by saints, Cosimo, Damiano, and others is represented. It may be that those happy stories of curing did not require gloom, but all the same one would miss the deep psychological effect of Botticelli's black, which as a surest expedient saves the representation of miracles from becoming a mere child's story in this age of growing realism, precise but prosaic. With the black background, not only do colours glow with gloomy pomp, but also the figures take on an unearthly air like phantoms of the superstitious night. We have already noticed similar transformation in Botticellesque Venuses, standing out white against black. The very basis of the spiritualistic view of life is such feeling of the unreality of earthly existence.

To the miraculous beauty of the *Death of St. Ignatius* I know no parallel in Europe. The striped pattern of the bed-cloth makes you shudder: it seems to move slowly like multi-coloured serpents. And then the violent red against black! As the most sublime of Buddhist paintings in Japan, there is the *Red Fudo of Koyasan*, the God Immovable surrounded by fire, looming largely out of primeval darkness. I do not compare the small Botticelli predella with this most awful of Oriental imaginations. I only notice a similar tendency as if it existed in beautiful miniature in Botticelli's soul. I sincerely wish that colour-harmonies, best exemplified by the Venetians, full of honey-coloured shadows, should not monopolize European appreciation.

For the soul so initiated as was Botticelli's into mystic reality, the distinction between life and death must become less distinct. In this way the spiritual world is to be realized. The *Judith* which was formerly in the Kaufmann Collection seems to be a typical example, which has, however, been very little appreciated by critics. Horne, after comparing it with the small *St. Augustine* of the Uffizi Gallery, says, 'Only in this panel the line is more tremulous and mannered, and the nervousness of the forms betrays that sense of effort which comes of a consciousness of failing

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

power' (*Horne*, p. 265), and this is the general tone of writers in reference to this marvellous panel, if referred to at all. Mr. Berenson admits in it 'Botticelli's authenticity only in part' (Berenson, *Florentine Painters of the Renaissance*, p. 116). I have not seen the picture, not knowing its whereabouts. From photograph, however, Judith seems to be the loveliest of phantoms which lived in Botticelli's soul. What matters, if she be too slender to be real, if Holofernes's head is as small as the fair woman's? The accusation of the lack of realism is most out of place. Although Horne speaks of the 'tremulous' line in a depreciatory sense, it seems to me that it was correctly tremulous and nervous for the delineation of a shy soul, about to flee into the dark. Botticelli was very fond of the story of Judith, where under the triumph of virtue and faith were mixed, in strange arabesque, the young woman's charm and the orgy, black night and scarlet death. It was as suitable a subject to the good soul of Botticelli as the story of the sinful Salome was to the school of Leonardo, whose grand, many-minded soul looked at sin and virtue with Nature's impartiality. Botticelli painted *Judith* at least seven times: besides these two, as independent pictures, three times in the *Calunnia*, twice in the *Lucrezia* panel, either as representations of statues or decorative reliefs. And of all these the famous Uffizi one, in spite of its wonderful popularity, is the least interesting. Its realism is remarkable only among Botticelli's own works, and where is the mystic sentiment, congenial to the beautiful assassin, so abundant in the Kaufmann panel? True, there are jewel-like colours in the Uffizi *Judith*, especially in the companion picture of the discovery of Holofernes's body, and these are really the precursors of the mystic colour-scheme of Botticelli's late years. Their undue brilliance, however, missing in these early years the spiritual inspiration which is its justification, gives in the Uffizi panels an impression of highly coloured glazed pictures.

The mystic mind of the old Botticelli was prepared to paint religious pictures in the true sense. Did he believe in the miraculous legends of saints? Even infantile fables acquire symbolic dignity when interpreted in the light of the soul. I love the tiny panel of *St. Augustine and the Infant Jesus:* it is sufficiently lovely to make sceptics believe the story. The legend of St. Eligius, in the predella to the *Coronation of the Virgin*, is also charming. The devil, bent upon the temptation of this patron saint of blacksmiths, 'came to his shop one day in the disguise of a beautiful woman, bringing him a horse to be shod, which, being possessed of an evil spirit, was so restive that it was not to be held in. The saint, however, nothing daunted, resorted to the simple expedient of cutting off its hoof, and having shod it, miraculously uniting the severed pastern to the leg of the horse, to the confusion of the devil.' (Horne's version from *Vita Prodigiosa di S. Eligio*, Horne, p. 173.) Again it is a black night, and the red fire burns, a decorative Japanese fire, in the blacksmith's shop. The fair woman shows

her devil's nature. The white horse, with its hoof cut off, raves and the mane waves, while the saint is calmly working with his uplifted hammer, like a butcher, on the severed leg of the white horse. Though as Art, the representation of the story in stone-relief by Nanni di Banco on the outside of Or San Michele, which Botticelli might have studied, is superior in its clean-cut composition and sound way of modelling, yet I miss in it the simple belief expressed in Botticelli's panel. We need not wonder if a soul so initiated into the spirit of mystery should have become indifferent to the realistic aspect of Art.

If the subject were nearer to the essence of Catholic mysticism, Botticelli's inspiration became more intense. The *Last Communion of St. Jerome*, in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, was famous from of old, as we gather from the mention of Anonimo Gaddiano and also from contemporary copies. There are three of them, the best lately belonging to Mr. R. Benson. The mystic story, as told in the latter part of the Quattrocento in Italy and which gained great popularity, is deep in sentiment and rich in heavenly splendour, which must have appealed to Botticelli the visionary. The aged saint knew that his end was nigh. When 'one of the monks brought him the most holy Body of our Lord Jesus Christ', the aged man 'immediately, with our aid, cast himself down with his face to the earth, and crying out as loudly as he was able, with a great lamentation, began to say: "Lord, what am I, that Thou shouldest enter into my house; what desert have I, a sinner? . . . Wherefore now dost Thou so humble Thyself, that Thou deignest to come to a sinner; and not only wouldst Thou eat with him, but Thou biddest him to eat of Thee." And as soon as the priest who held the eucharist came near to him, the glorious man, with our aid, raised himself on his knees and lifted his head, and with many tears and sighs, beating his breast many times, he said: "Thou art my God and my Lord, who suffered Death and the Passion for me, and none other!" and so fell to making a plenary confession of his faith with many prayers . . . and when the saint had made an end of these words, he received the most holy Body of Christ and cast himself again upon the ground, with his hands crossed upon his breast, singing the canticle of Simeon the prophet, "Nunc dimittis servum tuum," etc.' Botticelli took the story at this point, and it is a simple, solemn conception, worthy of the holiest of catholic mysteries, the Eucharist. The painter is serious, without the slightest shade of the humour, with which Paolo Uccello, the realist, once painted the mystic story of the desecration of the Holy Eucharist. Though the picture is small, the solemn silence reigning in it is almost overpowering. But let us read the continuation of the story, which is entirely of Botticellian splendour. 'And when he had finished, all those who were present suddenly saw in the place where he lay, so divine a light to shine that if all the beams of the sun had presently shone forth, they could not so greatly have dazzled

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

them; in so much that by no means were they able to look at the glorious man as he rose up towards the East. This light continuing for a space of time, certain of those who stood around saw three companies of angels passing away on every side, in the likeness of flames. Others did not see the angels, but heard a voice from heaven which said: "Come, my beloved, this is the time that thou receivest the reward of thy labour, which for love of me bravely hast thou borne". Some there were that neither saw the angels nor heard the voice, but heard only the voice of the blessed Jerome, who said when the other voice was ended, "Behold, I come to Thee, merciful Jesus! Receive Thou me, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious Blood!" Then, having made an end of speaking, that most holy spirit, like a star radiant with every virtue, left his body, ascending to the glorious realm of heaven.' (Horne's English version from *Incomincia il Denoto Transito del Glorioso Sancto Hieronymo, Ridocto in lingua Fiorentina*, Horne, p. 175 ff.)

Reading this, I cannot help bearing in mind the happiness I had in seeing the most perfect of Botticelli's religious visions, the *Transfiguration* of the Pallavicini triptych. Did Botticelli's soul ascend unto heaven with Jesus as one of the prophets who accompanied him? Or was he one of the apostles who were dazzled by so great a glory, or one of those two saints in his narrow cell bathed in the golden light of miracle? This is a vision, the transcendental made real.

I cannot help thinking that Botticelli was a man who might have had visions; otherwise this power of convincing us of miracles is beyond comprehension. Visions may be explained by physiological reasons as hallucinations of weakened body and nerves. Their real convincing power, however, lies in the absolute sincerity and undoubting belief of the visionaries. Medical explanations of Savonarola's prophetic visions do not weaken the force of his inspired sermons, which even now, through imperfect versions, cannot but move us. The age was of Savonarola, who saw visions and put ultimate confidence in their spiritual reality. Why could not Botticelli, who, after the friar's martyrdom in 1498, fell completely under his prophetic spell? In Japan a thousand years ago the Abbot Yeshin is said to have actually witnessed the Amida with his retinue of twenty-five boddhisatvas and angels flying on purple clouds out of the golden West to welcome dying souls, and the picture he painted from this vision, which is preserved in Koyasan, is, with all its crudities, actually haunting, as the vision must have been for him. The religious paintings of Botticelli's late years indeed present something penetrating into our souls with a law outside material Nature. In the *Descent of the Holy Ghost*, in the Cook Collection, or in the *Pietà* of the Museo Poldo-Pezzoli, or in the other grander *Pietà* in Munich, the coarse execution cannot kill the fanatic belief with which those religious scenes were conceived. It was not

a mere whim of mine to associate with Botticelli one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of visionary painters Europe has ever produced—El Greco. In Botticelli's *Coronation of the Virgin*, why is S. John the Evangelist looking up? In El Greco's great achievement, the *Burial of the Count Orgaz*, in Toledo, at first you invariably look at the death scene, which is in the foreground, and then—why is that one man with a beard looking up? You look up, too, and behold the solemn scene in Heaven, the dead man's soul being received by Christ. I have already expressed my belief in the parallel existence of dual worlds. El Greco translated their mysterious coexistence with the compulsory persuasion of one who saw them. Did Botticelli the visionary feel the same? In his *Coronation of the Virgin* the upturned face of S. John the Evangelist, with his outstretched arm, forcibly guides your attention to the all-importance of the heavenly scene. As for the *Mystic Crucifixion*, in the Fogg Museum, which may be naturally compared with El Greco, it is an hallucination of a shaken soul.

Let us approach as a sacred thing, at the end of our artistic pilgrimage, to the purest outpouring of Botticelli the Mystic's soul, the last of his works so far as we know, the *Mystic Nativity* of the National Gallery. Let Dr. Bode argue his distaste of the picture as he likes. My sole desire is to contemplate the picture silently, as it deserves. I here quote Horne's English version of the famous inscriptions in the picture: 'This picture, at the end of the year 1500, in the troubles of Italy, I, Alessandro, painted in the half-time after the time, at the time of the fulfilment of the 11th of S. John, in the second war of the Apocalypse, in the loosing of the devil for three and a half years: then he shall be chained according to the twelfth, and we shall see him trodden down as in the picture.'

For the scriptural and historical references of the mysterious text, the readers may consult Horne's conscientious study in his book, pp. 294–299. They have, however, little connection with the artistic effect of the picture.

I think this is the proper place to end my work, as my aim was to study and love Botticelli through his art. Here, where his art ceased, I too must cease. He prefers silence. I have neither the means nor the courage to approach him further.

Botticelli painted the *Mystic Nativity* in 1500, and for the first time he inscribed his own name on his picture, if we except the Dante Drawing to *Paradiso*, Canto XXVIII. I may make the picture Botticelli's own epitaph. But he died ten years later.

What was he doing during ten long years? We know practically nothing about his artistic activities. Vasari's story of his extreme poverty, how Sandro 'finally growing old and disabled, used to walk with two sticks; whereby no longer being able to work, infirm and decrepit, reduced to a most pitiable condition, he passed from his life in the seventy-eighth year

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

of his age, and was buried in Ognissanti at Florence, in the year 1515', cannot be literally accepted. Laborious researches in contemporary documents proved that he died on the 17th May 1510, and not 1515, and that instead of being 'reduced to a most pitiable condition', or of 'neglecting his work, whereby in the end he found himself old and poor to a degree that had not Lorenzo de' Medici, while he lived, assisted him, and afterwards had not his friends and many men of wealth had a care for his genius, he would almost have died of hunger', Botticelli, in common with his brother Simone, was possessed since 1494 of some landed property, without the Porta San Frediano, and that he paid his public taxes in the years 1503 to 1505 to the Company of S. Luke, to which as a painter he belonged. And his importance as a painter was not altogether forgotten, for in 1504 he was chosen as one of the committee to decide the position of Michelangelo's *David*, and this committee comprised nearly all great artists then working in Florence. Ugolino Verino, in his Latin poem, 'De Illustratione Urbis Florentiae', in 1503, alluded to Botticelli as Zeuxis. But Botticelli's fame was already on the wane. In the autumn of 1502 the Florentine agent of Isabella d'Este, of Mantua, was seeking a painter to take the place of the much occupied Pietro Perugino, to finish the decorative panels for her famous *Camerino*. The agent, promising to further his efforts with Perugino 'of slow performance', recommended Filippino and Botticelli in case Perugino failed. He says: 'Another famous painter has been spoken of to me, who also has been much belauded to me. He is called Philipino di Fra Philipino; and I have spoken with him, and he has told me that he will not be able to begin such a work for these six months, since he is occupied with other labour; but that perhaps after these are finished he will be able to serve your ladyship.

'Another, Alexandro Botechiella, has been much extolled to me, both as an excellent painter and as a man who works willingly, and has no hindrances, as the aforesaid; I have spoken with him; and he says that he would undertake the work at once and would serve your ladyship with a good will.' (*Horne*, pp. 303–4.) Poor Botticelli was unemployed, while his pupil Filippino had been occupied for six months. Horne judiciously explains this unpopularity as partly due to Botticelli's conversion to the cause of Savonarola, which turned rich patrons from him, but chiefly because Botticelli's archaism went out of fashion as the Cinquecento advanced. Indeed, in 1501 Leonardo, lately returned from Milan, startled the whole of Florence with the incomparable drawing of *St. Anne*, sometimes identified with the one in the Royal Academy in London, which was the actual beginning of what Vasari called the 'modern style'. In 1505, as the greatest event of artistic life in Florence, Michelangelo and Leonardo competed with each other with their cartoons for the decoration of the Gran Sala del Consiglio Maggiore, which entire Florence flocked to see,

and firmly established the taste for Cinquecento Art. It is possible that Botticelli, with his strict Quattrocento style, looked quite 'secca e cruda e tagliente', as Vasari, with his Cinquecento taste, said, and was soon forgotten. What was he doing in this social atmosphere, which was daily growing more foreign to him? It is impossible that he did not do anything, for we know his willingness to work from the letter to Isabella d'Este. Horne assigns the *St. Zenobius* panels to *c.* 1505; yet the paucity of Botticelli's work cannot account for ten long years since he painted the *Mystic Nativity*. If the *St. Zenobius* panels were painted after it, which is probable, there was no more remarkable change in Botticelli's manner, except that the execution became very coarse, showing technical deterioration. As an artist he was as good as dead after 1500. Let us mourn him with the *Mystic Nativity*.

What could have been the further upward trend of mysticism which Botticelli had been following? In plastic art it was impossible. His ethereal mysticism was perhaps being estranged from the domain of plastic art, which is, after all, the visual world, definite and limited. His spiritual aspiration must have gradually felt and hated even plastic limitations. The mystic country of the soul is vague and silent. Botticelli was fast approaching it. Let us admire his beautiful art, for ever, with the *Mystic Nativity*. Man's lot on earth is cruel: he has to live till he dies. Botticelli must have surely had to do unworthy things in these 'decrepit' years, as the *St. Zenobius* panels permit us to surmise. If new historical documents be discovered, they may refute me: so far as Botticelli lived in his works, and so far as present-day materials are not historically contradictory, the old soul of Botticelli was approaching as his destiny the great silence of mysticism, after his 'swan's song' of 1500. Let us mourn him again with the *Mystic Nativity*. He beautifully deserves it.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

APPENDIX

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GENERAL REFERENCES

BERENSON, B. *Drawings of the Florentine Painters*. London, 1903.
Florentine Painters of the Renaissance. Third Edition. London, 1909.

BODE. *Florentinische Bildhauer der Renaissance*. Third Edition. Berlin, 1911.

BROCKHAUS, H. *Forschungen über Florentines Kunstwerke*. Leipzig, 1902.

BURCKHARDT, J. *Der Cicerone* (ed. by Bode and Fabriczy), 1909.
Kultur der Renaissance in Italien. Tenth Edition. Leipzig, 1908.

CROWE AND CAVALCASELLE. *History of Italian Painting* (ed. by Langton Douglas and Borenius). London, 1903–14.

KRISTELLER, P. *Early Florentine Woodcuts*. London, 1897.

MORELLI, G. (LERMOLIEFF). *Die Galerien Borghese und Doria-Pamphili in Rome*, 1891.
Die Werke Italienischer Meister in den Galerien von München, Dresden und Berlin. Leipzig, 1880.
Italian Painters, transl. by C. J. Ffoulkes, 1911.

MÜNTZ. *Historie de l'Art pendant la Renaissance*. Paris, 1883.

SYMONDS, J. A. *Renaissance in Italy*. London, 1875–86.

VENTURI, A. *Storia dell' Arte Italiana*. From 1901, Milan. Especially Part IV, which treats of the Quattrocento.

VILLARI, P. *Life and Times of Savonarola*. London, 1888.
Scelta di Prediche e scritti di Fra Girolamo Savonarola. Florence, 1898. (This contains the chronicle of Botticelli's brother, 'Simone Philipepis'.)

OLD SOURCES ON BOTTICELLI

ALBERTINI, FRANCESCO. *Memorie di Molte Statue e Picture che sono nella inclyta cipta di Florentia*, 1510.

'ANONIMO GADDIANO, Codice dell'.' Ed. C. de Fabriczy, *Archivio Stor. Ital.*, Tom. XII, 1893.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

†Colnaghi and Co. *The Chigi Madonna*, 1904.

Colvin, S. 'Botticelli' (*Encyclopædia Britannica*).
'Botticelli' (*The Portfolio*, 1871, Feb.).

Conti, C. 'Découverte de deux Fresques de S. Botticelli' (*L'Art*, 1881).

Creizenach. 'Kleine Beiträge zur Deutung italienischer Kunstwerke' (Rep. f. *Kunstw.*, 1898).

Crowe, J. A. 'Sandro Botticelli' (*Gazette des B.-A.*, 1886).

Culthrop. 'La Bella Simonetta, the Spring of the Italian Renaissance' (*Connoisseur*, VIII, 1906).

Cust, R. H. H. 'A New Botticelli' (*Connoisseur*, V, 1903).
†*Botticelli* (Bell's Miniature Series of Painters), 1908.

†Dami, I. *Botticelli e Sua Scuola*. Firenze, 1920.

†Davey, R. *The Work of Botticelli* (Newnes' Art Library, 1903).

*†Diehl, C. *Botticelli*. Paris, 1906.

*Dorez, L. 'Le Portrait de Lorenzo Lorenzano' (*Bulletin de la Société française d'Histoire de la Médicine*, 1907).

Ephrussi, C. 'La *Divine Comédie*, illustrée par S. Botticelli' (*Gazette des B.-A.*, 1886).

'Les deux Fresques du Musée du Louvre attribuées à S. Botticelli' (*Gazette des B.-A.*, 1882).

Escherich, Melo. 'Botticelli's *Primavera*' (Rep. f. *Kunstw.*, XXXI, 1908).

†Ferrari, G. *Il Botticello e l'Antonello da Messina del Muséo di Piacenza*, 1903.

Foerster, R. 'Die Verleumdung des Apelles in der Renaissance' (*Kön. Preuss. Kunstsml. Jahrb.*, VIII, 1887).

Foville, J. de. 'Portrait d'un Médailleur du XVe Siècle' (*Revue Numismatique*, 1912).

Frey, K. 'S. Botticelli, ein Künstler Leben aus der Renaissance' (*Schweizerische Rundschau*, V, 1895).

Frothingham, A. L. 'The True Meaning of the *Pallas* of Botticelli' (*American Journal of Archæology*, No. 4, 1908).

Fry, R. 'Note on Horne's *Botticelli*' (*Burlington Mag.*, Dec., 1907).
'Note on a Portrait of Giuliano de' Medici by Botticelli' (*Burlington Mag.*, 1914).
'Sandro Botticelli', a review of *Sandro Botticelli*, by Yukio Yashiro (*Burlington Mag.*, April, 1926).

*Gamba, Conte. 'Botticelli' (Thieme u. Becker: *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*).

*†Gebhart, E. *S. Botticelli et son Époque*, 1907.
'La *Madonne Guidi* de Botticelli' (in Coll. Schlichting) (*Rev. de l'Art, anc. et mod.*, 1908).

Goffin. 'Les Primitifs Italiens: Le Perugin, S. Botticelli' (*Durendel*, 1901).

*Gomez-Moreno, D. M. 'Un Trésor de Peintres inédites du XVe Siècle à Granada' (*Gazette des B.-A.*, 1908).

†Gowans. *Masterpieces of Botticelli* (Gowan's Art Books), 1901.

Gronau. 'Zu Botticelli's Bild der Anbetung der Könige' (Rep. f. *Kunstw.*, 1902).

Hadeln, D. von. 'H. Sebastian aus S. M. Maggiore, Florenz' (*Kön. Preuss. Kstsml. Jahrb.*, 1906).

Hanvette, H. 'Sur quelques Portraits des Medicis dans l'Œuvre de Botticelli' (*Union Intel. Franco-Italienne*, 1919).

†Hay, G. *The Charm of Botticelli*, 1911.

†Herbert, M. *Alessandro Botticelli*, 1908.

Hill, G. F. 'The Portraits of Giuliano of Medici' (*Burlington Mag.*, 1914).

Hobbes, J. O. 'Dante and Botticelli' (*St. George*, Jan., 1902).

*Horne, H. 'Quelques Souvenirs de S. Botticelli' (*Rev. Archæologique*, 1901, July).
'The Story of a Famous Botticelli' (*The Monthly Review*, Feb., 1902).

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

*Horne, H. 'A Lost *Adoration of the Magi* by S. Botticelli' (*Burlington Mag.*, I, 1903).

*†*Sandro Botticelli*, 1908.

*'La Tavola d' Altare delle Convertite dipinta da S. Botticelli' (*Rassegna d' Arte*, Sept., 1913).

*'A Lost *Adoration of the Magi*' (*Burlington Mag.*, 1915).

'Botticelli's *Last Communion of St. Jerome*' (*Burlington Mag.*, 1915).

*'*The Last Communion of St. Jerome* by Botticelli' (Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, March, April, 1915).

Huneker, J. G. 'Botticelli' (*Promenades of an Impressionist*, 1911).

International Studio, 'Another Botticelli for America' (1925, vol. LXXXI, p. 467).

Jacobsen. 'Allegoria della *Primavera* di S. Botticelli' (*Arch. St. dell' Arte*, 1897).

*Kern, G. 'Ein perspektische Kreiskonstruktion bei S. Botticelli' (*Kön. Preuss. Kunstsml. Jahrb.*, XXVI, 1905).

Konody, H. P. 'On an Unknown Portrait of Botticelli and some dates' (*Connoisseur*, 1908).

†Kroeber, H. T. *Die Einzelporträts des S. Botticelli*, 1911.

Laban, F. 'Ein Männliches Bildnis Botticelli' (in Coll. Simon, Berlin) (*Zeitsch. f. Bild. Kunst.*, XVII, 1906).

*Lafenestre, G. 'Une Exposition de Tableaux Italiens' (*Rev. de l'Art, anc. et mod.*, 1909).

*Lasareff, V. 'An Unnoticed Botticelli in Petersburg' (*Burlington Mag.*, March, 1924).

Lenoir, Yyonne-Martha. 'Botticelli' (*L'Art Vivant*, Sept., 1927).

*†Lippmann, F. *Zeichnungen von S. Botticelli zur Dantes Göttliche Komedie*, 1896.

'Botticelli' (*Kön. Preuss. Kstsml. Jahrb.*, IV).

Marrai, B. 'La *Nascita di Venere* e la *Primavera* del Botticelli' (*Arte e Stor.*, 1908).

Mesnil, J. 'Ein Botticelli zu Montelupo' (*Zeitsch. zur Bild. Kunst.* XI, 1890).

'Les Figures des Vertus de la Mercanzia: Piero de Pollajuolo et Botticelli' (*Miscellania d' Arte*, I).

*'Quelques Documents sur Botticelli' (*Miscellania d' Arte*, 1903).

*'Botticelli, les Pollajuoli et Verrocchio' (*Rivista d' Arte*, III, 1905).

'Botticelli à Rome' (*Rivista d' Arte*, III, 1905).

'Le Pietà Botticelliane' (*Rassegna d' Arte*, Sept., 1914).

Monkhouse. 'S. Botticelli' (*Art Journal*, 1881).

Müntz, E. 'Botticelli, était-il Hérétique?' (*Journal des Débats*, 19 Avril, 1897).

'A propos de S. Botticelli' (*Gazette des B.-A.*, 1898).

'Les Déclarations de Biens de S. Botticelli et de Lorenzo di Credi' (*La Chronique des Arts*, 1899).

*Nicola, G. de. 'Un Tableau Inconnu de Botticelli dans la Coll. du Prince du Pallavicini à Rome' (*Rev. de l'Art*, XXXI).

†Oppé, A. P. *Sandro Botticelli*, 1911.

*Pater, W. 'Botticelli' (*The Renaissance*).

Peraté. 'Dessins Inédits de S. Botticelli pour illustrer la Divine Comédie' (*Gazette des B.-A.*, 1887).

Philippi, A. 'S. Botticelli' (*Zeitschr. f. Bild. Kunst.*, VIII, 1897).

†Phillimore. *Fra Angelico and Botticelli*, 1872.

†Plunkett, G. N. *Sandro Botticelli*, 1900.

*Poggi, G. 'La Giostra Medicea del 1475 e la *Pallade* del Botticelli' (*L'Arte*, 1902).

*'A Proposito della *Pallade* del Botticelli' (*L'Arte*, 1902).

*'*The Annunciation of San Martino* by Botticelli' (*Burlington Mag.*, 1915).

Post, C. 'A Neapolitan Interpretation of the Chigi *Madonna*' (*Art in America*, 1914).

Rankin, W. 'Casone Fronts in American Collections' (*Burlington Mag.*, 1906).

†Ranyon, H. 'Botticelli' (*Les Peintres illustres*, 1910).

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

*†Richter, J. P. *Lectures on the National Gallery*, 1898.

'Botticelli's Picture of the Miracles of St. Zenobius' (*Art in America*, 1915).

Richter, L. M. 'Recent Botticelli Literature' (*The Artist*, XXXII, 1902).

'Ein Längstverschollener und Wiedergefundener Botticelli' (*Zeitschr. f. Bild. Kunst.*, 1913).

*Rose, G. B. 'Botticelli' (*The Renaissance Masters*, 1898).

Rosen, J. H. de. 'La Pietà de Botticelli à la Pinacotèque de Munich' (*Rev. de l'Art Chrètien*, 1912).

Rosenberg. 'Der Dante des Sandro Botticelli' (*Zeitschr. f. Bild. Kunst.*, 1883).

†Schaeffer, E. *Sandro Botticelli* (Langham Series of Art Monographs, 1910).

†Schmarzow. *Sandro Botticelli*, 1923.

†Schneider, R. 'Botticelli' (*Les Grands Artistes*, 1911).

*†Schubring, P. *Cassone*.

†*Botticelli, der Maler des Frühlings*, 1922.

Shaw, W. B. 'Rossetti and Botticelli; a Comparison of Ideals and Art' (*The Craftsman*, 1905).

Simoneschi, L. 'La *Pallade* de Botticelli e un Arazzo del Muséo Civico di Pisa' (*Miscellanea d' Arte*, 1903).

Sirèn, O. 'Early Italian Pictures in Cambridge' (*Burlington Mag.*, 1920).

*†Steinmann, E. 'Botticelli' (*Kunstlermonographien*, 1913).

'Sandro Botticelli's *Tempelscene zu Jerusalem* in Cappella Sistina' (Rep. f. *Kunstw.*, 1895).

† *Sistinische Kapelle*, 1901.

Storch, K. 'Botticelli, zur Erinnerung an Seinen Todestag' (*Der Türmer*, 1910).

†Streeter, A. *Botticelli*, 1903.

'On Botticelli' (Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters*).

†Strzygowski. *Die Acht Zeichnungen von S. Botticelli zur Dante's Göttliche Komödie in Vatikan*, 1887.

†Supino, J. B. *Sandro Botticelli*, 1900.

†*Sandro Botticelli* (*in Profili*).

†*S. Botticelli, I disegni per la Divina Comedia*, 1921.

†Toesca, P. *Dante e Botticelli*, 1923.

Tietze-Conrat, E. 'Botticelli and the Antique' (*Burlington Mag.*, 1925).

Uhde, W. 'Zu Botticelli's *Primavera*' (*Monatsheft f. Kstw.*, I, 1908).

Uhde-Bernays, H. 'Ein Unbekanntes Juglingsbild des S. Botticelli' (*Der Cicerone*, 1913).

*†Uhlmann, H. *Sandro Botticelli*, 1893.

†*Fra Filippo Lippi u. Fra Diamante als Lehrers S. Botticelli's*, 1890.

Varenne, G. 'Botticelli et les Différénts Aspects de Son Œuvre' (*L'Art*, 1905).

Vassalli. '*La Nascita di Venere*' (*Biblioteca della Rivista d' Arte*, N. 1, Siena, 1908).

Venturi, A. 'La *Primavera* nelle Arti rappresentative' (*Nuova Antologia*, 1892).

*'Note on the *Madonna and Child* now in Coll. Schlichting, Louvre' (*L'Arte*, 1902).

'Il Ritratto di Giuliano de' Medici per S. Botticelli' (*L'Arte*, 1918).

*'Une Œuvre Inconnue de Botticelli' (*Gazette des B.-A.*, vol. XXXVIII, 1907).

*'Ritratto del Lorenzo Lorenzano di Mano di Botticelli' (*L'Arte*, 1908).

† *Il Botticelli, interprete di Dante*, 1921.

*'Uno Sconosciuto Botticelli' (*L'Arte*, July–Aug., 1922).

'Un Disegno di Botticelli ad Amborgo' (*L'Arte*, Sept.–Dec., 1922).

'Nuove Ricerche' (*Il Messagero*, 7 May, 1924).

'Per Sandro Botticelli' (*Cafarro, Genoa*, 18 March, 1924).

*'Il Ritratto di Dante' (*Illustrazione Italiana*, 1924).

*'Per Sandro Botticelli' (*L'Arte*, July–Aug., 1924).

'Sandro Botticelli' (*L'Arte*, 1924, vol. XXIV, p. 191 ff.).

† *Botticelli*, 1925. English Edition, 1925.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

*†Warburg, A. *S. Botticelli's 'Geburt der Venus' und 'Frühling'*, 1893.

Weicher's Kunstbücher. Botticelli's *Meisterbilder*, 1908.

Weisbach, W. 'Studien zu Pesellino und Botticelli' (*Kön. Preuss. Kstsml. Jahrb.*, XXIX, 1908).

Wickhoff, F. 'Die Hochzeitsbilder S. Botticelli's' (*Kön. Preuss. Kstsml. Jahrb.*, XXVII, 1906).

Woermann, A. 'Masaccio . . . S. Botticelli' (*Kunst. u. Künstler des Mittelalters*, 1898).

Wyzewa. 'Une Nouvelle Biographie de Botticelli' (*Rev. des Deux Mondes*, 1903).

Yashiro, Yukio. 'A Newly Discovered Botticelli' (*Burlington Mag.*, April, 1925).

'"A New Botticelli" at Detroit' (*Art in America*, Aug., 1927).

CHRONOLOGY

This is an attempt to arrange Botticelli's works in chronological sequence and to trace the development of his art together with his life as an artist. The author has endeavoured clearly to distinguish between the standard works whose dates are established by documentary evidence, and the attributions, which are only arrived at by reference to those standard works. In the following list the right-hand column, 'Stylistic Attributions', should always be considered in connection with some definite work mentioned in the left-hand column. Where the references are evident, dotted lines (. . . . . .) are used to connect the works. If otherwise, the chronological attributions are more indefinite and only vaguely point to the period through some approximate standard work. In such chronological attributions it is not the exact year, which is, after all, impossible to ascertain, but the grouping together of stylistically related works, that is important for students.

In the left-hand column are also given historical events which influenced the art of Botticelli, together with all the documented dates about his life.

Established by Documents	Stylistic Attributions
1444–5 Botticelli was born. This is the conclusion reached both by the 'Denunzia' of 1447 and by that of 1458, returned by Botticelli's father. Botticelli must have been born within the twelve months preceding February 28 or March 1, 1445.[1] cf. Jacques Mesnil, 'Quelques Documents sur Botticelli' (*Miscellanea d'Arte*, 1903); also cf. Horne, p. 5 ff.	
1447 March 1. The 'Denunzia' of his father mentions Botticelli as being two years old. cf. Jacques Mesnil, op. cit.	
1458 February 28. The 'Denunzia' of his father (Horne, doc. VII) mentions Botticelli as being 'thirteen years of age, *sta allegare* ("is at his books" according to	

[1] Prof. A. Venturi, in his recent work on Botticelli (Roma, 1926), calculated the year of Botticelli's birth as 1445, and thought that both Jacques Mesnil and Horne, who fixed the year mainly as 1444, had made a mistake, confusing the Florentine style with the modern. They do not seem, however, to have made such a mistake. If the records of Botticelli being 'two years old' in 1447, March 1, or of being 'thirteen years old' on 28 February 1458 mean, as they do, that Botticelli has already completed two years or thirteen years respectively on those dates, Botticelli must have been born within the twelve months preceding February 28 or March 1, 1445, that is to say, between March 1444 and February 1445.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Horne; "doing goldsmith's work" according to Warburg and Bode)[1] and of ill-health'.

Shortly after Botticelli must have joined the workshop of Fra Filippo Lippi, then working at Prato.

1467
Fra Filippo Lippi left for Spoleto, where he died two years later.

1470
Pollajuolo brothers were commissioned to paint the Virtues for the Hall of the Mercanzia. They failed, however, to proceed with the work as quickly as was demanded in the contract. The newly-elected 'Consul' of the Mercanzia, Tommaso Soderini, seems to have given two figures of the Virtue to Botticelli, who finished only one of them, the **Fortezza** (Uffizi), and was paid for it on August 18.
cf. Jacques Mesnil, 'Les Figures de Vertus de la Mercanzia' (*Miscellanea d'Arte*, 1903), where necessary extracts from the 'Deliberazioni' of the officers of the Mercanzia are given and elucidated.

1472
About this year Botticelli became a member of the Compagna di San Luca, to which painters belonged. Throughout 1472–3–4 Botticelli's name appears on various occasions in the 'Libro Rosso', or the account-book of the Compagna, as paying regular fees, making contributions, offering candles on festivals, etc. (Horne, doc. XI.)

[1] For the attempted reading of the words *sta allegare*, cf. p. 174, and the note.

First Period (.... up to 1467)

[Apprentice years of Botticelli to Fra Filippo Lippi. The following works show Fra Filippo's influence predominant.]

Madonna and Child (Coll. Schlichting, Louvre)
Madonna and Child (Uffizi)
Madonna and Child, in fresco, much repainted (Cappella Vannella, Corbignano)
Adoration of the Magi (National Gallery, London)

Second Period (1468–1480)

[After Fra Filippo's departure for Spoleto, Botticelli must have come under the direct influence of Florentine realists, especially of Pollajuolo and of Verrocchio. The following works of Botticelli are dated to this period, as they show characteristics of these two powerful masters, together with the Filippesque traits, which are gradually disappearing.]

Judith (Uffizi)
Holofernes found dead (Uffizi)

Madonna and Child (Uffizi)
Madonna and Child with Six Saints; the central part badly repainted. (Accademia, Florence)

Portrait of a Man (Louvre)
[*Portrait of a Man* (formerly in Coll. Mr. Simon, Berlin, now in Coll. Mr. Cambò, Barcelona).]

Madonna and Child with Young St. John, not altogether by Botticelli (Louvre)

1472
Filippino Lippi works with Botticelli as his assistant. This can be understood from an entry in the 'Libro Rosso' of the Compagna di San Luca.
cf. Horne, p. 31.

1474
January. Botticelli painted the **St. Sebastian** (Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin) for S. Maria Maggiore, Florence. The 'Anonimo Gaddiano' gives this notice. (Horne, doc. II.)

1474
January 27. Botticelli goes to Pisa 'to see where he was to paint in the Campo Santo'. This is mentioned in the 'Ricordenze' of the Opera del Duomo, Pisa. (Horne, doc. XII.)
In this and following dates the Pisan style was originally used in the documents. For the difference between the Pisan and the Florentine or the modern, cf. Horne, p. 34.

1474
September 20. Botticelli was paid for the *Ascension of Our Lady*, a work begun in the Duomo of Pisa in the chapel of the Incoronata as the 'paragon' for the frescoes, which Botticelli was to undertake, if it pleased the Wardens of the Duomo. This is mentioned in the account-book of the Opera del Duomo, Pisa. (Horne, doc. XIII.) The work, however, was soon abandoned.

1475
June 28. The famous tournament of the Medici took place in the Piazza Santa Croce, in which Giuliano de' Medici distinguished himself. Poliziano began to compose 'La Giostra' in Giuliano's celebration, which was soon left unfinished.

1476
April 26. 'La Bella Simonetta', the

Madonna and Child with an Angel (Coll. Gardner, Boston)
Madonna and Child with two Angels (Museo Nazionale, Naples)
Madonna and Child with Angel, much retouched (Coll. Mr. van Buren, Amsterdam and Paris)

The Trinity with St. John and Mary Magdalene (Coll. Viscount Lee of Fareham, London), and its *predella with the Story of Mary Magdalene* (Coll. Johnson, Philadelphia). Botticelli worked on these works with assistants

Drawing, Angel of the Annunciation (Uffizi)
The Annunciation (Coll. Mr. Louis Hyde, Glen Falls, U.S.A.)
The Annunciation (Coll. Mr. Huldschinsky, Berlin)

Adoration of the Magi (National Gallery, London)
Portrait of a Man with a Medici-Medal (Uffizi)

La Primavera (Uffizi)

Drawing, the Abundance (Uffizi)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

'inamorata' of Giuliano de' Medici on the occasion of the tournament, died.

'La Bella Simonetta' (Coll. Dr. Noah, Berlin)
Giuliano de' Medici (Accademia Carrara, Bergamo)

1476
Botticelli seems to have painted a fresco *Adoration of the Magi* in the Palazzo della Signoria about this year. The 'Anonimo Gaddiano' mentioned this. But the picture had already disappeared in the sixteenth century. (Horne, doc. II.)
Horne attempts to determine the approximate date of the painting from the rebuilding works which were done in the Palazzo.
cf. Horne, p. 44 ff.

1478
April 26. The Pazzi Conspiracy. Giuliano de' Medici was killed, but the plot failed. Botticelli painted the criminals' effigies in fresco, which have been lost. The payment to Botticelli is recorded in the 'Deliberazioni' of the Signoria on July 21. (Horne, doc. XVIII.)
The 'Anonimo Gaddiano' gives a description of the frescoes. (Horne, doc. II.)
cf. also Horne, p. 63 ff., for the correction of Vasari's confused statement.

[In painting these criminals' effigies Botticelli seems to have learned much from Andrea del Castagno, whose influence is felt in Botticelli's works of this period.]

1480
Botticelli painted the fresco **St. Augustine** in Ognissanti, Florence, in competition with Domenico Ghirlandajo. Ghirlandajo's fresco of St. Jerome in Ognissanti is dated 1480, and the competition between the two painters is recorded by the 'Anonimo Gaddiano'. (Horne, doc. II.)

Adoration of the Magi (Uffizi)

1481
January. The 'Denunzia' of his father mentions Botticelli thus: 'Sandro di Mariano of the age thirty-three; he is a painter, he works in the house when he will'. (Horne, doc. XX.)
Horne has discussed the inaccuracy of Botticelli's age as given in this document.

Pallas and the Centaur (Uffizi)

1481
April–May. Botticelli was painting in fresco the **Annunciation** in S. Martino, Florence. The account-book of the Spedale degli Innocenti, to which S. Martino belonged, has two entries of payment for the work: one on April 8, when the apprentice Ludovico received the money for Botticelli, another on May 8.
cf. Giovanni Poggi, 'The Annunciation of San Martino, by Botticelli' (*Burlington Magazine*, 1916).

[The production of such a sweet work of sentimental character at this time shows that Botticelli could not have been entirely,

or for long, overwhelmed by the severe and monumental art of Andrea del Castagno.]

Madonna del Magnificat (Uffizi)
Madonna and Child (Museo Poldo-Pezzoli, Milan)

1481
August 30. The *Commento di Christoforo Landino fiorentino sopra la Comedia di Danta Alighieri poeta fiorentino* was published, to which Botticelli supplied engravings, but only in the cantos of the *Inferno*. The work was obviously interrupted by Botticelli going to Rome.

1481–2
Together with Cosimo Rosselli, Domenico Ghirlandajo and Pietro Perugino, Botticelli was summoned to Rome by Pope Sixtus IV, to paint frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. The contract (Horne, doc. XXII) was made on October 27, 1481, in which the painters promised to finish the ten paintings with curtains below by March 15 of the next spring. Botticelli designed the greater part, and painted some, of the **Popes' Portraits,** designed a part of the wall decoration below in imitation of curtains, and painted the three frescoes, **Purification of the Leper,** the **Life of Moses in the Land of Midian,** and the **Punishment of the Company of Korah.**

THIRD PERIOD (1481–90 *circa*)

[Botticelli's invitation to Rome seems to have been a turning-point in his career. His own art, singularly independent of the realistic tendency of the age, begins to develop. In his paintings the linear quality becomes more and more pronounced, the decorative effect increasing, with realism weakening in proportion.]

1481–2
While staying in Rome, Botticelli painted an *Adoration of the Magi*, which is mentioned by the 'Anonimo Gaddiano'. (Horne, doc. II.)

Adoration of the Magi (Hermitage, Petrograd)

1482
February 20. Botticelli's father, Mariano di Vanni, died and was buried in Ognissanti. Recorded in the register of the dead in Florence. (Horne, doc. XL.)

1482
About this time Filippino Lippi painted the portrait of Botticelli in the fresco *Crucifixion of St. Peter* in the Brancacci Chapel of the Carmine, Florence.

Adoration of the Magi, left unfinished and repainted (Uffizi)
Adoration of the Magi, unfinished and cut in fragments (one fragment in

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

This shows that Botticelli has already returned from Rome.

1482
October 5. Botticelli made an agreement to paint frescoes in the Audience Hall of the Palazzo della Signoria, Florence, in conjunction with Domenico Ghirlandajo, Pietro Perugino (who was, however, substituted a little later by Filippino Lippi), Piero Pollajuolo, and Biagio Tucci. The work seems to have soon been interrupted. Only Ghirlandajo completed the image of St. Zenobius. All this is recorded in the 'Deliberazioni degli Operai del Palazzo della Signoria'. (Horne, doc. XXIII.)

1482
November 25. Botticelli's payment of the fee to the Compagna di San Luca is recorded in the 'Libro Rosso'. (Horne, doc. XI.)

1483
On the occasion of the marriage between Giannozzo Pucci and Lucrezia di Pietro di Giovanni di Binni, Botticelli made the design for the decorative panels of the nuptial chest, which his pupils executed. These panels represent the **Story of Nastagio degli Onesti** in *Boccaccio*. (Three of them now belong to M. Spiridon, Paris, and one to Mr. Vernon Watney, London.) Vasari gives this notice. As for the date, Milanesi, in the note to his edition of *Vasari*, vol. III, p. 313, thought that it was at the time when Giovanni Binni married Lucrezia di Francesco di Giovanni Pucci in 1487, but Horne, more carefully studying the coats of arms in the pictures, decided that the chest was designed for another marriage, which occurred between the two families in 1483.
cf. Horne, 133.

1483–4
Botticelli worked with Filippino Lippi, Ghirlandajo, and Perugino for the Villa Spedaleto of Lorenzo il Magnifico near Volterra. This is mentioned in a letter of the Florentine agent of the Duke of Milan, who was looking for artists to serve him. (Horne, doc. XXIV.) I have quoted this letter in Horne's rendering in English. The works are now lost.

Morgan Library, New York, three fragments in Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge)

[These panels were merely designed by Botticelli, and were executed by his pupils and assistants, above all by Bartolommeo di Giovanni.]

Portrait of a Youth (National Gallery, London)

Christ (Museum, Detroit)
Madonna and Child with St. Barnabas and other Saints and Angels, and its *predella* (Uffizi)

Portrait of a Youth (Coll. Mr. C. Mackay, New York)
The Annunciation (Galleria Corsini, Florence)
'La Derelitta' (Coll. Principe Pallavicini, Rome)
Engraving, Madonna and Child with two Saints (British Museum, London)

Drawing, St. John the Baptist (Uffizi)
Drawing, Study for an Angel (Uffizi)
Drawing, Study for a Pallas (Uffizi)

1485
February–August. Botticelli was engaged in painting the altar-piece of the Chapel of Agnolo de' Bardi in Santo Spirito. The last entry of payment to the painter is recorded in the account-book of Giovanni d' Agnolo de' Bardi on August 5. (Horne, doc. XXV.)
For the identification of this altar-piece with the **Madonna and Child between St. Johns** (Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin), from the descriptions of the 'Anonimo Gaddiano', Vasari and others, cf. Horne, p. 136.

Drawing, St. Jerome (Uffizi)

1486
Frescoes from the Villa Lemmi (Louvre, Paris) were painted by Botticelli on the occasion of the marriage of Lorenzo Tornabuoni and Giovanna d' Albizzi, which took place on June 15.

Mars and Venus (National Gallery, London)

Infant Christ and St. John (National Gallery, Ottawa)

1487
Botticelli painted a circular picture for the Audience Chamber of the 'Magistrato de' Massai della Camera' in the Palazzo della Signoria. Milanesi, in his edition of *Vasari*, mentions this, apparently recalling some document, which Horne could not identify. cf. Horne, p. 153 ff., for his comment on Milanesi's note. With this circular painting the **Madonna della Melagrana** (Uffizi Gallery, Florence) can be identified. cf. Horne, p. 154.

Venus (Coll. Signor R. Gualino, Turin)
Birth of Venus (Uffizi)

Portrait of Giuliano de' Medici (Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin)
Portrait of Lorenzo Lorenzano (Coll. Johnson, Philadelphia)

1489
March 19. Botticelli was painting the **Annunciation** altar-piece (Uffizi Gal- → *La Pietà* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

lery, Florence) for the Chapel of the Annunciation in the Convent of Cestello, or of Santa Maria de' Pazzi, Florence. On this day a payment was made to the painter. The chapel was consecrated on June 26, 1490, before which date the altarpiece must have been finished. (Horne, doc. XXXII.)
Also cf. Horne, p. 163 ff., for the history of this convent and of the reconstruction of the chapel.

FOURTH PERIOD (1490–1510)

[From about this time Botticelli inclines to mystic art, which develops itself under the growing influence of Savonarola. Also about the same time Botticelli seems to have begun the *Dante Illustrations*, which, absorbing his interest more and more completely, converted him from a plastic artist into a kind of prophetic visionary. There are no dated works of his in this period, except the Mystic Nativity of 1500. Moreover, there is little evolution of his style noticeable during his late years. In the following list, therefore, Botticelli's late works are grouped together more by subjects than by stylistic features.]

1490
During this year Botticelli must have painted the **Coronation of the Virgin** (Uffizi Gallery, Florence) for San Marco, Florence. This is the conclusion ingeniously drawn by Horne from the old records of the convent of San Marco (Horne, doc. XXXIII), and also of the 'Arte della Seta' (Horne, doc. XXXIV). cf. Horne, p. 168 ff.

Drawing, Study for the feet of a Saint (Uffizi)

1491
January 5. Botticelli was among the artists summoned to consider the designs for the façade of Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence. The designs were sent in by various artists, among whom we find 'Giuliano Maiano, Benedetto da Maiano, Cecco di Giorgio, the Sienese, Filippino Lippi, and Antonio Pollaiuolo.' Botticelli attended the meeting with Lorenzo di Credi, Domenico Ghirlandajo, Cosimo Rosselli, Perugino, and Alessio Baldovinetti. This is recorded in the 'Deliberazioni' of the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore (Le Monnier edition of *Vasari*, vol. VII, p. 243.) Horne (p. 177 ff.) gives necessary extracts.

Madonna and Child with Young St. John (Coll. Rockefeller, New York)

1491
From about this year Savonarola's sermons began to stir Florence.

Madonna and Child with two Angels (Ambrosiana, Milan)

1491
May 18. On this day Botticelli was commissioned to decorate the vault of the Chapel of St. Zenobius in Santa Maria del Fiore, together with Domenico and David Ghirlandajo, Gherardo the miniaturist and his partners, Bartolommeo and Monte di Giovanni. From the records of payment Botticelli seems to have worked in conjunction with Gherardo and Monte. The work was interrupted and was finally finished by David Ghirlandajo and Monte in 1515. The Contract and the Payments are recorded in the 'Deliberazioni' of the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore. (Horne, doc. XXXVI.)

La Calunnia (Uffizi)
Story of Virginia (Accademia Carrara, Bergamo)
Story of Lucrezia (Coll. Gardner, Boston)

Drawing, three angels (Uffizi)
Drawing, Pallas (Ambrosiana, Milan)
Drawing, Story of a Saint, on silk (Louvre)
Drawing, Unidentified subject (Museum, Darmstadt)
Drawing, Nativity (Uffizi)
Drawing, Study for St. Thomas (Ambrosiana, Milan)
Engraving, Assumption of the Virgin (Uffizi and elsewhere)

1492
April 8. Lorenzo il Magnifico died. The inventory of his goods taken at the time of his death (Horne, doc. XXIX) mentions two works by Botticelli: a large canvas with the figure of Pallas, and a tester ('sopracielo') for the bed with the figure of Fortune. These works are now lost. For the attempted readings of the corrupted writing in this document, cf. Horne, p. 156 ff. and p. 183.

1493
March 30. Botticelli's eldest brother, Giovanni, died and was buried in Ognissanti. Mentioned in the register of the dead of Florence. (Horne, doc. XL.)

1493
Towards the end of this year or the beginning of the next, Botticelli's third brother, Simone, seems to have returned from Naples and lived in Florence with him. Simone soon became a zealous follower of Savonarola.

1494
Botticelli is mentioned, together with Filippino Lippi and Domenico Ghirlandajo, as skilled in perspective among

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Florentine artists in 'Summa de Arithmetica, Geometria, Proportione & Proportionalità' of Luca Paccioli, printed in Venice in this year.

1494
April 19. Botticelli bought, in conjunction with his brother Simone, a landed property outside the Porta San Frediano. The record of purchase is preserved in the protocol of a municipal notary. (Horne, doc. XLI.)

1495
Savonarola's prophetic career really begins from about this year.

1496
June 14–August 19. Botticelli undertook to paint a St. Francis in the dormitory of the Monastery of Santa Maria di Monticelli, Florence. The picture is now lost. The records of the monastery tell that between these two dates several payments were made either to Botticelli himself or to his assistants. (Horne, doc. XLIII.)

1496
July 2. On this date Michelangelo sent a private letter from Rome to Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, addressing it to Botticelli in Florence. Michelangelo's letter is given in Le Monnier edition of *Vasari*, vol. XII, p. 339, and its English version in Horne, p. 187.

1497
Shrove Tuesday. The first 'Burning of Vanities'.

1497
July 3. Botticelli had been engaged with a few assistants on some decorative works at the Villa of Castello for Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici. On this date the certificate for payment was given to the painter by Basino, who was in charge of the villa. (Horne, doc. XLIX.)

1498
The tax-register of this year contains the declaration that Botticelli and his brother Simone lived in the house of their nephews, Benincasa and Lorenzo. It also states the rent which the landed property of Botticelli and Simone outside the

Porta San Frediano was yielding to them (Horne, doc. XLIII.)
cf. Horne, p. 267 ff., for the elucidation of this document, which throws a light on the financial condition of Botticelli's later years.

1498
February 18. Botticelli is mentioned in the protocol of a municipal notary, as making a promise, in front of two witnesses and through his guarantor, Antonio di Migliore Guidotti, citizen of Florence, 'not to offend' his neighbour, Filippo di Domenico del Cavaliere, hosier. (Horne, doc. L.)
cf. Horne, p. 279 ff., for the political aspect of Florence at the time and the probable circumstances of the quarrel.

1498
Shrove Tuesday. The second 'Burning of Vanities'.

1498
May 23. Savonarola's execution.

1499
November 2. Botticelli is mentioned in the chronicle of his brother Simone (Horne, doc. LV), as faithful to the memory of Savonarola, but at the same time, as associating with the 'Idlers', the enemies of Savonarola, who caused his death. Also there are similar descriptions in 'Le Giornate de Ser Lorenzo Violi'. (Horne, doc. XLVI.)
Horne, p. 290 ff., gives extracts from these documents, which greatly serve to explain the character of Botticelli.

1499
November 15. Botticelli was matriculated as a painter in the 'Arte del Medici e degli Speziali'. (Horne, doc. LIII.)

1500
In the spring Leonardo da Vinci returned from Milan. A year after he finished the cartoon of St. Anne, which startled the whole of Florence. This is the beginning of the Art of the Cinquecento.

1500
'At the end of the year' Botticelli painted the **Mystic Nativity** (National Gallery, London), with a prophetic inscription

Judith (formely in Coll. Kaufmann, Berlin)
The Annunciation (Hermitage, Petrograd)
St. Augustine (Uffizi)
The Last Communion of St. Jerome (Metropolitan Museum, New York)
Transfiguration (Coll. Principe Pallavicini, Rome)

→ *Agony in the Garden* (Capilla Real, Granada)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

written on the picture. The Greek inscription is transcribed and rendered into English by Horne, p. 294 ff.

1502

September 23. In a letter written by Francesco de' Malatesti, the Florentine agent of Isabella d' Este, to her, when he was looking for a painter who would work for her, Botticelli is mentioned after Perugino and Filippino Lippi 'as an excellent painter and as a man who works willingly and has no hindrances, as the aforesaid'. (Horne, doc. LVIII.)

1503

Botticelli is mentioned among famous artists in the poem, 'De Illustratione Urbis Florentiae', by Ugolino Verino, published about this year.

1503–4–5

Botticelli's fees due to the Compagna di San Luca and their payments are mentioned in the account-book of the company on various occasions between October 17, 1503, and October 18, 1505. (Horne, doc. XI.)

1504

January 25. Botticelli is one of the committee invited by the Wardens of the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore and the 'Consuls' of the Arte della Lana, to consider the site to place Michelangelo's *David*. The committee meeting is minutely reported in the 'Deliberazioni of the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore' (Johan Gaye, *Carteggio inedito d' Artisti*, vol. III, p. 455).
cf. Horne, p. 306 ff.

1505

Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo competed with each other with their famous cartoons for the Palazzo della Signoria: the triumph of the Art of the Cinquecento.

1510

May 17. Botticelli died and is buried in Ognissanti. This is mentioned both in the register of the dead of Florence (Horne, doc. LX), and also in the register of the dead of the 'Arte dei Medici e degli Speziali'. (Horne, doc. LXI.)

The Mystic Crucifixion (Fogg Museum, Boston)

Stories of St. Zenobius (two panels in the Mond Coll., National Gallery, London; one panel in Metropolitan Museum, New York; one panel in Gemäldegalerie, Dresden)

INDEX

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

INDEX

Abbreviations

B.=Botticelli. N.G.=National Gallery, London. Uff.=Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

A

Abundance, drawing, 42.
'Academy of Idlers', 201.
Adoration of the Magi, N.G., 9, 11, 12.
Adoration of the Magi, Petrograd, 60.
Adoration of the Magi, Uff., 30, 33 *sqq.*, 80, 172, 215.
  Portraits in, 44–45, 172.
Æsthetics, *see* Art.
Agony in the Garden, Granada, 71, 80.
Alberti, Leon Battista, Art of, 129, 131.
Allegorical figures by B., Corsini Gall., 42.
'Amico di Sandro', 9, 12, 57, 210.
Anatomy, B.'s weakness in, 41 *sqq.*, 93.
Angelico, Fra, Art of, 3.
  Madonnas of, 193.
  Treatment of flowers by, 76, 78, 83, 84.
  Use of gold by, 216.
  Annunciation, 77.
  Noli me tangere, 77.
Angels, treatment by B., 192–193.
Annunciation, Hyde Coll., 56.
Annunciation, S. Martino fresco, Florence, 115.
Annunciation, Stroganoff Coll., 115.
Annunciation, Uff., 54, 116, 128, 141.
'Anonimo Gaddiano' on B., 60, 94, 98, 145.
Apelles, *Venus Anodyomene*, 97.
Arc in composition, 153 *sqq.*
Archaism in Art, 5.
'Aria Virile', 39 *sqq.*, 196.
Aristotle on Art, 100.
Art, 136, 167 *sqq.*
  See also Archaism in Art, Ethical Art, Gothic Art, Florentine Art, Japanese Art, Naturalistic Art, Oriental Art, Pathetic Art, Realism in Art.
  Cinquecento, 58, 139, 151, 195, 222–223.
  Quattrocento, 3 *sqq.*, 18, 26–27, 57–58, 65, 76 *sqq.*, 130, 151. *See also* Perspective.
Art-Criticism, Fashions in, 168.
Asceticism, 204.
Atmosphere in B.'s landscapes, 62.

B

Baccio burns his drawings from the nude, 200, 202.
Background, black, in B.'s paintings of the nude, 98.
Baldovinetti, Alesso, Art of, 3, 17, 27, 58, 66, 76, 83.
Beatrice, in B.'s Dante Drawings, 179, 209.
Bellini, Giovanni, Madonnas of, 193.
Bellini, Jacopo, Oriental influence on, 92.
Berenson
  on 'Amico di Sandro', 12.
  on B.,16 *n.*, 28, 134–135, 147, 149.
  on Sienese school, 132.
  on treatment of hands in Art, 105–106.
  on Leonardo da Vinci, 169.
Binyon, Laurence, Dante quotations translated by, 69–70, 114, 150, 160, 190, 191, 210.
Birth of Venus, Uff., 23, 96.
  Alleged port. of Simonetta in, 181.
  Copied as Madonna, 158.
  Drawing of figure in, 41.
  Hair in, 122, 123, 124.
  Hands in, 112, 115.
  Feet in, 113.
  Flowers in, 81.
  Landscape in, 62–63.
  Poliziano's poetry the source of, 187–188.
  'Presenting' element in, 137–138.
  Sea in, 67.
  Sentimentality in, 179.
  Shell in, 86.
  Waves in, 149.
Black, use by B., 98, 217.
Black and white effects in Art, 152.
Blond hair, 123.
Boccaccio, Illustrations to *Nimfale Fiesoliano*, 124.
Bode, Dr.
  on B.'s *Adoration of the Magi*, 34.
  on B.'s 'Improvisation', 209.
  on B.'s perspective, 54.
  on B.'s *Portrait of Young Man with the Medal*, 109.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Bode, Dr.—*contd.*
on B.'s *Primavera*, 177.
on B.'s self-portrait, 172–173.
on reading of M. Filipepi's *Denunzia*, 174.
on alleged portrait of Simonetta, 182.
on Verrocchio's influence on B., 12.
Body, *See* Figure, Human.
Botticelli, Sandro [Alessandro Filipepi]
Birth, 3.
Boyhood and education of, 3 *sqq.*, 94, 174.
parts from Filippo Lippi, 12, 16.
invited to Rome by Sixtus IV, 36.
goes to Rome, 37.
Vasari's character of, as a boy, 53.
Dream of, 94.
put in charge of frescoes for Sistine Chapel, 139.
Agreement to paint frescoes at Pisa, 140–141.
paints altar-piece for St. Mark's, 142.
paints *Calunnia* for Segni, 143.
Old age of, 143.
Alleged patronage by Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, 145–146, 201–202.
Influence of Dante on, 145, 175, 199.
Heresy of, 191–192.
influenced by Savonarola, 199 *sqq.*
Quarrel with Filippo di Domenico del Cavaliere, 206.
Anecdotes of, 206.
Family life of, 207.
Poverty of, 207.
Conversion of, 208.
Last ten years of life of, 221–223.
on Committee to decide position of Michelangelo's *David*, 222.
Landed property of, 222.
Fame of, waning, 195, 222–223.
Modern appreciation of, 196.
Portrait by Filippino Lippi, 94.
Self-portrait, 171.
Characteristics
Attitude to legends of the saints, 218 *sqq.*
Attitude to Marriage, 94.
Element of repentance in, 206, 208, 209.
Emotional side of, 179 *sqq.*
Feeling for nature in, 83.
Idyllic side of, 68 *sqq.*
Intellectuality of, 175 *sqq.*
Botticelli, Sandro [Alessandro Filipepi]—*contd.*
Characteristics—*contd.*
Literary culture of, 175 *sqq.*
Mysticism of, 146, 199 *sqq.*
Relationship with women, 95.
Sadness of, 209 *sqq.*
Sensuousness of, 75 *sqq.*
Sentimentality of, 179 *sqq.*, 199.
Spirituality of, 171.
Tactile sense in, 134.
Visionary element in, 220–221.
Art
Alleged 'archaism', 4.
Allegorical references of, 176.
Architectural drawing of, 55 *sqq.*
Art of latest works, 143.
Black and white effects in, 152.
Blond hair, love of, 123.
as Colourist, 144, 212 *sqq.*
Colouring, bad, due to restoration, 213–214.
Compared with El Greco, 221.
Compared with Utamaro, 20, 85 *sqq.*
Compared with Leonardo da Vinci, 171.
Composition in, 153 *sqq.*
Contemporary copies of works, 196.
Decadence of, 95, 143.
Decorative art in, 80 *sqq.*
Defective drawing of, 41 *sqq.*
Development of, 136.
Drawings, scarcity of, 202.
Dualism of, 147.
Dynamic composition, 139, 141.
Figure painting compared with Utamaro's, 102.
Flying, pose for, 115.
as Fresco painter, 138 *sqq.*
Grand style lost, 145.
Influence of Castagno, 26 *sqq.*, 33, 35, 47, 110, 209.
Influence of Filippo Lippi, 4, 9–11, 12, 16, 18.
Influence of Masaccio, 9–10, 26.
Influence of Oriental Art, 92.
Influence of Pollajuolo, 4, 12 *sqq.*, 46.
Influence of Realistic education, 19.
Influence of Sienese school, 132.
Influence of Verrocchio, 12 *sqq.*
as Landscape painter, 50 *sqq.*
Landscape compared with Filippo Lippi's, 66.

Botticelli, Sandro [Alessandro Filipepi]—*contd.*
Art—*contd.*
Linear Art of, 132–133, 150 *sqq.*
Madonnas of, 189 *sqq.*
Naturalistic art of, 11.
Nature-study of, 10–11, 21, 23, 29, 46.
Nude, paintings of, 98.
Nymphs, creator of, 123–124.
'Pathetic' art of, 100, 101.
Perspective of, 14, 52 *sqq.*
as Portrait painter, 35, 44 *sqq.*
Realism in art of, 37 *sqq.*
Religious art of, 143, 220.
Sensuousness in art of, 93 *sqq.*
'La Bella Simonetta', Portraits of, 124, 184.
Technique of, 143.
Tondo composition of, 155 *sqq.*
See also the following headings: Anatomy, Angels, Atmosphere, Arc, Black, Cherubs, Conventionality, Crescent, Figures, Flowers, Flame, Gold, Grass, Grey, Hair, Hands, Running Figures, Sea, Shells, Trees, Veils, Water, Wrists.
Critics of. *See* Berenson, Bode, Diehl, Horne, Kern, Lipmann, Meyer, Morelli, Pater, Rose, Rossetti, Ruskin, Steinmann, Uhlmann, Venturi, Waldmüller, Warburg.
Works
See under the name of the individual work.
For complete list see Appendix.
Attributions
Flora, 98, 99.
Madonna with Seven Angels, Berlin, 52, 54.
Portrait of a Young Man. Friedsam Collection, 47.
Portrait of a Young Man, Kahn Collection, 47.
School of
Exaggeration of drooping of figures by, 194.
Portraits, 110.
Annunciation, Veil in, 128.
Crucifixion, 209.
Madonna tondo, Hair in, 125.
Madonna and Child with Eight Angels, Berlin, 157.
Madonna and Child with many Angels, Borghese Gal., 157.
Botticelli, Sandro [Alessandro Filipepi]—*contd.*
School of—*contd.*
Madonna and Child with many Angels, Circular form of, 195.
Madonna and Child with St. John and an Angel, N.G., 156.
Portrait of a Man with a Ring, 46, 110.
Standing Madonna and Child, 159.
Standing Madonna with Seven Angels, Berlin, 157–9.
Botticini, Francesco, 12, 115.
Assumption of the Virgin, N.G., attributed to B., 154–155.
Madonna and Child with Angels, Pitti, 125.
Palmieri Altar-piece, 192.
Brancacci Chapel, Paintings in, 4, 9.
Portrait of B., 94.
Brunelleschi, 6.
Buddha, Hair in images of, 121.
Buddhism, system of Mudras, 108.
Buddhist paintings in Japan, 217.
Burckhardt, Jacob, Praise of Monaco, 142.
'Burning of the Vanities', 200.
Buti, Lucretia, Marriage to Filippo Lippi, 8.
Byzantine Art, 130, 154.

C

Calunnia, 51-52, 143.
Alleged portrait of Simonetta in, 181.
compared with the *Primavera*, 178.
Drawing of figure, 41.
Gold in, 217.
Decorative scenes in, 68–69.
Hands in, 114.
Sea in, 62.
Campagna, alleged view in landscape by B., 60, 61.
Carrière, Eugène, 214.
Cartwright, Julia, on Landscape of B.'s *Adoration of the Magi*, Petrograd, 60.
Castagno, Andrea del, Art of, 25, 26, 143, 155.
Influence on B., 26 *sqq.*, 33, 35, 45, 47, 110, 209.
Crucifixion, N.G., 28, 29. 30.
Last Supper, Fresco, 27.
Chastisement of Korah, Fresco, 139–140, 142.
Self-portrait in, 171.
Cherubs, Treatment in Art, 159.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Chinese Art, 68, 71, 87, 151.
Cimabué, Art of, 3.
Cinquecento Art. *See* Art, Cinquecento.
Clothes. *See* Draperies. Transparent clothes.
Cologne Masters, Treatment of Flowers, 91.
Conventionality in B., 62.
Coronation of the Virgin, Uff., 28 *sqq.*, 32.
  Angels in, 192–193.
  Gold in, 215–216.
  Hair in, 125.
  Hands in, 110, 114.
  Landscape in, 62–63.
  Predella, 62.
  Sea in, 67.
  Visionary element in, 221.
Correggio, Treatment of the Nude, 100.
Cosimo, Piero di
  Portrait of Simonetta, 124, 180, 181–182.
  Treatment of hands, 105.
  Death of Procris, N.G., 70.
  Holy Family with Angels, Tondo, 161.
  Mars and Venus, Berlin, 70.
Cranach, Lucas, Art of, 42, 100.
Crayon, Use in Art, 151.
Credi, Lorenzo di, burns his drawings from the nude, 200, 202.
Crescent in Art, 160 *sqq.*
Crivelli, Carlo, Treatment of flowers, 91.

D

Dante
  as Poet, 147–148.
  Influence on B., 145, 175, 199.
  Landino's edition of *Divina Comedia*, 144, 146, 176.
  Quotations, 69–70, 114, 147, 150, 160, 163, 190, 210.
Dante Drawings, 69, 143 *sqq.*
  Colouring of, 144.
  Compared with Shita-ye-gyo, 151–152.
  Date of, 145–146.
  Flowers in, 89.
  Hair in, 125.
  Feet in, 114, 115.
  Tondo composition in, 162–163.
Death of St. Ignatius, Uff., 212, 217.
Decorative Art in B., 80 *sqq.*
Decorative-Spiritual Landscape, 59, 64.
Derelitta, La, 210–211, 214.
Diamante, Fra, 11.
Diehl, Charles, on B., 40, 60.
Donatello, Rodin on, 6.
  Gattamelata statue, 27.
  Madonna and Child, 162.
Doni, on B.'s perspective, 54.
Draperies in Art, 126 *sqq.*
  Treatment by B., 126 *sqq.*
Drawing materials, 151.
Drooping of head and figures in B.'s art, 194–195.
Duccio, Treatment of Draperies, 131.
Dürer, Albrecht
  Treatment of Flowers, 89.
  Treatment of Hair, 118, 119, 122.
  Treatment of Hands, 107.
  Christ disputing with the Doctors, 107–108.
  Self-portrait, Louvre, 89.
Dynamic Composition of B., 139, 141.

E

Ears, Treatment in Art, 105–106.
'Eccellenti Pittori' of Ferdinand I, 196.
Ecstasy, 204–205.
Eligius, St., Legend of, 218–219.
Embroideries, School of B., 158.
Esmeralda Bandinelli, Purchased by Rossetti, 196.
Ethereal, The, Association with the Sensual, 102.
'Ethical' Art, 100, 150.
Eyck, van, Treatment of Hand, 108.

F

Fabriano, Gentile da, Treatment of Flowers, 91.
Face, Drawing of, 42.
Farnese, Alessandro (Pope Paul III), Alleged portrait by B., 45.
Feet, B.'s treatment of, 112–113.
Ferdinand I, Grand Duke of Tuscany, List of 'eccellenti pittori', 196.
Ferrari, Gaudenzio, Treatment of Hair, 120.
Figure, Female, in Art, 96.
Figure, Human, Treatment by B., 93 *sqq.*
Filipepi, Giovanni, 207.
Filipepi, Mariano, Father of B., 174.
Filipepi, Simone, 207, 209, 222.
  on Savonarola, 201–202.

Filippino. *See* Lippi.
Filippo. *See* Lippi.
Flame, in B.'s Art, 149.
'Flat' treatment of draperies, 130.
Flemish painting, 57–59.
  Imitated in B.'s landscape, 57, 59.
Florentine Art, 3, 6, 203.
  Treatment of Flowers, 76 *sqq.*
  See also Art, Quattrocento.
Flower-arrangement in Japan, 88.
Flowers
  Decorative, 81 *sqq.*
  Sensuous, 84, 87.
  Spiritual, 91.
  Treatment by
    Angelico, 3.
    B., 75 *sqq.*
    Cologne Masters, 91.
    Japanese Art, 87.
    Lippi (Filippo), 78 *sqq.*, 84, 89.
    Monastic School, 76 *sqq.*
    Paolo, 92
    Quattrocento Art, 76 *sqq.*
    Vinci, 80
    Zevio, 91.
Flying pose in B., 115.
Forli, Melozzo da, 45.
Fortezza, Uff., 13 *sqq.*, 16, 21, 136.
  Hands in, 110.
Francesca, Piero della, Art of, 3, 66, 193.
Fresco painting, 138–140.

G

Gamba, on B., 79.
Garbo, Raffaelino del, Tondi in B.'s manner, 161.
  Madonna and Child with St. John and Two Angels, Glasgow, 157.
Ghiberti, 18.
Ghirlandajo, Domenico, Art of, 85, 92, 122, 140.
  Alleged portrait of Simonetta, 180.
  Birth of the Virgin, 137.
  Madonna della Misericordia, 182.
  Madonna enthroned with Angels and Saints, Uff., 85.
  St. Jerome, 213.
Giorgione, Treatment of the Nude, 100.
Giotto
  Art of, 3, 5, 7, 193.
  Madonnas of, 193.
  Tradition of Draughtsmanship, 5.
Goes, Hugo van der
  Influence on Florentine Art, 6, 57.
  Treatment of Flowers, 79.
  Poltinari altar-piece, 57, 99.
Gold, Use by B., 215–217.
Goldsmiths in Florence, Relation to artists, 18.
Gothic Art, 6.
Gothic landscape in B., 59.
Goya, Treatment of the Nude, 101.
Gozzoli, Benozzo, Art of, 8, 78, 85.
  Frescoes at Pisa, 141.
  Self-portrait, 173.
Graces, the Three, 129.
'Grand Style', 27, 145.
Grass, Treatment by B., 83.
Greco, El
  Art of, 42, 49, 108, 117, 221.
  Burial of the Count Orgaz, 221.
Greek Art, 127, 150.
Grey, use of, 213, 214, 215.
Grien, Hans Baldung, Treatment of the Nude, 100.

H

Hair
  in Art, 118 *sqq.*
  Treatment by B., 118 *sqq.*
Hands
  in Oriental religions, 108.
  Symbolic use of, 108–109.
  Treatment in Art, 105 *sqq.*
  Treatment by B., 109 *sqq.*, 116.
  Treatment by Michelangelo, 107, 116.
Harunobu, 103, 104.
Heads, Two, on one body in B.'s Dante Drawings, 147.
Heian period, Art of, 151, 152.
Heine, Heinrich, 99.
Hokusei, Sensuality of, 103.
Holbein, Treatment of Flowers, 89.
Horikawa, Emperor, 152.
Horne, Herbert P., on B.'s
  Adoration of the Magi, 34.
  Dante Drawings, 144, 145–146, 148.
  Death of St. Ignatius, 212.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Horne, Herbert P., on B.'s—*contd.*
Frescoes at Pisa, 140–141.
Judith, 218.
Landscapes, 50–51.
Madonna enthroned with Two St. Johns, 83.
Madonnas, 191, 194.
Mystic Nativity, 221.
Pallas and the Centaur, 31, 33.
Primavera, 177.
Relationship with women, 95.
Self-portrait, 172.
Treatment of Hands, 112.
Horne, Herbert P.
on Castagno, 25.
on golden hair, 123.
on Legends of the Saints, 218–220.
on Lippi (Filippo), 4–5.
on Müller-Walde document, 40.
on Poliziano's poetry, 187–188.
on Pollajuolo, 12.
on reading of M. Filipepi's *Denunzia*, 174.
on Savonarola, 201.
on Sienese school, 132.
on 'La Bella Simonetta', 179.

I

'Idlers' Academy', 201.
Ignatius, St., 212.
Impressionism, 167.
'Improvization' by B., 209, 211.
Indian Art, Symbolic use of hand in, 108–109.
Irises, 79.
Ishikawa Toyonobu, 102.
Italian Art, Symbolic use of hand in, 109.
See also Florentine Art.

J

Japanese Art, 64–65, 68, 87, 121, 151, 152.
See also Hokusei, Kamakura Art, Kiyonaga, Kōrin school, Utamaro.
Jerome, St., Legend of Last Communion, 219–220.
Judith, as Subject for B., 218.
Judith
Kaufmann Coll., 146, 217–218.
Uff., 13, 16, 24, 66, 80, 133, 137.
Julius II, Pope, portrait of, 45.

K

Kamakura Art, Linear element in, 151.
'Karasuri' printing, 104.
Kenzan, Treatment of Flowers, 81.
Kern, J., on B.'s perspective, 52.
Kiyonaga, 103.
Kōrin, 67, 149.
Kōrin school, 64, 81, 87, 130.
Koyasan, Painting of vision in, 220.
Kōyetsu, 64.
Kwannon, 108.

L

Laertus, Pomponius, Alleged portrait by B., 45.
Lami, Order for *Adoration of the Magi*, 34.
Landino, Edition of Dante's *Divina Comedia*, 144, 146, 176.
Landscape
in Flemish Art, 58–59.
in Florentine Art, 57–58.
Last Communion of St. Jerome, 219–220.
Lee of Fareham, *Trinity with St. John and Mary Magdalene*, 208.
Lemmi. *See* Villa Lemmi.
Liang K'ai, 68.
Lilith, 120.
Linear Art, 129 *sqq.*, 134 *sqq.*, 142, 146, 150 *sqq.*
Linear Realism, 5–6, 18, 118–119.
Lippi, Fra Filippino
Art of, 4, 159.
Portrait of B., 94, 172.
Lippi, Fra Filippo
Art of, 4–10, 65.
at Spoleto, 4, 12.
Influence on B., 3–4, 9–12, 136.
Treatment of Draperies, 129–131.
Treatment of Flowers, 78 *sqq.*, 84, 89.
Treatment of Hand, 109.
Use of grey, 215.
Adoration of the Child, Berlin, 78.
Adoration of the Magi, Cook Coll., 78.
Coronation of the Virgin fresco, Spoleto, 154.
Madonna and Child, Palazzo Riccardi, Florence, 8.
Salome, 129, 137.
Lippmann, on question of date of B.'s Dante Drawings, 146.

Lorenzano, Lorenzo, 48–49.
Lorenzetti, Ambrogio, 77, 92, 132.
Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, Relation to B.'s *Primavera*, 177.
Lucrezia panel, 56, 125, 143.

M

Madonna, Cult of, 8, 189, 193.
Madonna, Bronze plaque, 21.
Madonna, Count Lazzaroni, 21.
Madonna, Lady Wantage, 21.
Madonna and Child, Louvre, 66, 113, 129.
Madonna and Child Enthroned, fresco, Cappella Vannella, 136.
Madonna and Child Enthroned with St. Barnabas and other Saints, 32, 113, 181, 191.
Madonna and Child Enthroned with St. Barnabas and Other Saints, Predella, 62, 67, 149.
Madonna and Child with an Angel, Gardner Coll., Boston, 67.
Madonna with Six Angels and Young St. John, Borghese Gall., 57.
Madonna and Child with Young St. John, Rockefeller Coll., 216.
Madonna and Child with Six Saints, Accademia, Florence, 16, 21, 113, 122, 129.
Madonna and Child with Three Angels, tondo in Bibl. Ambros., 67, 146, 161.
Madonna and Child with Two St. Johns, Berlin, 30, 82, 178.
Madonna Enthroned with many Saints, Uff., 24.
Madonna della Melagrana, Uff., 124–125, 156 *sqq.*, 214.
Madonna of the Magnificat, Uff., 113, 149, 160 *sqq.*
Madonnas of B., 42, 189 *sqq.*
Madonnas. *See also* Angelico, Francesca, Giotto, Lippi (Filippo), Orcagna, Raphael, Veneto, Vinci.
Maiano, Benedetto da, 21.
Makura-no-Sōshi, 152.
Manet, Edouard, 100, 214.
Mantegna, Andrea, Art of, 99, 122, 216.
Mars and Venus, N.G., 70–71.
Alleged portrait of Simonetta in, 181, 185.
Feet in, 113.
Mars and Venus, N.G.—*contd.*
Poliziano's poetry the source of, 187–188.
Shell in, 86.
Martini, Simone, Art of, 91, 142, 193.
Mary Magdalene in predellas, 9, 208.
Mary Magdalene embracing the Cross, Fogg Coll., 208–209.
Masaccio,
Art of, 4, 7, 10.
Influence on B., 9–10, 26.
Masolino. *See* Ponicale.
Medici Family
Antipathy towards Savonarola, 200.
Portraits by B., 33 *sqq.*, 44.
Medici Medal, 46.
Medici Tournament, 184, 185.
Medici, Giovanni de'
Possible portrait by B., 46, 47.
Medici, Giuliano de'
Murder of, 23, 180.
Portraits of, 181, 184, 186.
Medici, Lorenzo de', 31, 33.
on Filippo Lippi, 8.
Elegies on Simonetta, 183.
Medici, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de', Alleged patronage of B., 145–146, 201.
Mercanzia, Hall of, Paintings in, 13.
Meyer, J., on B.'s perspective, 52.
Michelangelo
Art of, 148.
Competes with Leonardo da Vinci, 222.
Drawings, 151.
Letter to Pierfrancesco de' Medici, 201, 206.
Creation of Adam, 116.
David, statue, 107, 222.
Sacred Family, Uff., 162.
Sistine Chapel, 139.
Treatment of Hands, 107, 116.
Michelozzo, Designer of Medici Medal, 46.
Mikkyo (Tantric), 108.
Milanesi, on alleged portrait of Simonetta, 182.
Miniaturists, Alleged colouring of B.'s Dante Drawings by, 144.
Mirandola, Pico della, Possible portrait by B., 46, 47.
Monaco, Don Lorenzo, Art of, 77, 131, 132, 142.
Monastic School, Treatment of Flowers, 76 *sqq.*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Horne, Herbert P., on B.'s—*contd.*
Frescoes at Pisa, 140–141.
Judith, 218.
Landscapes, 50–51.
Madonna enthroned with Two St. Johns, 83.
Madonnas, 191, 194.
Mystic Nativity, 221.
Pallas and the Centaur, 31, 33.
Primavera, 177.
Relationship with women, 95.
Self-portrait, 172.
Treatment of Hands, 112.
Horne, Herbert P.
on Castagno, 25.
on golden hair, 123.
on Legends of the Saints, 218–220.
on Lippi (Filippo), 4–5.
on Müller-Walde document, 40.
on Poliziano's poetry, 187–188.
on Pollajuolo, 12.
on reading of M. Filipepi's *Denunzia*, 174.
on Savonarola, 201.
on Sienese school, 132.
on 'La Bella Simonetta', 179.

I

'Idlers' Academy', 201.
Ignatius, St., 212.
Impressionism, 167.
'Improvization' by B., 209, 211.
Indian Art, Symbolic use of hand in, 108–109.
Irises, 79.
Ishikawa Toyonobu, 102.
Italian Art, Symbolic use of hand in, 109.
See also Florentine Art.

J

Japanese Art, 64–65, 68, 87, 121, 151, 152.
See also Hokusei, Kamakura Art, Kiyonaga, Kōrin school, Utamaro.
Jerome, St., Legend of Last Communion, 219–220.
Judith, as Subject for B., 218.
Judith
Kaufmann Coll., 146, 217–218.
Uff., 13, 16, 24, 66, 80, 133, 137.
Julius II, Pope, portrait of, 45.

K

Kamakura Art, Linear element in, 151.
'Karasuri' printing, 104.
Kenzan, Treatment of Flowers, 81.
Kern, J., on B.'s perspective, 52.
Kiyonaga, 103.
Kōrin, 67, 149.
Kōrin school, 64, 81, 87, 130.
Koyasan, Painting of vision in, 220.
Kōyetsu, 64.
Kwannon, 108.

L

Laertus, Pomponius, Alleged portrait by B., 45.
Lami, Order for *Adoration of the Magi*, 34.
Landino, Edition of Dante's *Divina Comedia*, 144, 146, 176.
Landscape
in Flemish Art, 58–59.
in Florentine Art, 57–58.
Last Communion of St. Jerome, 219–220.
Lee of Fareham, *Trinity with St. John and Mary Magdalene*, 208.
Lemmi. *See* Villa Lemmi.
Liang K'ai, 68.
Lilith, 120.
Linear Art, 129 *sqq.*, 134 *sqq.*, 142, 146, 150 *sqq.*
Linear Realism, 5–6, 18, 118–119.
Lippi, Fra Filippino
Art of, 4, 159.
Portrait of B., 94, 172.
Lippi, Fra Filippo
Art of, 4–10, 65.
at Spoleto, 4, 12.
Influence on B., 3–4, 9–12, 136.
Treatment of Draperies, 129–131.
Treatment of Flowers, 78 *sqq.*, 84, 89.
Treatment of Hand, 109.
Use of grey, 215.
Adoration of the Child, Berlin, 78.
Adoration of the Magi, Cook Coll., 78.
Coronation of the Virgin fresco, Spoleto, 154.
Madonna and Child, Palazzo Riccardi, Florence, 8.
Salome, 129, 137.
Lippmann, on question of date of B.'s Dante Drawings, 146.

Lorenzano, Lorenzo, 48–49.
Lorenzetti, Ambrogio, 77, 92, 132.
Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, Relation to B.'s *Primavera*, 177.
Lucrezia panel, 56, 125, 143.

M

Madonna, Cult of, 8, 189, 193.
Madonna, Bronze plaque, 21.
Madonna, Count Lazzaroni, 21.
Madonna, Lady Wantage, 21.
Madonna and Child, Louvre, 66, 113, 129.
Madonna and Child Enthroned, fresco, Cappella Vannella, 136.
Madonna and Child Enthroned with St. Barnabas and other Saints, 32, 113, 181, 191.
Madonna and Child Enthroned with St. Barnabas and Other Saints, Predella, 62, 67, 149.
Madonna and Child with an Angel, Gardner Coll., Boston, 67.
Madonna with Six Angels and Young St. John, Borghese Gall., 57.
Madonna and Child with Young St. John, Rockefeller Coll., 216.
Madonna and Child with Six Saints, Accademia, Florence, 16, 21, 113, 122, 129.
Madonna and Child with Three Angels, tondo in Bibl. Ambros., 67, 146, 161.
Madonna and Child with Two St. Johns, Berlin, 30, 82, 178.
Madonna Enthroned with many Saints, Uff., 24.
Madonna della Melagrana, Uff., 124–125, 156 *sqq.*, 214.
Madonna of the Magnificat, Uff., 113, 149, 160 *sqq.*
Madonnas of B., 42, 189 *sqq.*
Madonnas. *See also* Angelico, Francesca, Giotto, Lippi (Filippo), Orcagna, Raphael, Veneto, Vinci.
Maiano, Benedetto da, 21.
Makura-no-Sōshi, 152.
Manet, Edouard, 100, 214.
Mantegna, Andrea, Art of, 99, 122, 216.
Mars and Venus, N.G., 70–71.
Alleged portrait of Simonetta in, 181, 185.
Feet in, 113.
Mars and Venus, N.G.—*contd.*
Poliziano's poetry the source of, 187–188.
Shell in, 86.
Martini, Simone, Art of, 91, 142, 193.
Mary Magdalene in predellas, 9, 208.
Mary Magdalene embracing the Cross, Fogg Coll., 208–209.
Masaccio,
Art of, 4, 7, 10.
Influence on B., 9–10, 26.
Masolino. *See* Ponicale.
Medici Family
Antipathy towards Savonarola, 200.
Portraits by B., 33 *sqq.*, 44.
Medici Medal, 46.
Medici Tournament, 184, 185.
Medici, Giovanni de'
Possible portrait by B., 46, 47.
Medici, Giuliano de'
Murder of, 23, 180.
Portraits of, 181, 184, 186.
Medici, Lorenzo de', 31, 33.
on Filippo Lippi, 8.
Elegies on Simonetta, 183.
Medici, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de', Alleged patronage of B., 145–146, 201.
Mercanzia, Hall of, Paintings in, 13.
Meyer, J., on B.'s perspective, 52.
Michelangelo
Art of, 148.
Competes with Leonardo da Vinci, 222.
Drawings, 151.
Letter to Pierfrancesco de' Medici, 201, 206.
Creation of Adam, 116.
David, statue, 107, 222.
Sacred Family, Uff., 162.
Sistine Chapel, 139.
Treatment of Hands, 107, 116.
Michelozzo, Designer of Medici Medal, 46.
Mikkyo (Tantric), 108.
Milanesi, on alleged portrait of Simonetta, 182.
Miniaturists, Alleged colouring of B.'s Dante Drawings by, 144.
Mirandola, Pico della, Possible portrait by B., 46, 47.
Monaco, Don Lorenzo, Art of, 77, 131, 132, 142.
Monastic School, Treatment of Flowers, 76 *sqq.*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Monochrome painting, 98–99.
Morelli
on B.'s *Fortezza*, 14.
on B.'s *Young Man with a Medici Medal*, 46.
on Hands in Art, 17, 106, 112.
Method of criticism, 168.
Mosaics, Byzantine, 154.
Mudras, 108.
Müller-Walde, Document discovered by, 39.
Mushi-erabi of Utamaro, 85 *sqq*.
Mystic Crucifixion, 221.
Mystic Nativity, 80, 209, 223.
Draperies in, 133.
Hair in, 125.
Hands in, 114.
Inscription on, 221.
Mysticism of B., 146, 205.
Mysticism in Colour, 214 *sqq*.
Mysticism, Oriental, Importance of hands in solemnities, 108.

N

Naples, Alleged view in landscape by B., 60.
Naturalistic Art, 7–8, 77.
See also Flowers.
Nature, Feeling for, 65.
Nature-study in Art, 10–11.
Nirvana of Sakya, 91.
Nude in Art, 93, 97, 100–101.
Nymphs in Art, 124.

O

Oak-tree in Petrograd *Adoration of the Magi*, 61.
Oil, used by B., 209.
Orcagna, Madonnas of, 193.
Oriental Art, 5, 19–20, 64, 91–92, 130, 132, 138–139, 151.
Influence on B., 92.
Orsini, Clarice, portrait of, 182, 183.
'Over-meaning', 170.
Oyei, Sensuality of, 103.

P

Pacioli, Luca, on B. as master of perspective, 53, 54.
Pallas and the Centaur, Uff., 30 *sqq*.
Hands in, 111.
Landscape in, 60, 62–63.
Palmieri, Matteo, Heresy of, 191–192.
Panicale, Masolino da, Art of, 4, 130.
Paolo, Giovanni di, Treatment of Flowers, 92.
Pater
on B., 51, 96, 135, 169, 170, 196, 213, 214.
on B.'s Madonnas, 189, 191–192, 194.
on Leonardo da Vinci, 169, 170.
'Pathetic' Art, 100, 101, 150–151.
Paul III, Pope, Alleged portrait by B., 45.
Pazzi Conspiracy, 23 *sqq*.
Possibly subject of *Pallas and the Centaur*, 33.
Peacock, in B.'s *Adoration of the Magi*, Uff., 71, 80.
Perspective
in Quattrocento Art, 3, 52.
B.'s knowledge of, 175.
Perugino, Pietro, Art of, 140, 161.
Pesellino, Francesco, 4, 217.
Pietà, Alte Pinakothek, Munich, 211.
Pisanello, Art of, 91, 92.
Plants. *See* Flowers, Grass, Trees.
Poliziano, Influence of his poetry on B., 97, 123–124, 177, 183, 185, 186 *sqq*.
Pollajuolo, Antonio
Art of, 58, 99, 122, 136.
Influence on B., 4, 12 *sqq*, 46.
Portrait of Galeazzo Sforza, 47.
St. Sebastian, 21–22, 99.
Pollajuolo, Piero, Art of, 14, 58.
Poltinari altar-piece, Influence on Florentine Art, 57.
Ponicale, Masolino da, Art of, 4, 130.
Portrait of a Young Man, Mackay Coll., 49, 117.
Portrait of a Young Man, N.G., 48.
Portrait of a Young Man with the Medici Medal, 32, 46 *sqq*., 106, 149.
Portrait of Pope Sixtus II, Sistine Chapel, 28.
Portraiture, 44, 48.
Portraits, by School of B., 110.
Prato, Residence of B., 12.
'Presentation' in Art, 20, 29, 135–136, 214.
Primavera, 16, 22–23, 177.
Alleged portrait of Simonetta in, 181.
Classical learning in, 176–177.

Primavera—contd.
Colouring of, 213.
Compared with *Pallas and the Centaur*, 31–32.
Draperies in, 127, 133.
Figures in, 41.
Flame in, 149.
Flowers in, 79–80.
Hair in, 122, 123, 124, 125.
Hands in, 111, 114.
Poliziano's poetry the source of, 186–187.
'Presenting' element in, 137.
Venus copied as Madonna, 158, 159.
Wrist in, 113.
Primitives, Art of, 48.
Psycho-analysis, 94–95.
Purification of the Lepers, fresco, 137, 178.
Puritanical sentiment, 93, 95.

Q

Quattrocento Art. *See* Art, Quattrocento.
Quercia, Jacopo della, 18.

R

Raphael
Frescoes, 153.
Madonna della Sedia, Pitti, 162.
Realism in Art, 3, 4, 5–6, 19 *sqq*., 39, 67–68, 80, 83–84, 134 *sqq*.
See also Linear Realism, Naturalistic Art, Tonal Realism.
Red Fudo of Koyasan, 217.
Religion, Psychology of, 203.
Religion and Art, 199 *sqq*.
Renaissance, Art of the, 3, 151.
Renoir, Auguste, Treatment of the Nude, 104.
'Representation' in Art, 20, 29, 135–136.
Riario, Girolamo, Alleged portrait by B., 45.
Richter, J. P.
on Pesellino, 4.
on Alleged portrait of Giuliano de' Medici, 186.
Ridolfo, on B.'s *Pallas and the Centaur*, 31, 33.
Rodin, on Donatello, 6.
Romanesque sculpture, Treatment of Draperies, 130.
Rose, George
on B.'s drawing, 43.
on B.'s treatment of Hands and Feet, 112.
on Tondo composition, 155.
Rosselli, Cosimo, Art of, 128, 129, 216.
Rossetti, D. G.
Appreciation of B., 196.
Quotation from 'Lady Lilith', 120.
Rovere Family
Alleged painting by B. for, 60.
Oak-trees of, 61.
Rovere, Giuliano della (Pope Julius II), Portraits of, 45.
Ruskin, John
on Monaco, 142.
on Principle of Art, 167–168.
on 'La Bella Simonetta', 179–180.
on Vinci's *Madonna of the Rocks*, 51.
Running figures, 137, 146.

S

Sadness in B.'s Art, 209 *sqq*.
St. Augustine,
Fresco in Ch. of Ognissanti, Florence, 26, 28, 140.
Hands in, 110.
Gold in, 216.
Oriental influence in, 92.
Pallavicini triptych, 28.
St. Augustine and the Infant Christ, panel, 62, 218.
St. Ignatius. See Death of St. Ignatius.
St. Jerome. See Last Communion of St. Jerome.
St. Sebastian, Berlin, 21 *sqq*., 59, 214.
St. Zenobius, N.G., 56, 223.
Saints, Legends of, B.'s attitude to, 218.
Sakyamuni, Romantic Legend of, 109.
Salvator Mundi, Morelli Coll., 17, 112.
Sanseverino, Lorenzo and Jacopo da, frescoes, 91.
Sarto, Andrea del
Treatment of Hands, 107.
Noli me tangere, Uff., 58.
Savonarola, 93, 96, 116, 180.
Compared with B., 145.
Death of, 201–202.
Influence on B., 199 *sqq*.
on the Madonna, 191, 205.

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

Savonarola—*contd.*
on Paintings in Churches, 200.
Visions of, 220.
Sea, B.'s treatment of, 62, 67.
Segni, Antonio, Patron of B., 143.
Sellajo, Jacopo del, Art of, 114, 128, 129.
Influence of B., 161.
Reclining Venus, Feet in, 112–113.
Trionfi, Mus. Bandini, 154.
Seneca, 129.
Sensuous attitude to Nature, 83 *sqq.*
Sensuousness in Art, 93 *sqq.*
Sentimentalism, 179, 195, 206.
Sforza, Galeazzo, Portrait by Pollajuolo, 47.
Shells, Treatment by B. and Utamaro, 85–86.
Shiohino-tsuto of Utamaro, 85 *sqq.*
Shita-ye-gyo compared with B.'s drawings, 151–152.
Sienese painting, 77, 132, 142.
Signorelli, Luca, as tondo painter, 195.
Silver-point, use in Art, 151.
Simone. *See* Filipepi.
Simonetta Vespucci ('La Bella Simonetta'), 124, 179, 185, 188.
Alleged portraits of, 180 *sqq.*
Sistine Chapel, Rome, Frescoes by B., 28, 36, 38, 45, 59, 61, 68, 71, 124, 137, 139–140, 178, 213, 216.
Sixtus IV, Pope
invites B. to Rome, 36.
Portrait by Forli, 45.
Soderini, Tommaso, Patron of B., 13, 94.
Spini, Doffo, on death of Savonarola, 202.
Spiritual Art, 167 *sqq.*
Spiritual-decorative landscape, 59.
Spoleto, Filippo Lippi at, 12.
Stained glass, Colours of, 215.
Steinmann, D.
on B.'s frescoes in Sistine Chapel, 139.
on B.'s portraits, 45–46.
on B.'s self-portrait, 171–172.
on Savonarola's influence on B., 191.
Subconscious activity, 170–171.
Sung painting, 151.
Suzuki Harunobu, 102.
Symbolic use of hands by B., 116.

T

Tactile Sense, 101, 134.
Tang painting, 151.
Tapestries, Gothic, Flowers in, 91.
Tempera painting, Harm of restoration, 214.
Tempio Malatesta, Rimini, 131.
Tempio period, Linear Art of, 151.
Thiis, Jens, on Leonardo da Vinci, 95.
Tintoretto, Treatment of Hair, 119.
Titian
Art of, 100, 118–119.
Repenting Magdalene, Pitti, 119.
Tonal Realism, 5–6, 119.
Tondo composition, 155 *sqq.*, 193–194, 195.
Touch. *See* Tactile Sense.
Tournament of the Medici, 184, 185.
Transfiguration, Pallavicini Coll., 116, 132, 216, 220.
Transparent clothes, 128.
Trees, Treatment by B., 61, 82.
Trinity with St. John and Mary Magdalene, 208.
Tura, Cosimo, Face painting by, 42.

U

Ucccello, Paolo, Art of, 3, 54, 77.
Uhlmann, on Verrocchio's influence on B., 12.
Ukiyoye school, 87, 103.
Utamaro
Art of, 85 *sqq.*, 152.
Compared with B., 20, 85 *sqq.*
Treatment of Figures, 102 *sqq.*
Treatment of Hair, 121.
Treatment of Veils, 128–129.

V

Vasari, 38.
on B., 38–39.
on B.'s invitation to Rome, 36.
on B.'s boyhood, 53, 94.
on B.'s paintings of the nude, 98.
on B.'s frescoes at Pisa, 141.
on B.'s Dante Drawings, 144, 148.
on B.'s *Adoration of the Magi*, Uff., 172.
on B.'s boyhood and education, 174–175.
on B.'s knowledge of Dante, 175.
on B.'s heresy, 191–192.
on B.'s mode of life, 207.
on two female portraits by B., 180–181.

Vasari—*contd.*
on B.'s last years, 221–222.
on Botticini's *Assumption*, 155.
on Castagno, 25.
on Filippo Lippi, 3.
on Rosselli, 216.
on Uccello, 3.
on portraits of Vespucci family, 182.
on religious fanaticism, 200.
Veils in Art, 128.
Veneto, Bartholomeo, Art of, 89, 120–121,
Veneziano, Domenico
Alleged assassination by Castagno, 25.
Art of, 3, 57, 66, 76.
St. John the Baptist, fresco, 27.
Venturi, A.
on alleged portrait of Simonetta, 182.
on B.'s *Madonna and Child*, Louvre, 66.
on reading of M. Filipepi's *Denunzia*, 174.
Venturi, Lionello, on Vasari as Art-critic, 38 *n.*
Venus, in B.'s Art, 96.
Venus. See Birth of Venus.
Venus Anadyomene of Apelles, Reconstruction of, 97.
Venus de' Medici, 96, 97.
Verino, Ugolino, Allusion to B., 222.
Verrocchio
Art of, 8.
Influence on B., 12 *sqq.*
Baptism, Uff., 17.
Colleoni monument, 27.
Veronese, Paul, 119.
Vespucci family, portraits of, 182.
See also Simonetta.
Villa Lemmi Frescoes, 138, 142, 213.
Vinci, Leonardo da
Art of, 7, 55, 99, 171.
Berenson on, 169–170.
Competes with Michelangelo, 222.
on B.'s landscapes, 50–51.
Portrait of Simonetta, 180.
Pupil of Verrocchio, 18.
Vinci, Leonardo da—*contd.*
Treatment of
Draperies, 129.
Flowers, 80.
Hair, 119–120.
Hands, 107.
Youth of, 94, 95.
Last Supper, 107.
Leda, 102, 120.
Mona Lisa, 102, 111, 169–170.
St. Anne, drawing, 120, 222.
La Vierge aux Rochers, 80, 120.
School of, Treatment of the Nude, 102.
Virginia panel, Bergamo, 116, 125, 143.
Visions, Power of, 220.

W

Waldmüller, on portraits of Simonetta, 180–181.
Warburg, Dr.
on B.'s *Primavera*, 175, 177, 187.
on B.'s treatment of Hair, 123.
Wasps in B.'s *Mars and Venus*, 71.
Water in Art, 149.
Waves in Art, 149.
Whistler, Use of grey, 214.
Winter, Fr., on Duccio, 131.
Wrists, Treatment by B., 113.

Y

Yamato-Ye Masters, 64, 87, 121.
Yamauba, 121.
Yenshu school, 88.
Yeshin, Visions of, 220.
Yüan painting, 151.

Z

Zevio, Stefano da, Treatment of Flowers, 91.

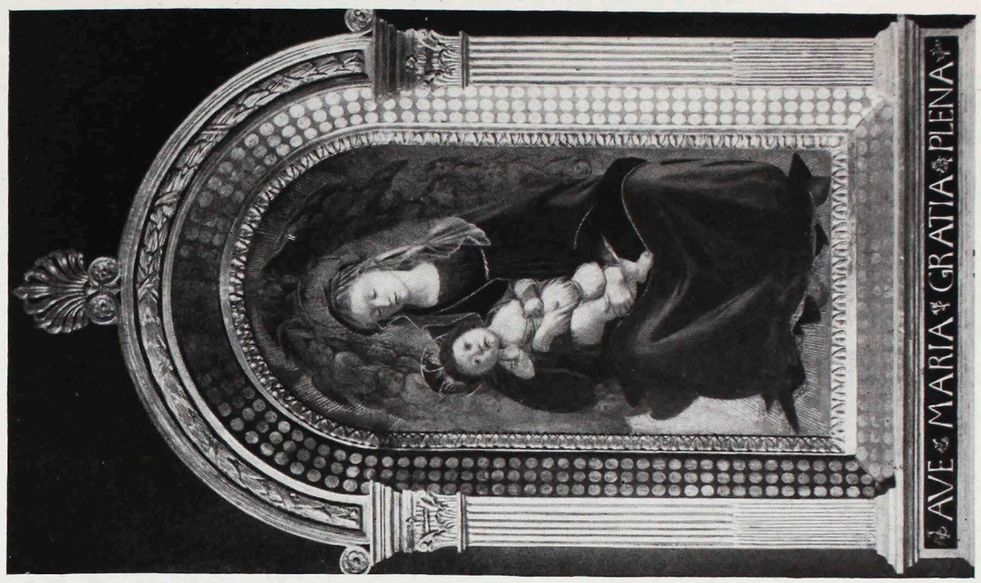
© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

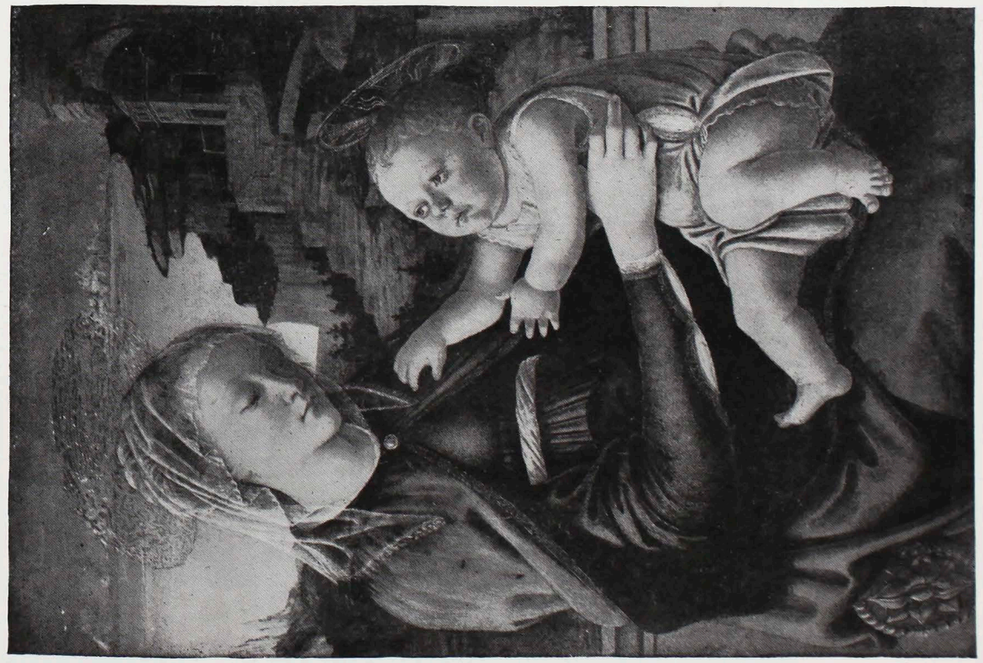
FIRST PERIOD

UP TO 1467

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



2. MADONNA AND CHILD *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*



1. MADONNA AND CHILD *Schlichting Collection, Louvre*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



National Gallery, London

3. ADORATION OF THE MAGI



3. ADORATION OF THE MAGI (detail)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

SECOND PERIOD

1468–1480

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



5. HOLOFERNES FOUND DEAD *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*



4. JUDITH *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

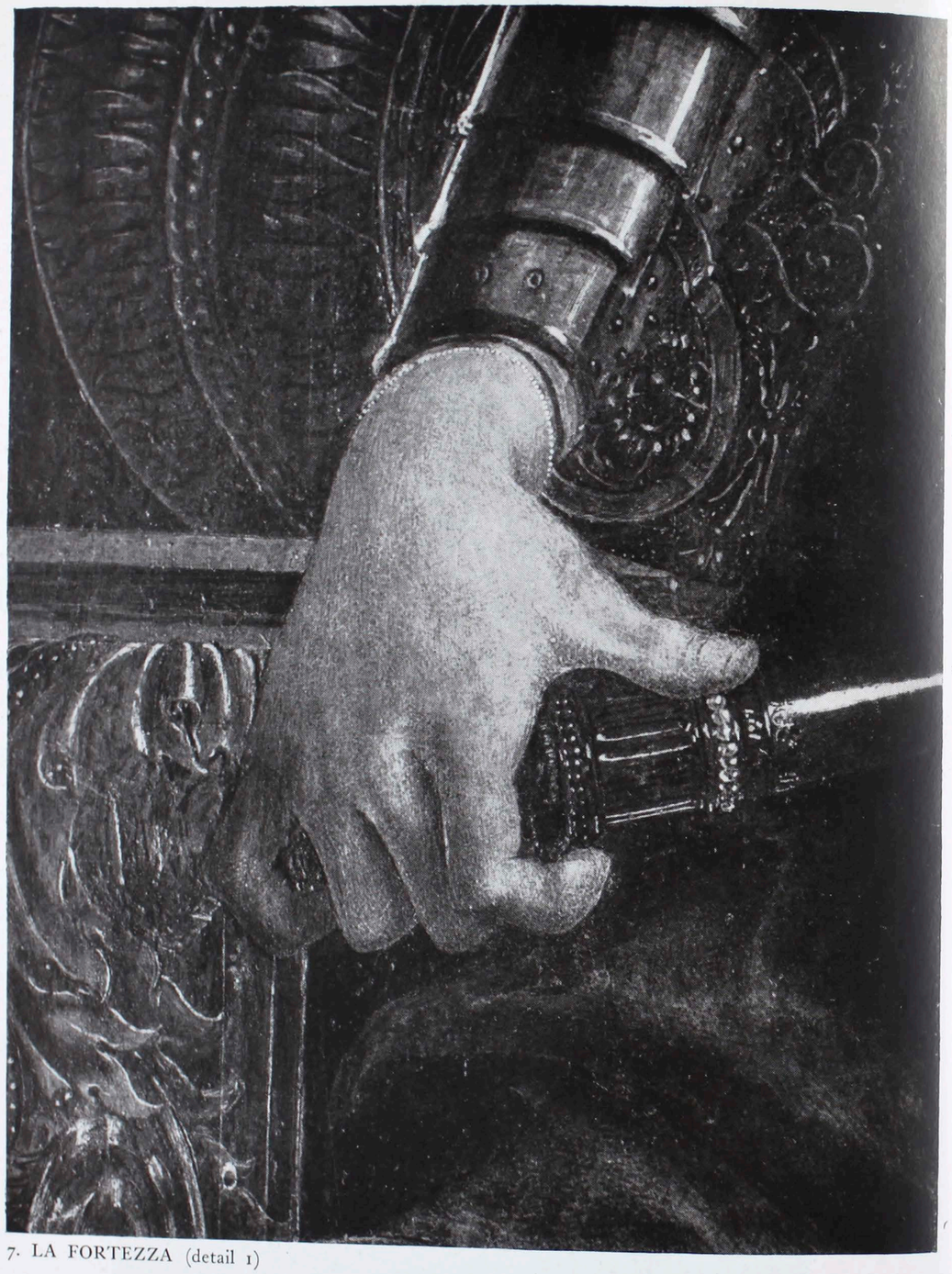


6. MADONNA AND CHILD — *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*

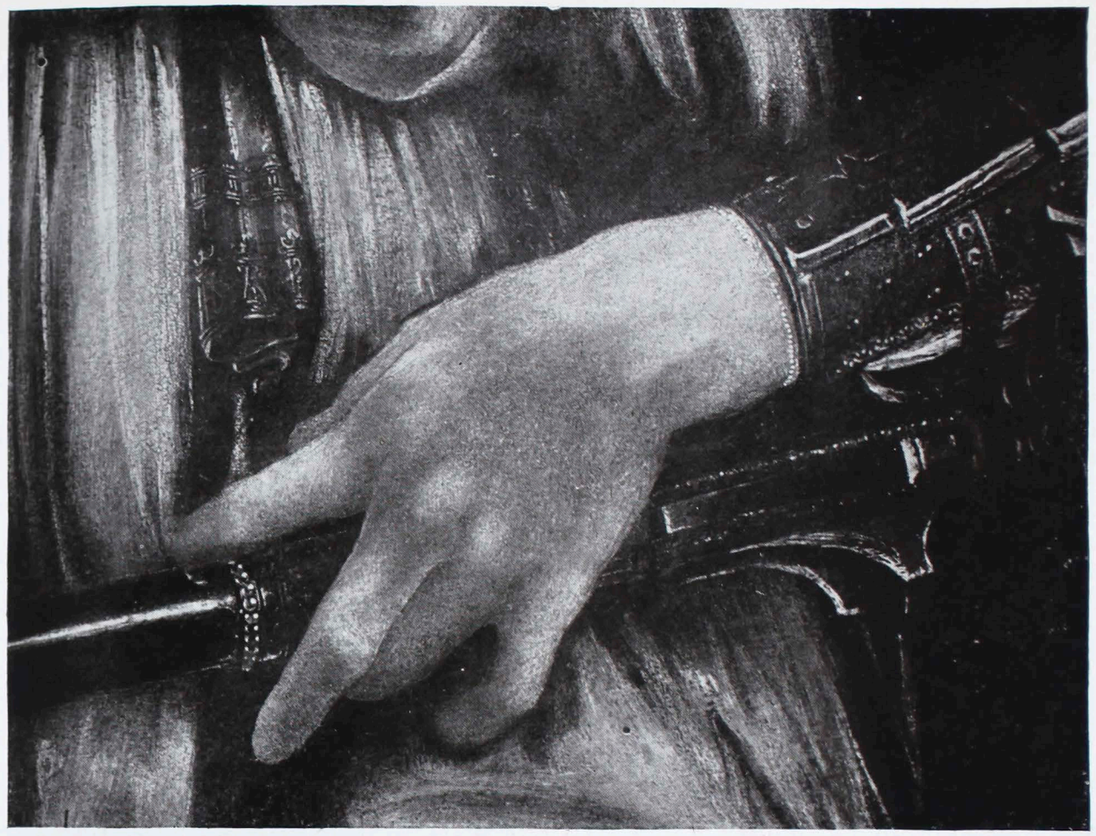


7. LA FORTEZZA — *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

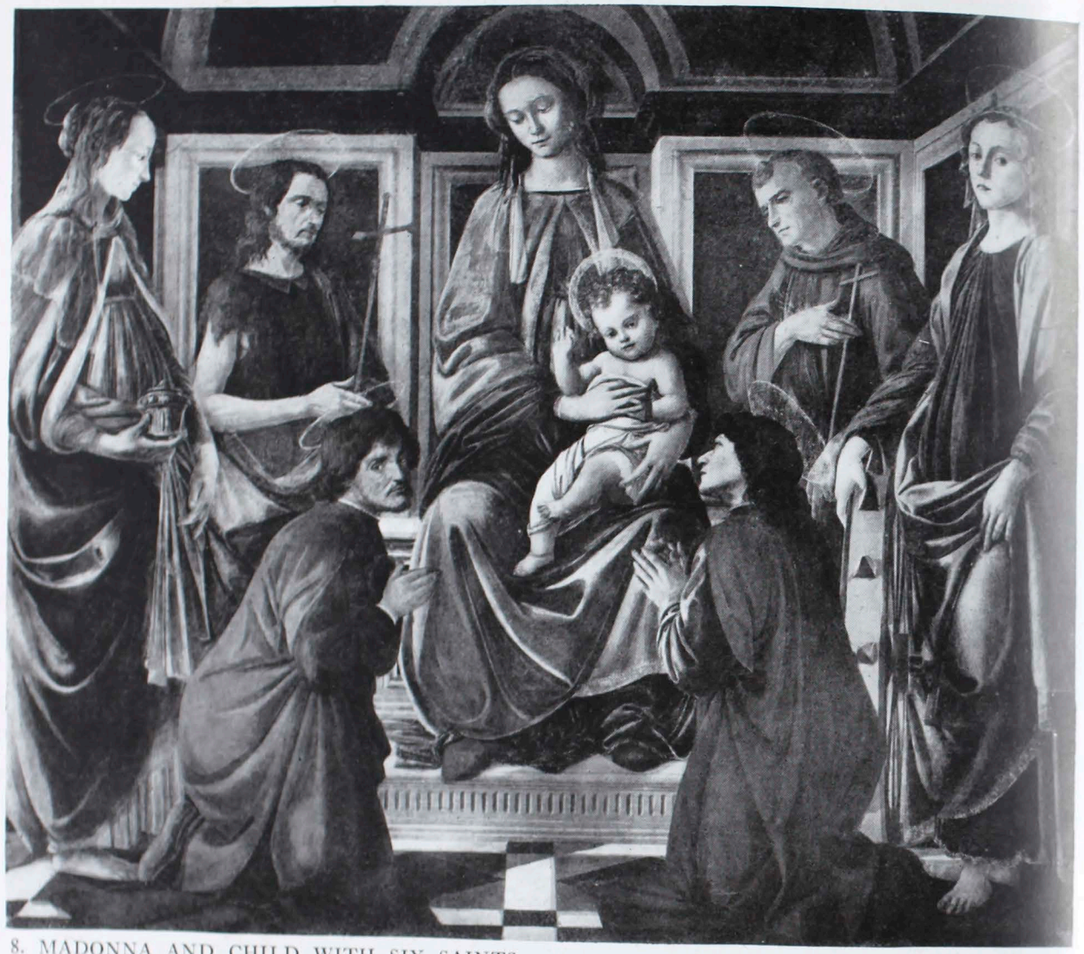


7. LA FORTEZZA (detail 1)



7. LA FORTEZZA (detail 2)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



8. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH SIX SAINTS *Accademia, Florence*



8. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH SIX SAINTS (detail)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



9. PORTRAIT OF A MAN

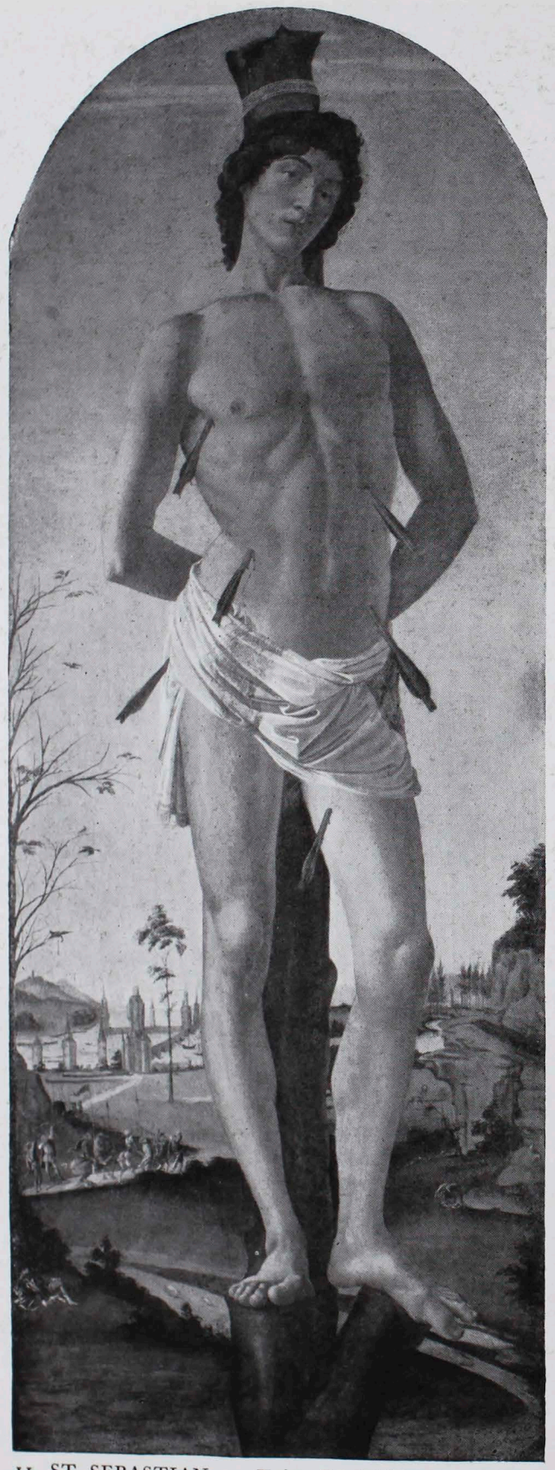
Louvre, Paris



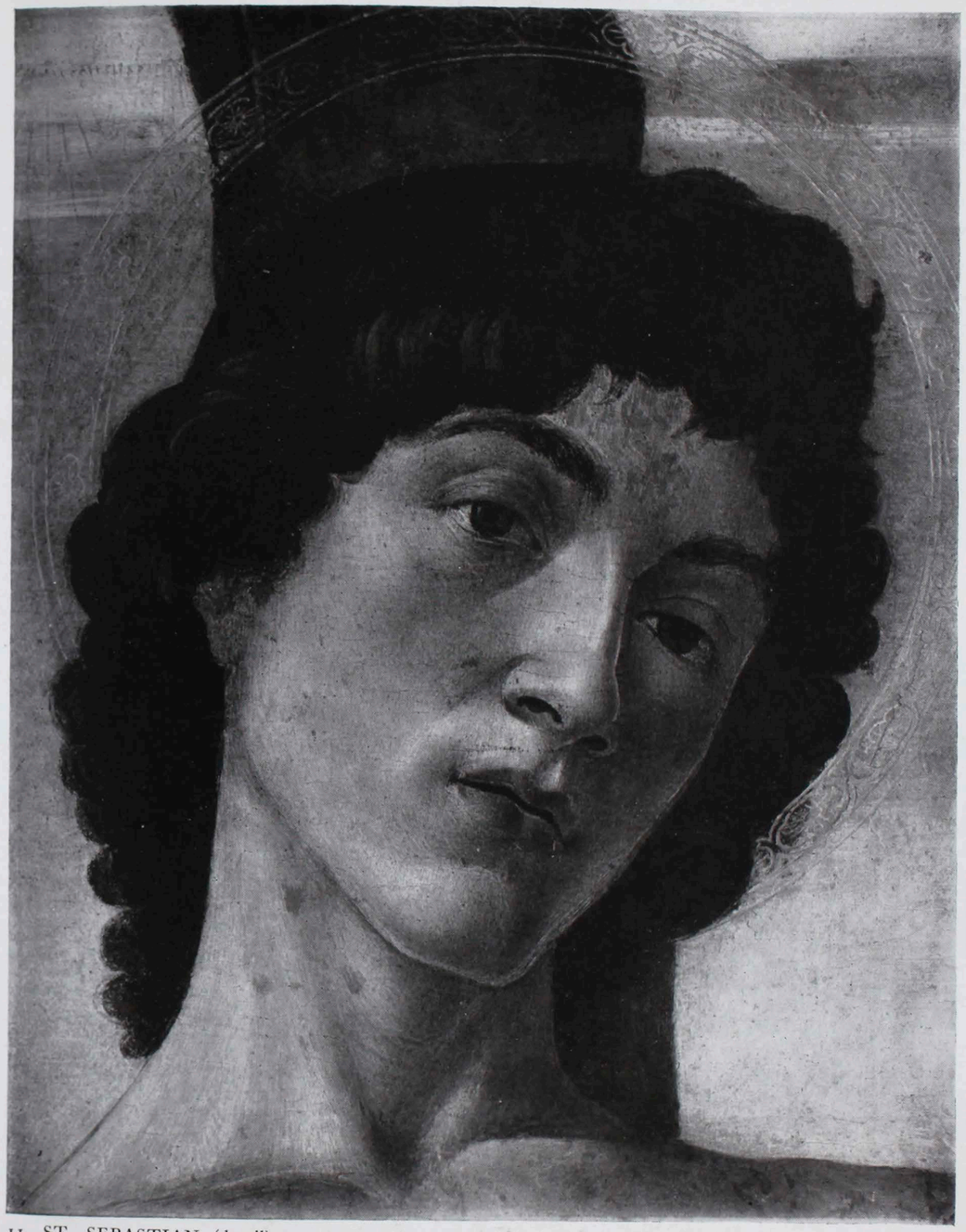
10. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH AN ANGEL

Gardner Collection, Boston

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

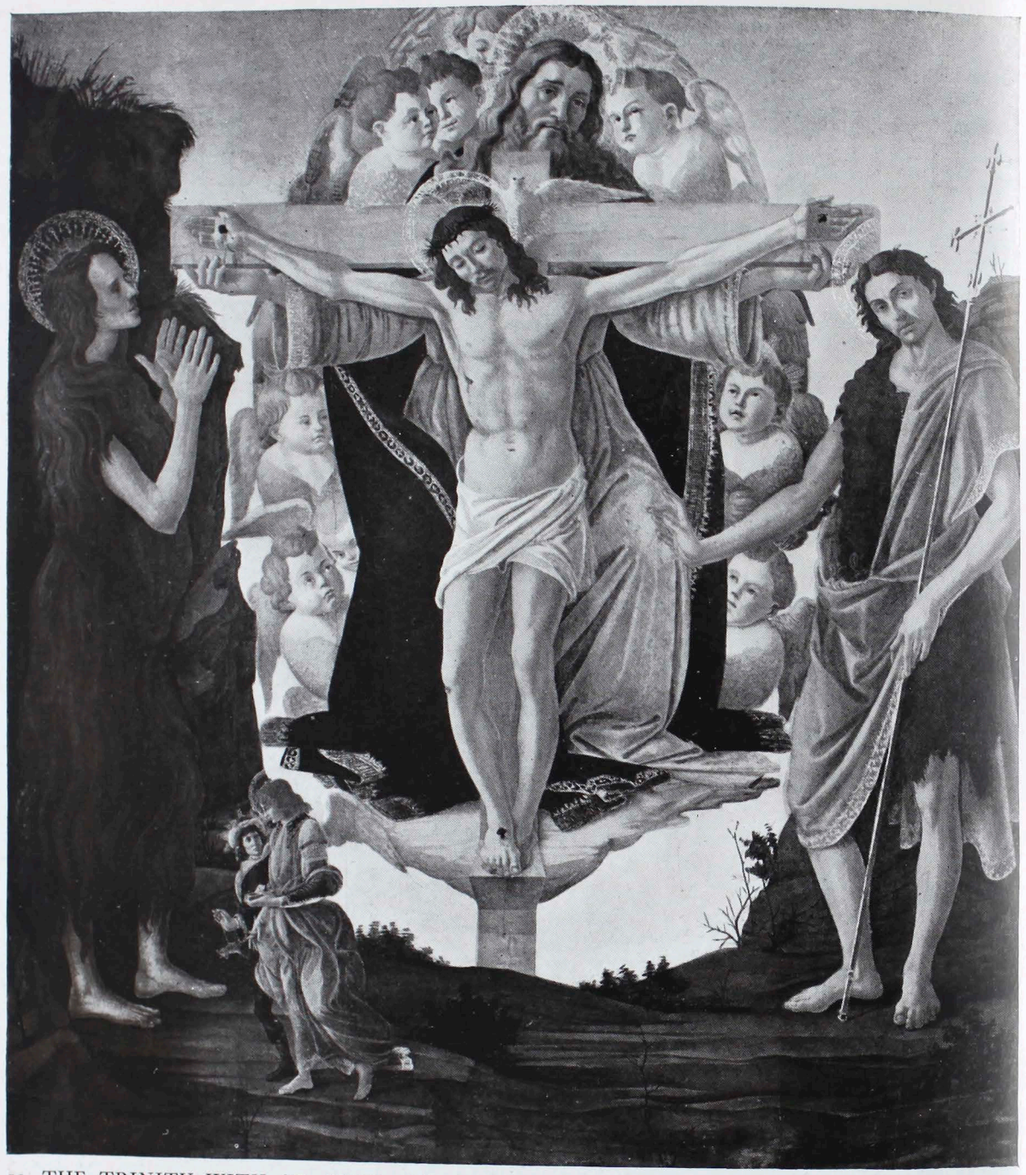


11. ST. SEBASTIAN *Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin*



11. ST. SEBASTIAN (detail)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



12. THE TRINITY WITH ST. JOHN AND MARY MAGDALENE *Collection Viscount Lee of Fareham,*



12. THE TRINITY WITH ST. JOHN AND MARY MAGDALENE (detail)

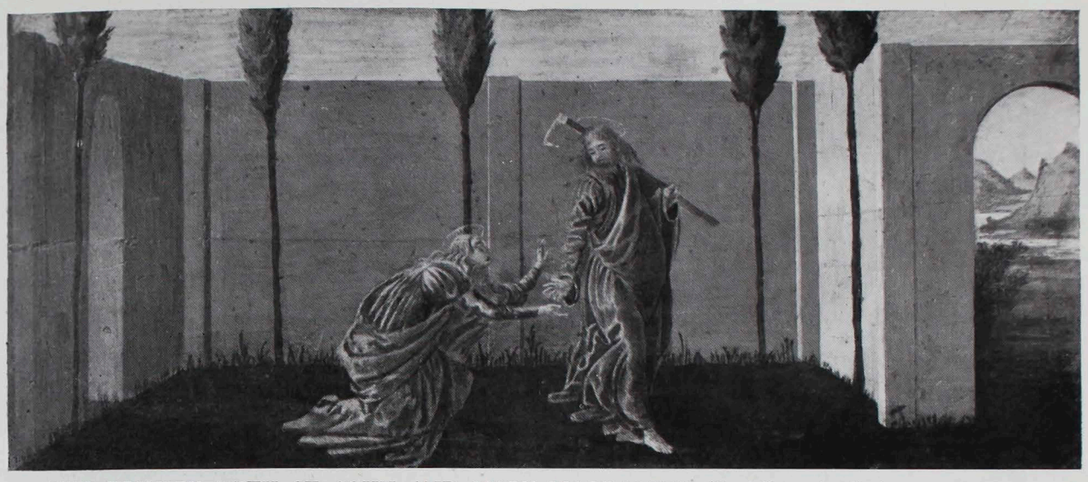
© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



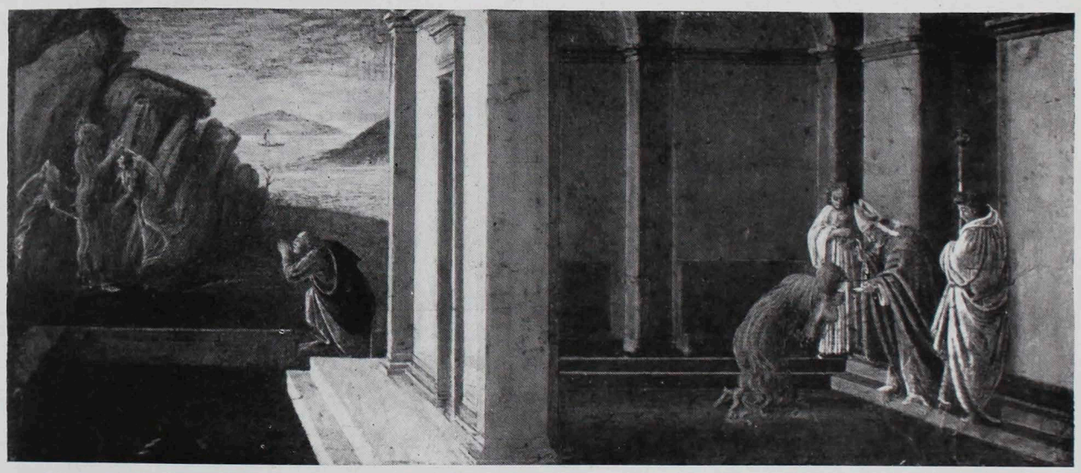
13. THE TRINITY WITH ST. JOHN AND MARY MAGDALENE (Predella 1, detail 1) *Johnson Collection, Philadelphia*



13. THE TRINITY WITH ST. JOHN AND MARY MAGDALENE (Predella 1, detail 2)

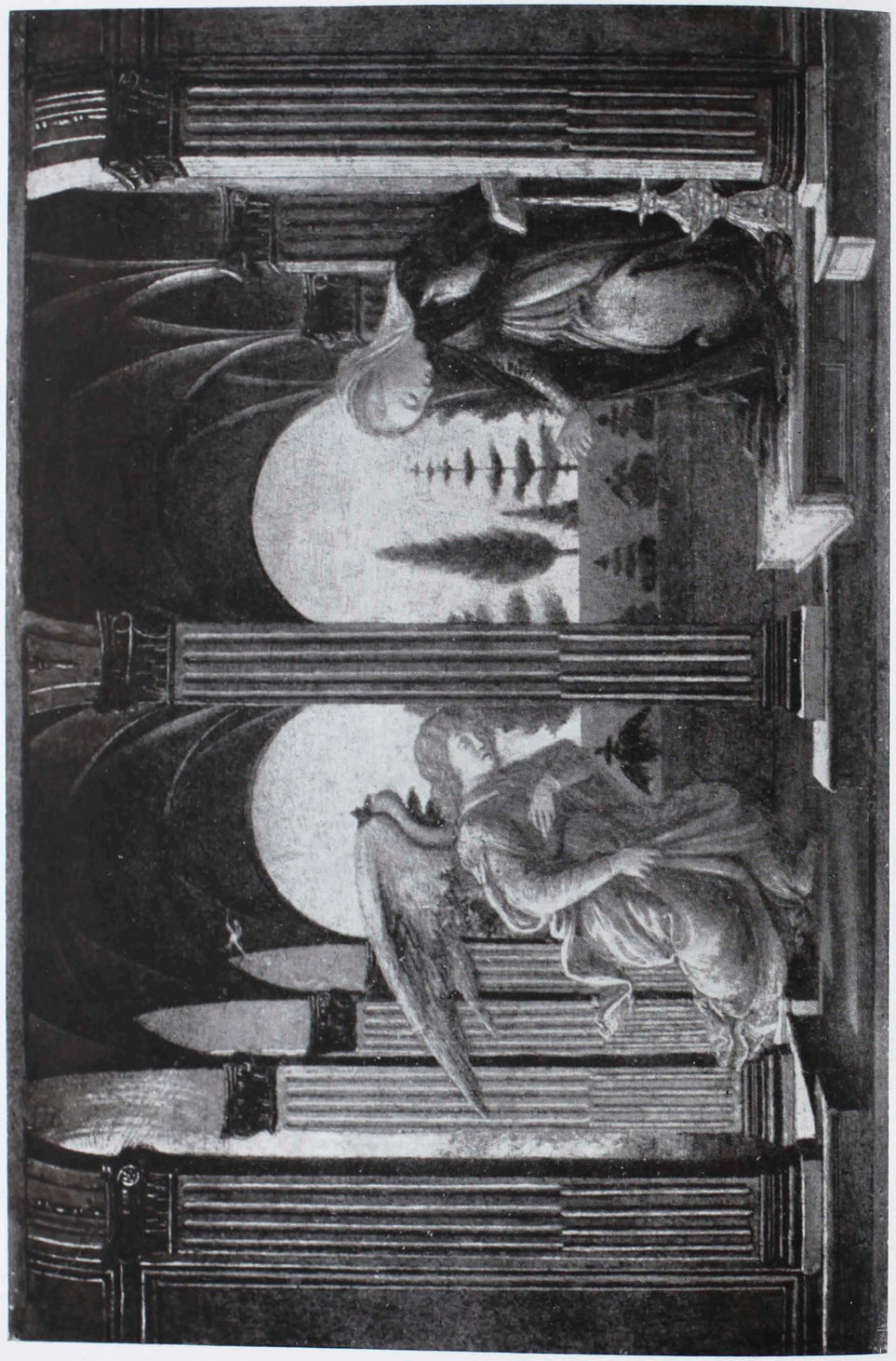


14. THE TRINITY WITH ST. JOHN AND MARY MAGDALENE (Predella 2, detail 1)



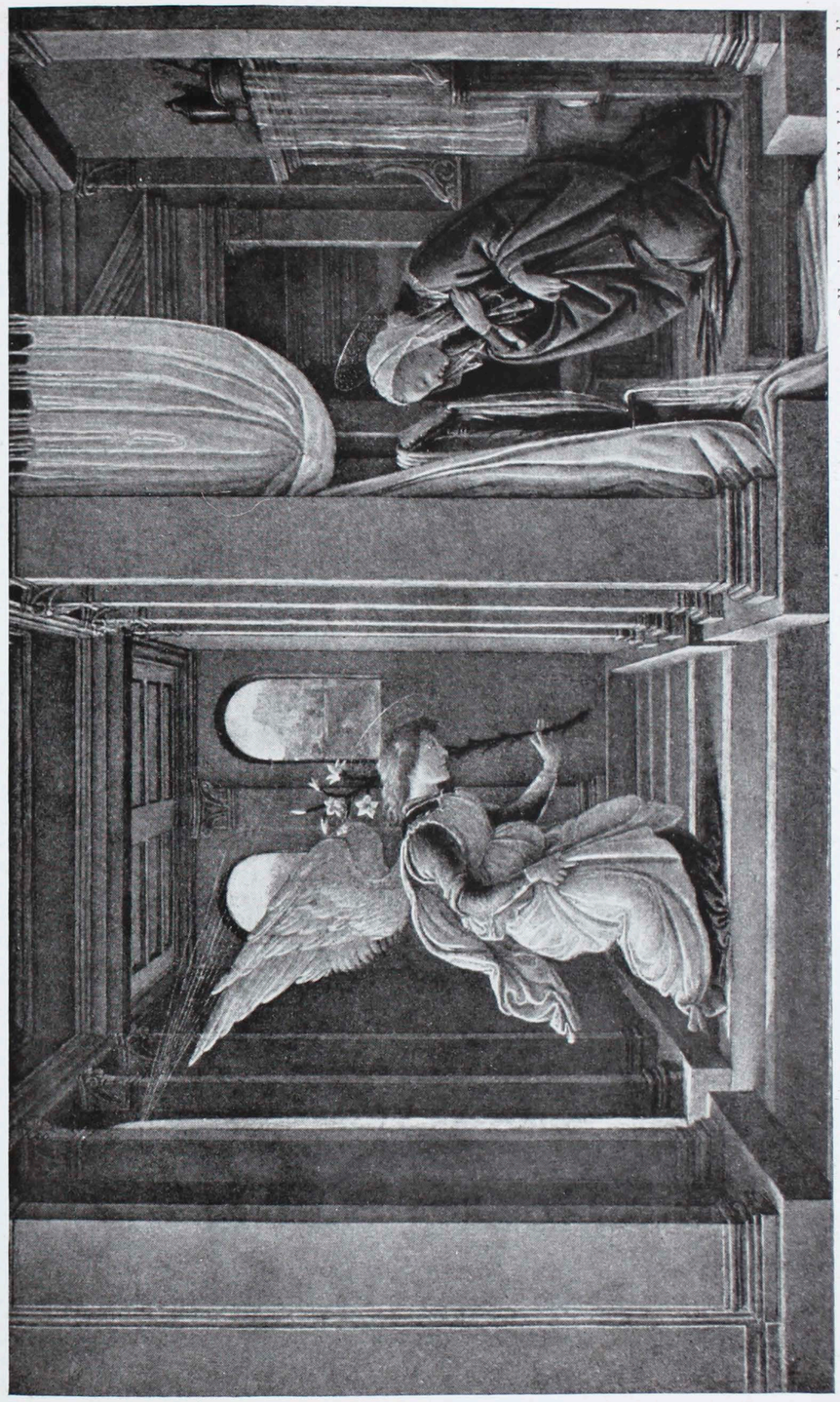
14. THE TRINITY WITH ST. JOHN AND MARY MAGDALENE (Predella 2, detail 2)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



Collection, Mr. Louise Hyde, Glen Falls, U.S.A.

15. THE ANNUNCIATION



Collection, Herr Huldschinsky, Berlin

16. THE ANNUNCIATION

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



17. PORTRAIT OF A MAN WITH A MEDAL — *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*



18. ADORATION OF THE MAGI — *National Gallery, London*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



19. LA PRIMAVERA

Uffizi Gallery, Florence



19. LA PRIMAVERA (detail 1)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



19. LA PRIMAVERA (detail 2)



19. LA PRIMAVERA (detail 3)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



19. LA PRIMAVERA (detail 4)



19. LA PRIMAVERA (detail 5)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



19. LA PRIMAVERA (detail 8)



19. LA PRIMAVERA (detail 9)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



19. LA PRIMAVERA (detail 10)



19. LA PRIMAVERA (detail 11)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



19. LA PRIMAVERA (detail 12)



19. LA PRIMAVERA (detail 13)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



19. LA PRIMAVERA (detail 14)



21. GIULIANO DE MEDICI *Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin*



20. "LA BELLA SIMONETTA" *Collection, Dr. Noah, Berlin*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



Uffizi Gallery, Florence

22. ADORATION OF THE MAGI



22. ADORATION OF THE MAGI (detail 1)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



22. ADORATION OF THE MAGI (detail 2)



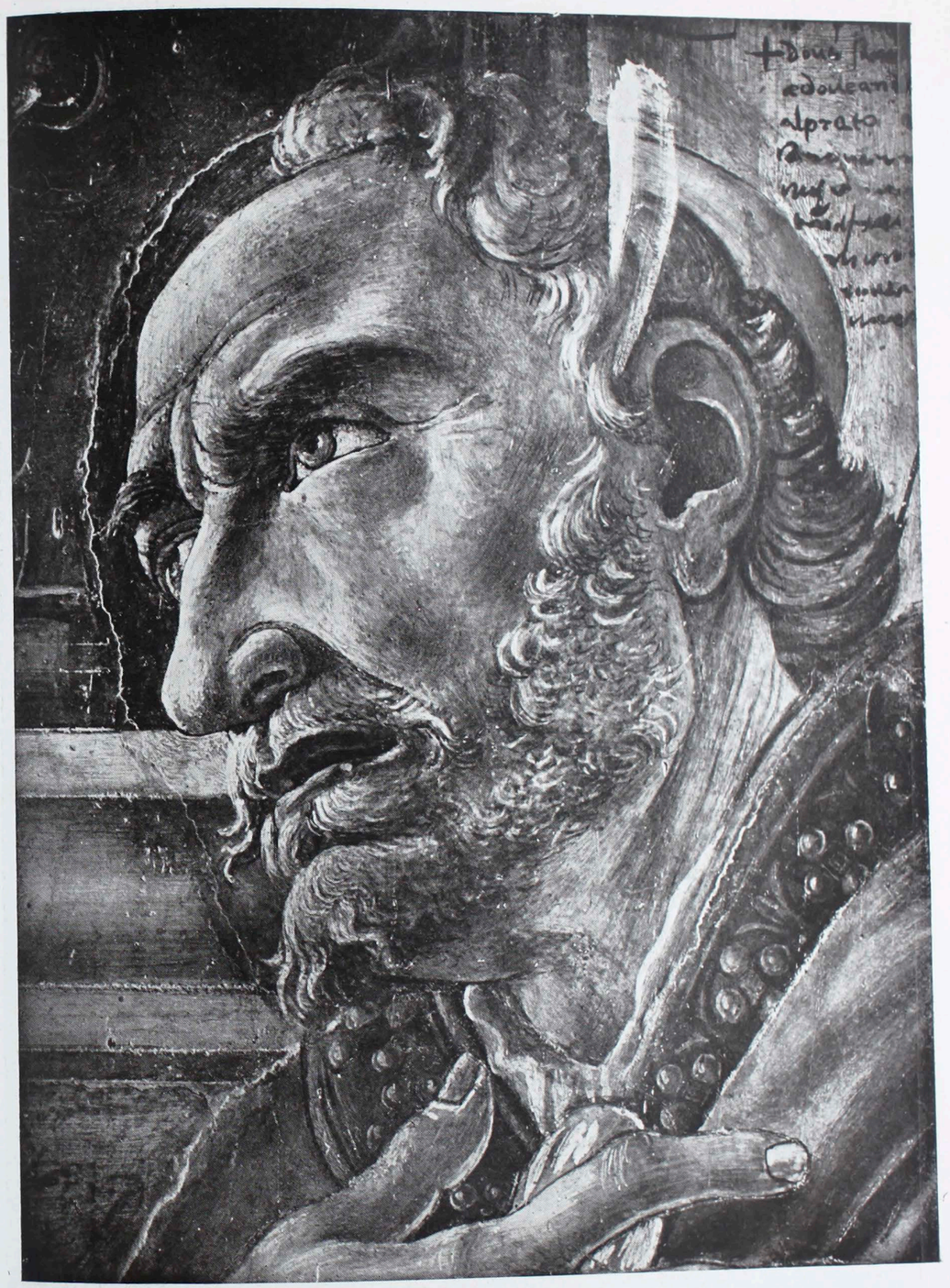
22. ADORATION OF THE MAGI (detail 3)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



23. ST. AUGUSTINE (1480)

Ognissanti Florence



23. ST. AUGUSTINE (detail 1)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



24. PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR

Uffizi Gallery, Florence

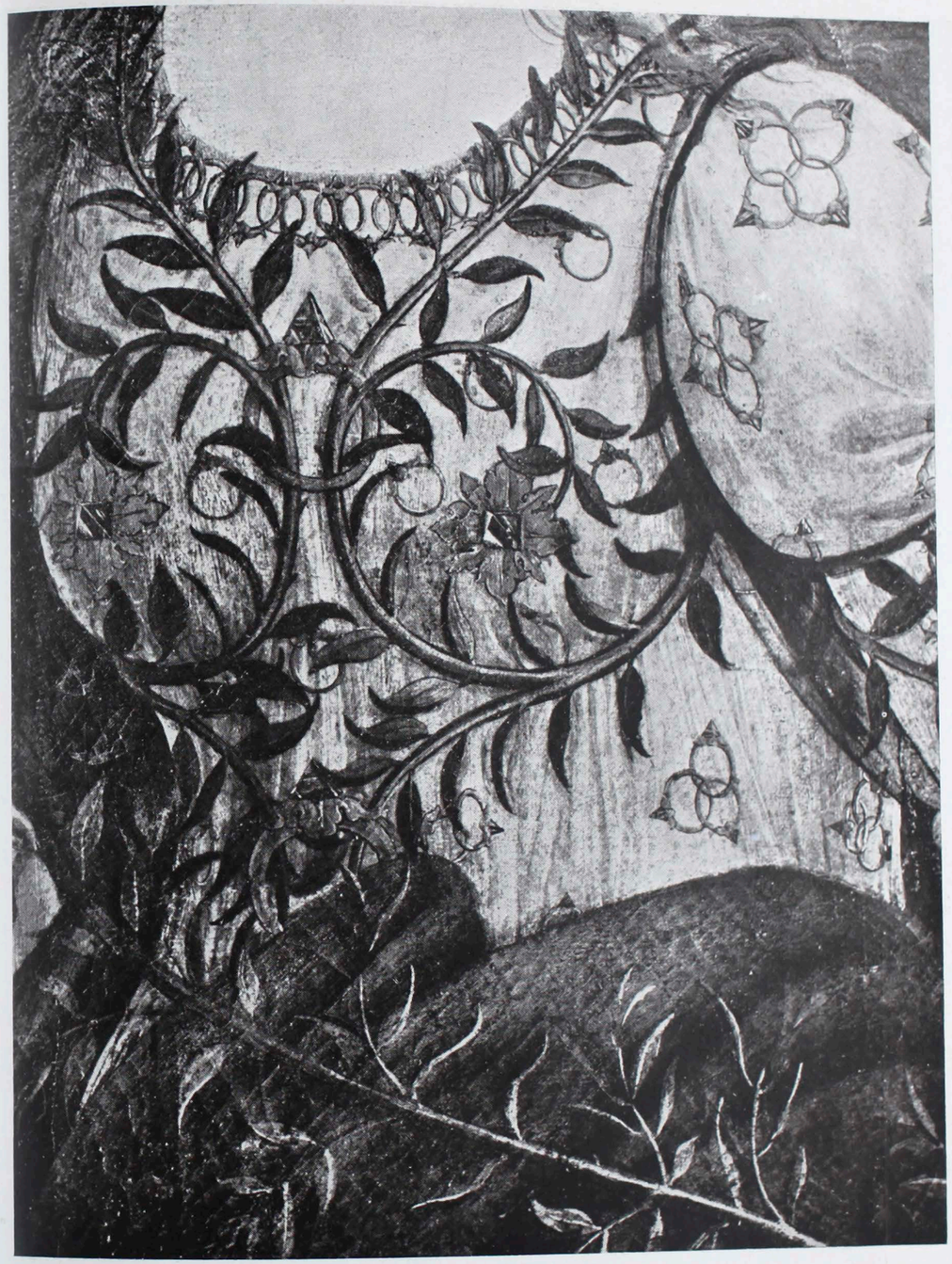


24. PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR (detail 1)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

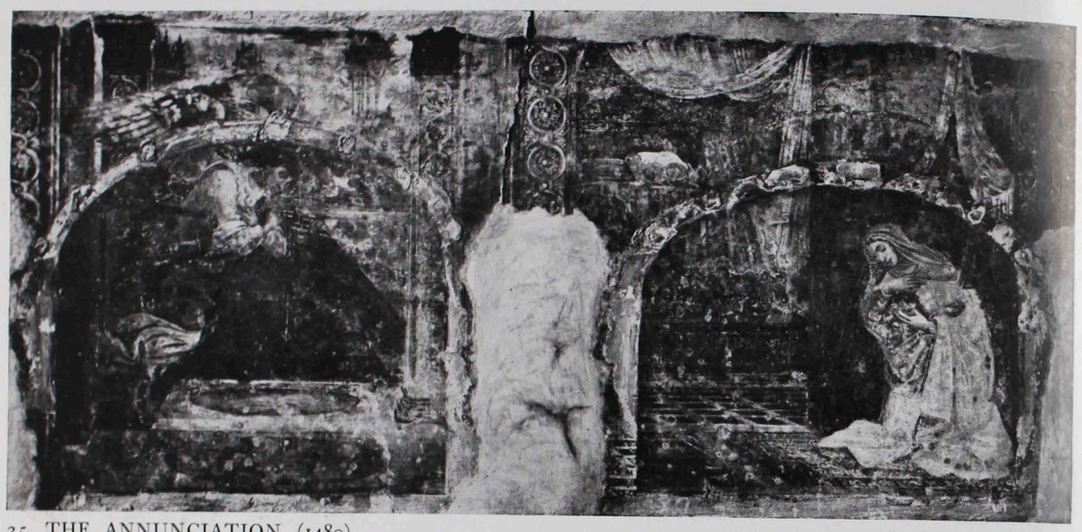


24. PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR (detail 2)



24. PALLAS AND THE CENTAUR (detail 3)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



25. THE ANNUNCIATION (1480) *St. Martino, Florence*

BELVEDERE



25. THE ANNUNCIATION (detail 1)

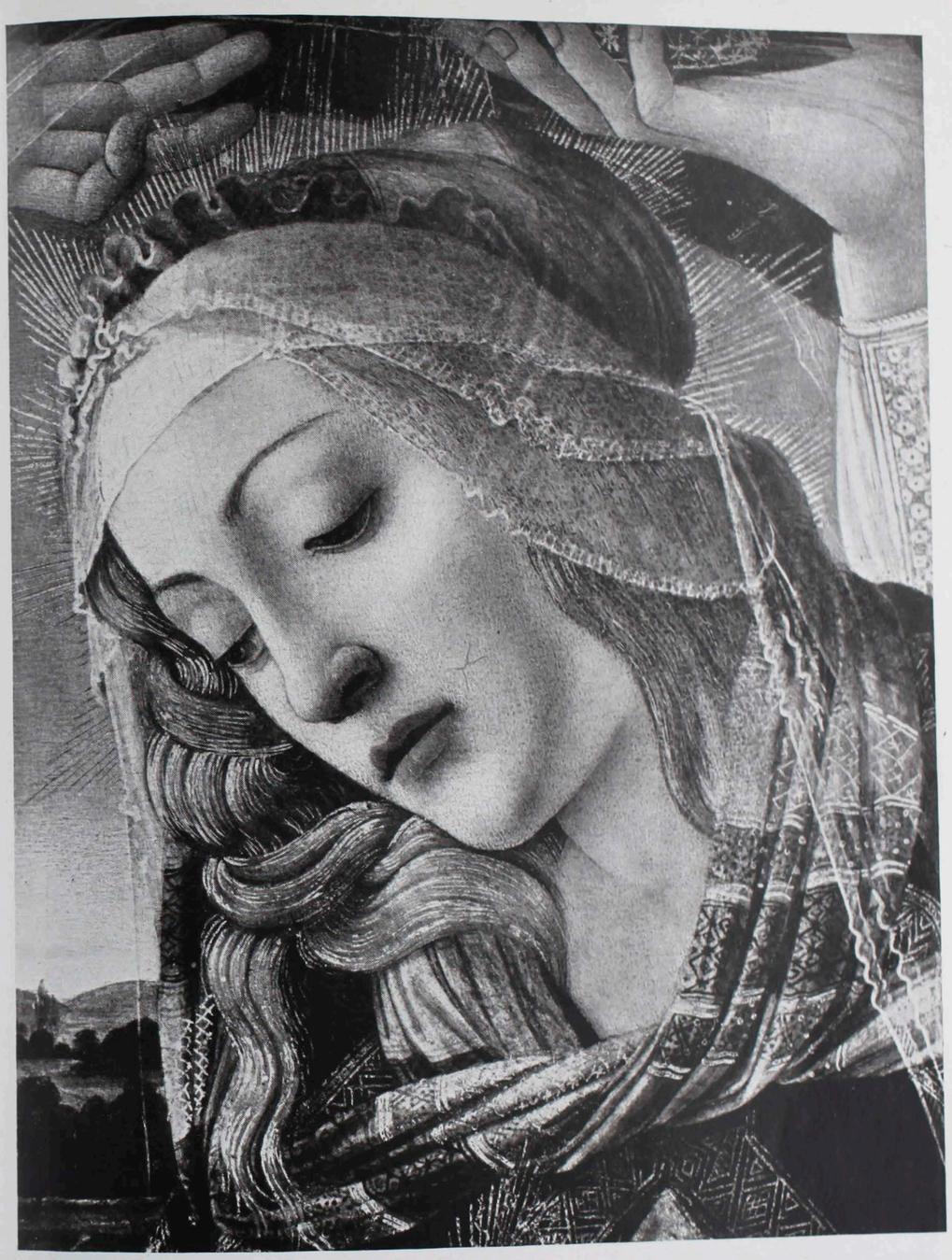


25. THE ANNUNCIATION (detail 2)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



26. MADONNA DEL MAGNIFICAT *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*



26. MADONNA DEL MAGNIFICAT (detail 1)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



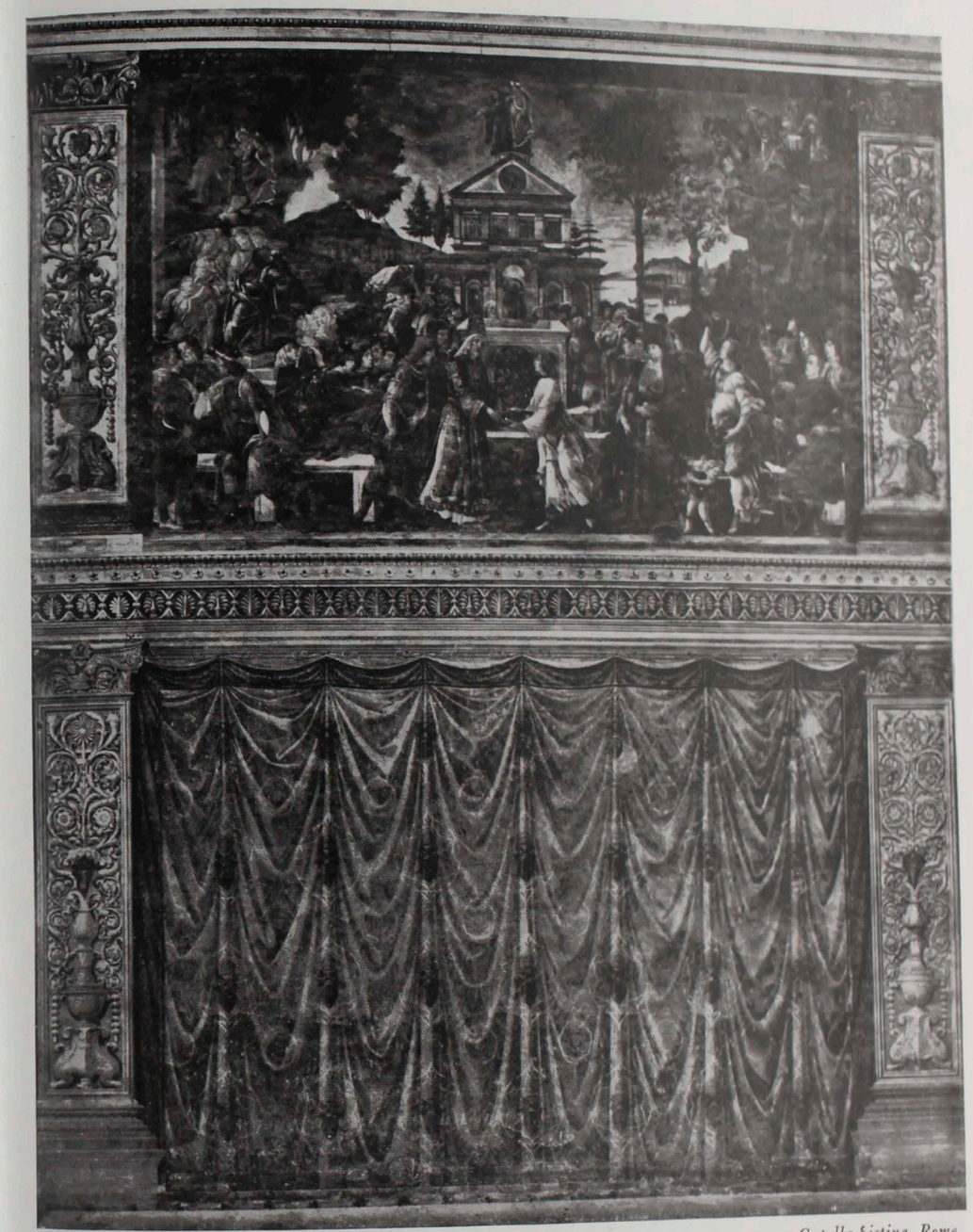
27. MADONNA AND CHILD

Poldi-Pezzoli Museum, Milan

THIRD PERIOD

1481–1490

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



28. PURIFICATION OF THE LEPER (1481–1482) *Capella Sistina, Rome*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



28. PURIFICATION OF THE LEPER (detail 1)



28. PURIFICATION OF THE LEPER (details 2 and 3)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



Capella Sistina, Rome

29. CHASTISEMENT OF THE COMPANY OF KORAH (1481–1482)



Capella Sistina, Rome

30. THE LIFE OF MOSES (1481–1482)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

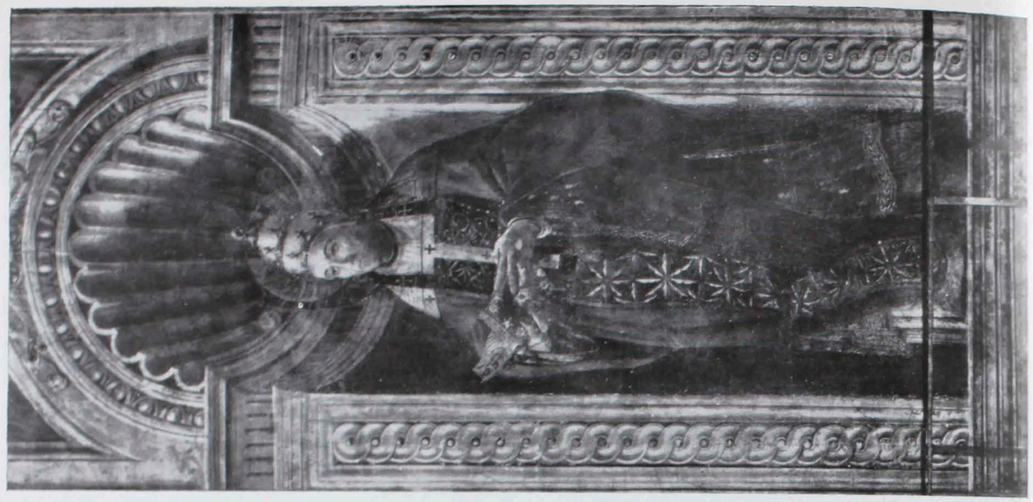


30. THE LIFE OF MOSES (detail 1)



30. THE LIFE OF MOSES (detail 2)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



S. LUCIO I



S. SISTO II (detail)



S. CORNELIO

31. POPES' PORTRAITS (1481–1482)
Capella Sistina, Rome



S. SOTERO (detail)



S. STEFANO (detail)



S. MARCELLINO (detail)



S. EVARISTO (detail)

31. POPES' PORTRAITS (1481–1482)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



Hermitage Gallery, Petrograd

32. ADORATION OF THE MAGI (1481–1482)



Morgan Library, New York





Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

33. ADORATION OF THE MAGI. (Unfinished)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

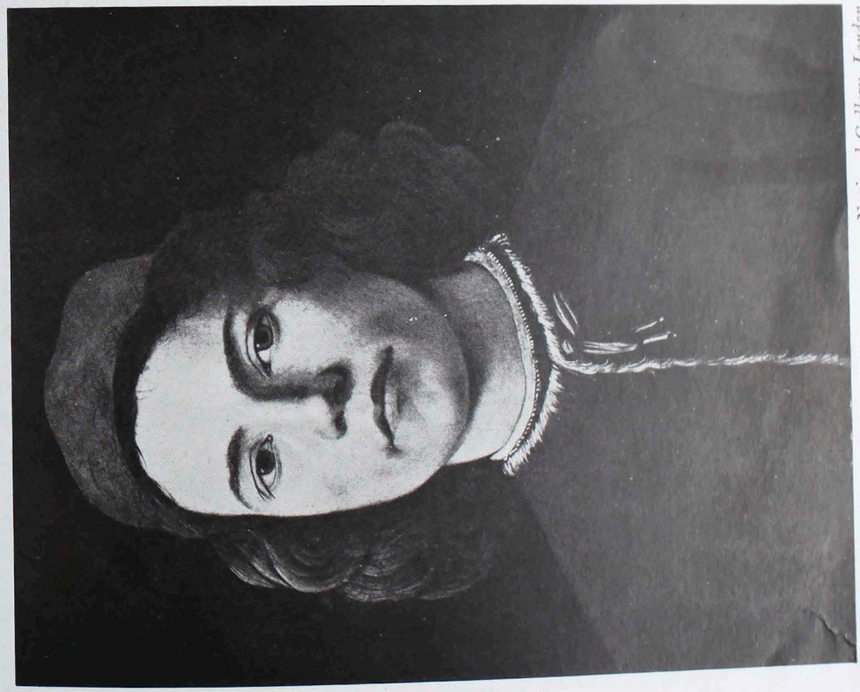


Uffizi Gallery, Florence

34. ADORATION OF THE MAGI. (Unfinished and repainted)

Collection, Mr. C. Mackay, New York

36. PORTRAIT OF A YOUTH



National Gallery, London

35. PORTRAIT OF A YOUTH

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



38. CHRIST *Detroit Museum*



37. PORTRAIT OF LORENZO LORENZANO *Johnson Collection, Philadelphia*



39. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. BARNABAS AND OTHER SAINTS AND ANGELS *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



39. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. BARNABAS AND OTHER SAINTS AND ANGELS
(detail 1)

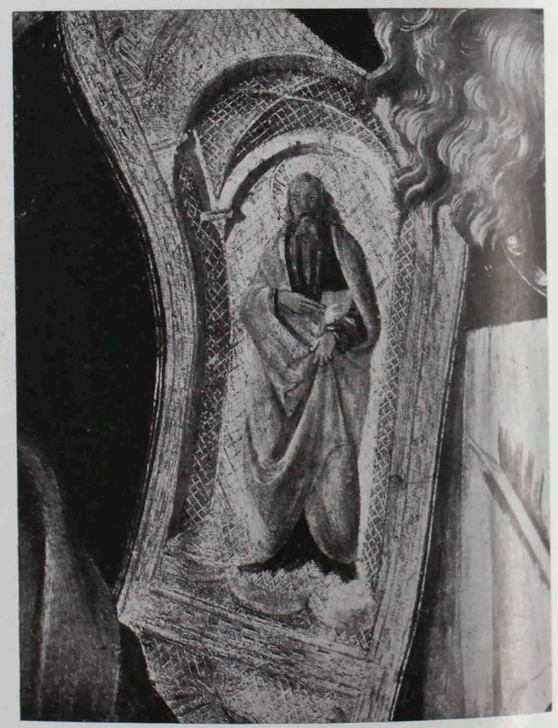


39. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. BARNABAS AND OTHER SAINTS AND ANGELS
(detail 2)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License







39. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. BARNABAS AND OTHER SAINTS AND ANGELS (details 3, 4, 5)



39. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. BARNABAS AND OTHER SAINTS AND ANGELS
(Predella, detail 1)



39. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. BARNABAS AND OTHER SAINTS AND ANGELS
(Predella, detail 2)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



39. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. BARNABAS AND OTHER SAINTS AND ANGELS
(Predella, detail 3)



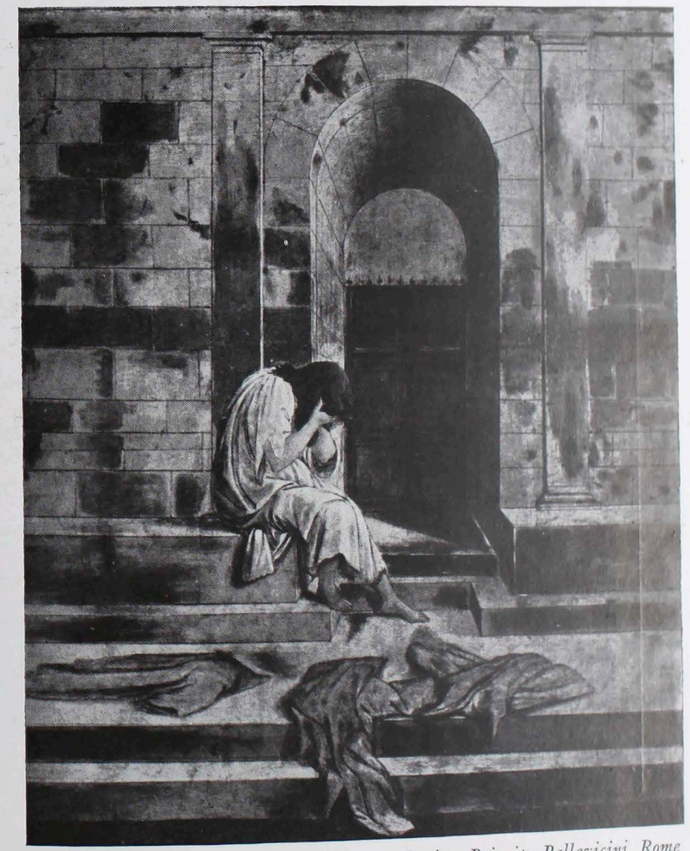
39. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. BARNABAS AND OTHER SAINTS AND ANGELS
(Predella, detail 4)



40. THE ANNUNCIATION



Corsini Gallery, Florence



41. "LA DERELITTA"

Collection, Principe Pallavicini, Rome

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



National Gallery, London

42. MARS AND VENUS



42. MARS AND VENUS (detail 1)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



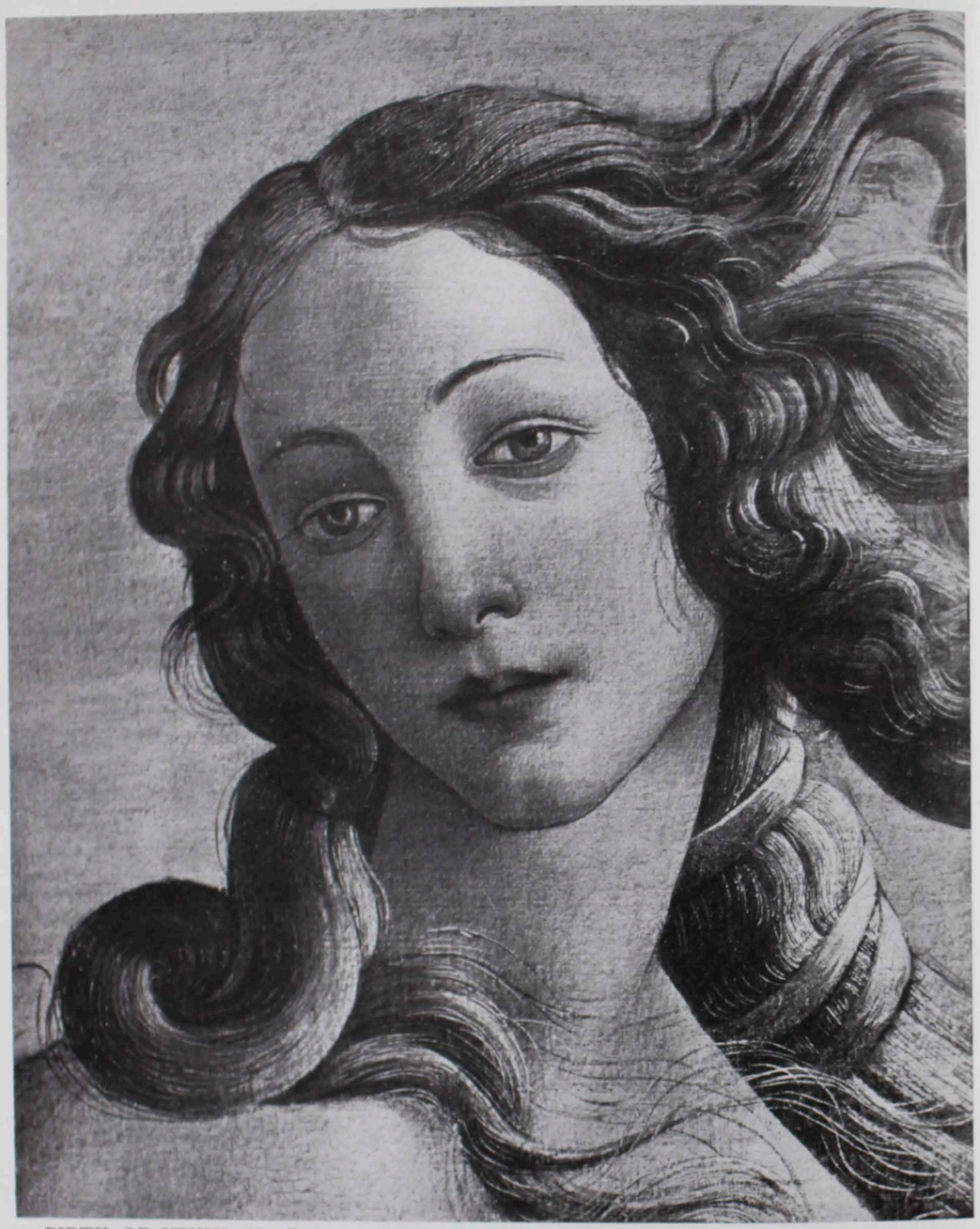
43. VENUS *Collection Sig. Gualino, Turin*



Uffizi Gallery, Florence

44. BIRTH OF VENUS

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



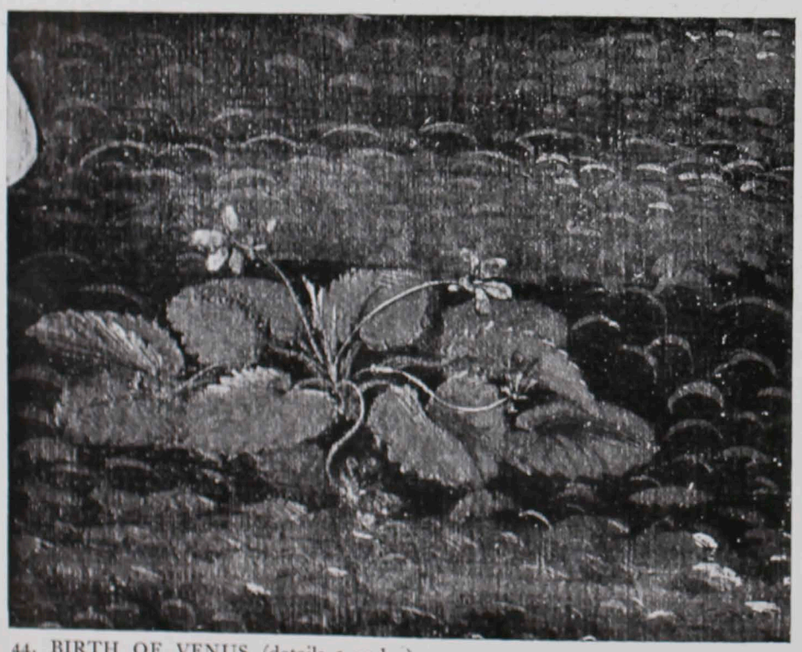
44. BIRTH OF VENUS (detail 1)



44. BIRTH OF VENUS (detail 2)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License





44. BIRTH OF VENUS (details 3 and 4)



45. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH TWO ST. JOHNS (1485) *Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



Louvre, Paris

46. FRESCOES FROM VILLA LEMMI (1486)



46. FRESCOES FROM VILLA LEMMI (1486)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



47. INFANT CHRIST AND ST. JOHN *National Gallery, Ottawa*



48. MADONNA DELLA MELAGRANA (1487) *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



48. MADONNA DELLA MELAGRANA (detail 1)



48. MADONNA DELLA MELAGRANA (detail 2)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



49. ANNUNCIATION (1489) *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*



49. ANNUNCIATION (detail 1)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



Alte Pinakothek, Munich

50. LA PIETA

FOURTH PERIOD

1490—1510

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



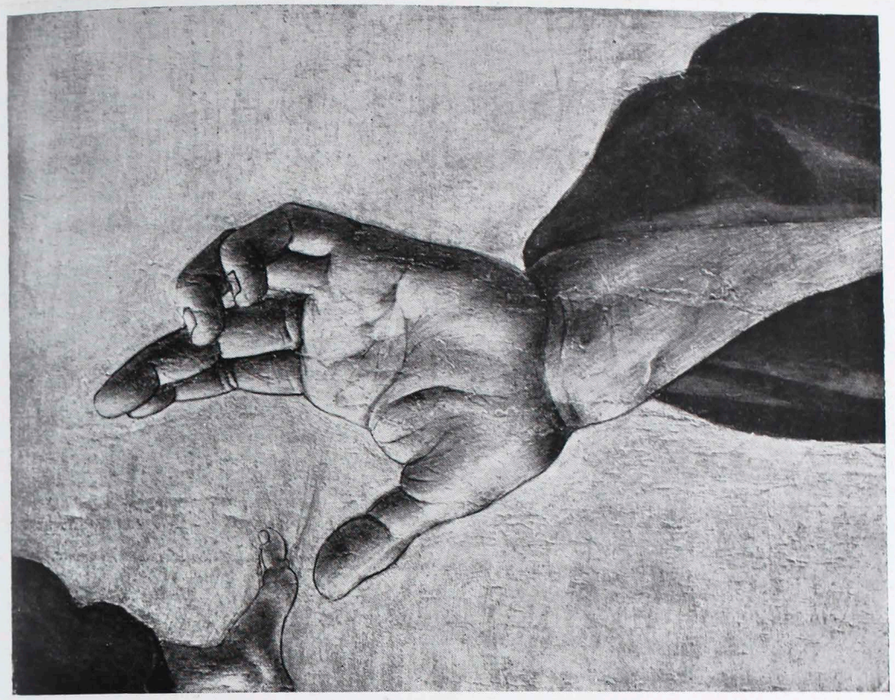
51. CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN (1490) *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License





51. CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN (details 1 and 2)





51. CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN (details 3 and 4)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



51. CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN (detail 5)



52. CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN (detail 6)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



51. CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN. (Predella 1, detail 1)



51. CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN. (Predella 1, detail 2)



51. CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN. (Predella 1, detail 3)



51. CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN. (Predella 2, detail 1)



51. CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN. (Predella 2, detail 2)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



52. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ST. JOHN — *Collection, Mr. Rockefeller, New York*

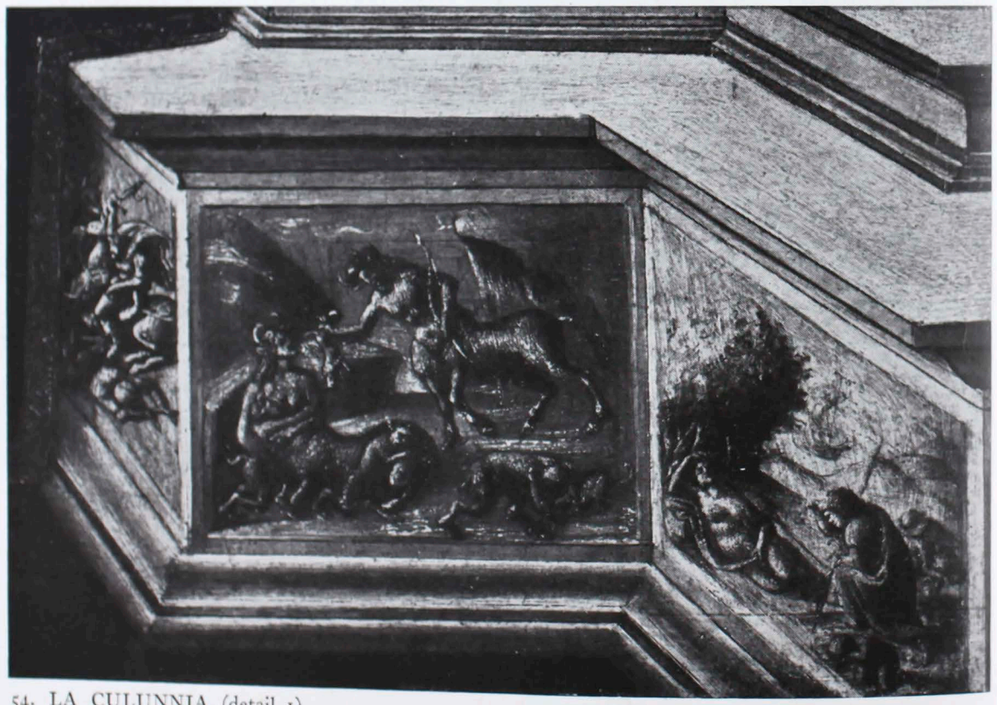


53. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH ANGELS — *Ambrosiana, Milan*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



54. LA CULUNNIA *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*



54. LA CULUNNIA (detail 1)



55. STORY OF VIRGINIA *Accademia Carrara, Bergamo*



56. STORY OF LUCREZIA *Gardner Collection, Boston*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



58. ANNUNCIATION *Hermitage Gallery, Petrograd*

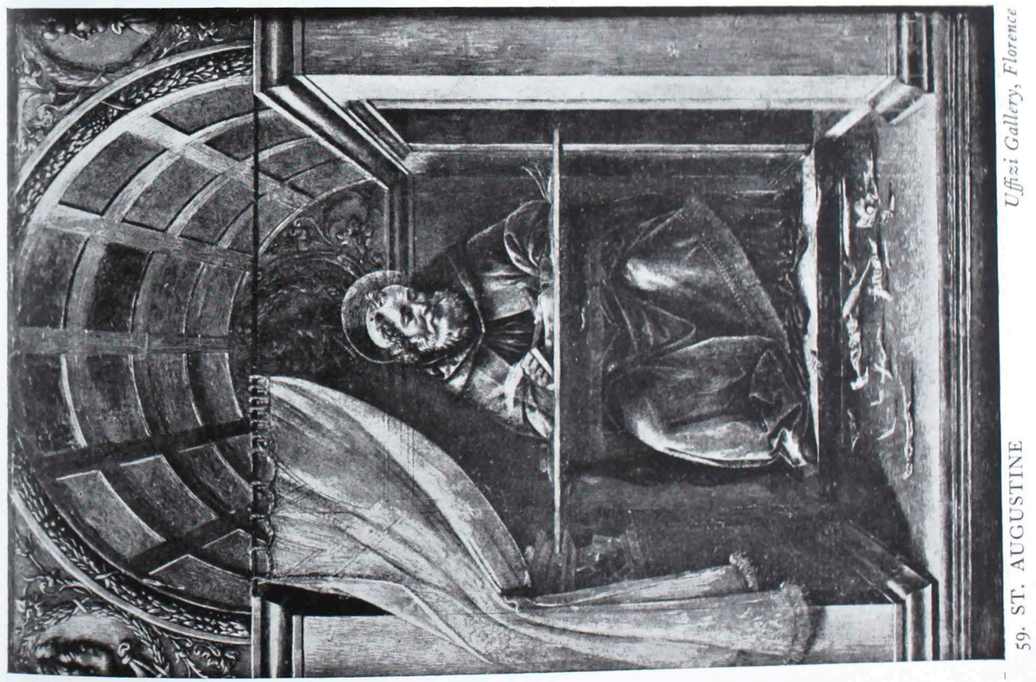




57. JUDITH *Formerly Kaufmann Collection, Berlin*



60. LAST COMMUNION OF ST. JEROME *Metropolitan Museum, New York*



59. ST. AUGUSTINE *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



61. TRANSFIGURATION

Collection Principe Pallavicini, Rome



62. AGONY IN THE GARDEN

Royal Chapel, Granada

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



63. THE MYSTIC NATIVITY (1500) *National Gallery, London*



63. THE MYSTIC NATIVITY (detail 1)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



63. THE MYSTIC NATIVITY (detail 3)



63. THE MYSTIC NATIVITY (detail 2)



63. THE MYSTIC NATIVITY (detail 4)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



64. THE MYSTIC CRUCIFIXION

Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, U.S.A.



64. THE MYSTIC CRUCIFIXION (detail 1)

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



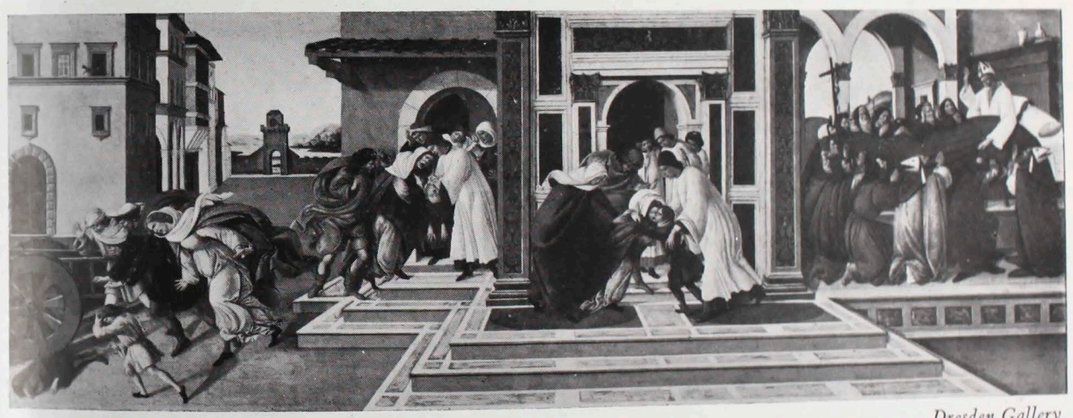
65. THE STORY OF ST. ZENOBIUS — *National Gallery, Mond Collection, London*



65. THE STORY OF ST. ZENOBIUS — *National Gallery, Mond Collection, London*



65*a*. THE STORY OF ST. ZENOBIUS — *Metropolitan Museum, New York*



65*b*. THE STORY OF ST. ZENOBIUS — *Dresden Gallery*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

DRAWINGS

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



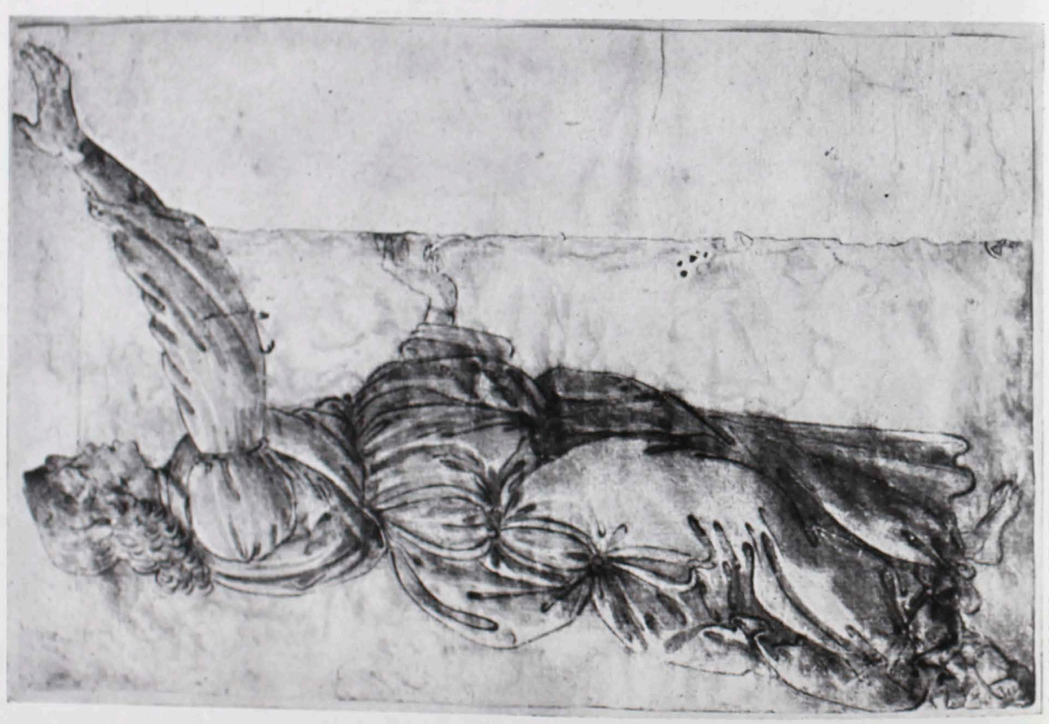
66. THE ABUNDANCE

British Museum, London

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



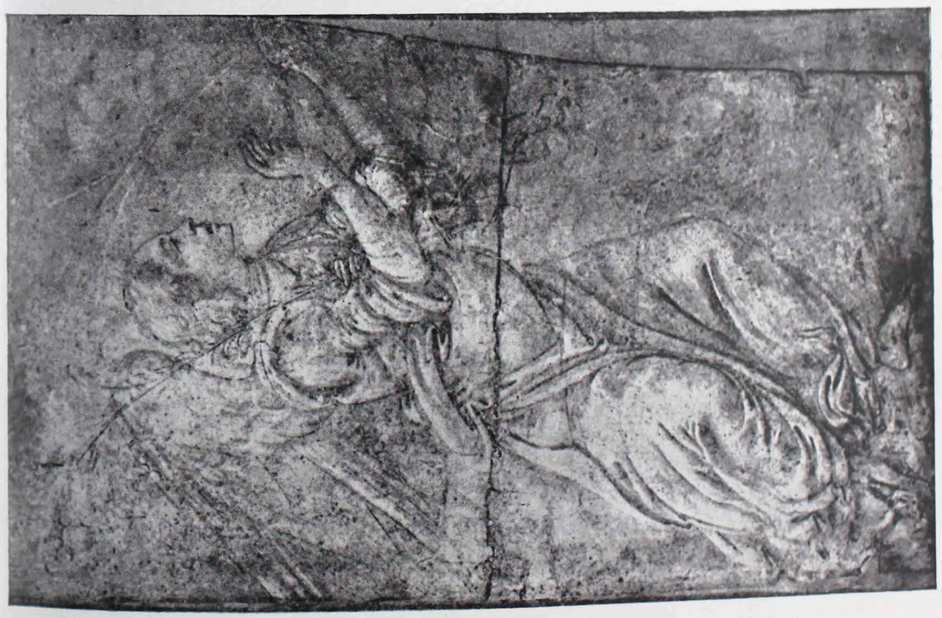
68. PALLAS *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*



67. ANGEL OF THE ANNUNCIATION *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*



70. STUDY FOR ST. THOMAS *Ambrosiana, Milan*



69. STUDY FOR AN ANGEL *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



71. SINGING ANGELS *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*



72. UNIDENTIFIED SUBJECT *Darmstadt Museum*



73. STORY OF A SAINT (drawing on silk) *Louvre, Paris*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



74. ST. JEROME *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*



75. PALLAS *Ambrosiana, Milan*



76. STUDY OF THE FEET OF A SAINT *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*



Uffizi Gallery, Florence

77. STUDY FOR THE NATIVITY

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



78. ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST *Uffizi Gallery, Florence*

DANTE DRAWINGS

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



Vatican Library, Rome

79. INFERNO XV

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



Print Room, Berlin

80. PURGATORIO XIII



Print Room, Berlin

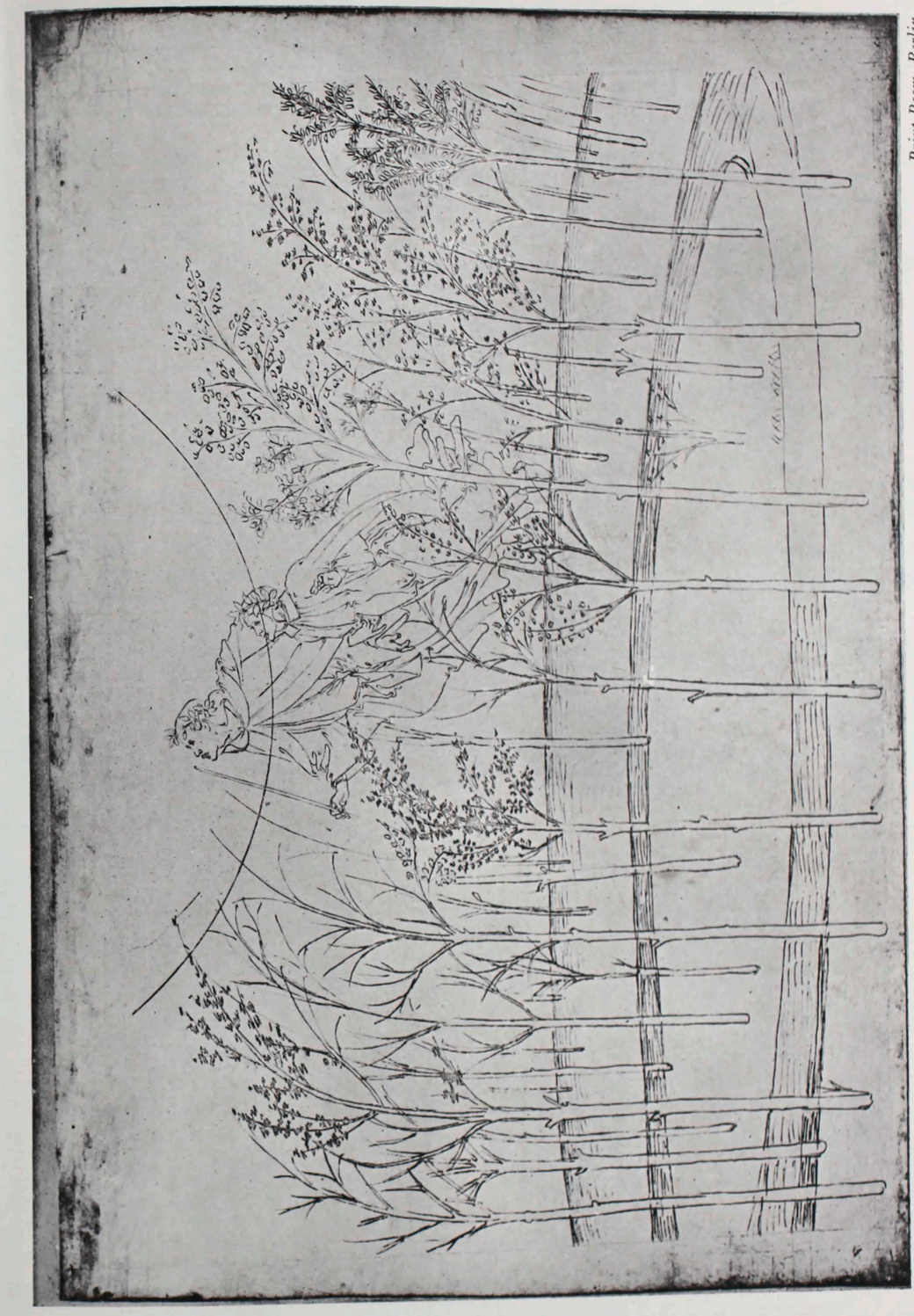
81. PURGATORIO XXVIII

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



Print Room, Berlin

82. PURGATORIO XXXIII



Print Room, Berlin

83. PARADISO I

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



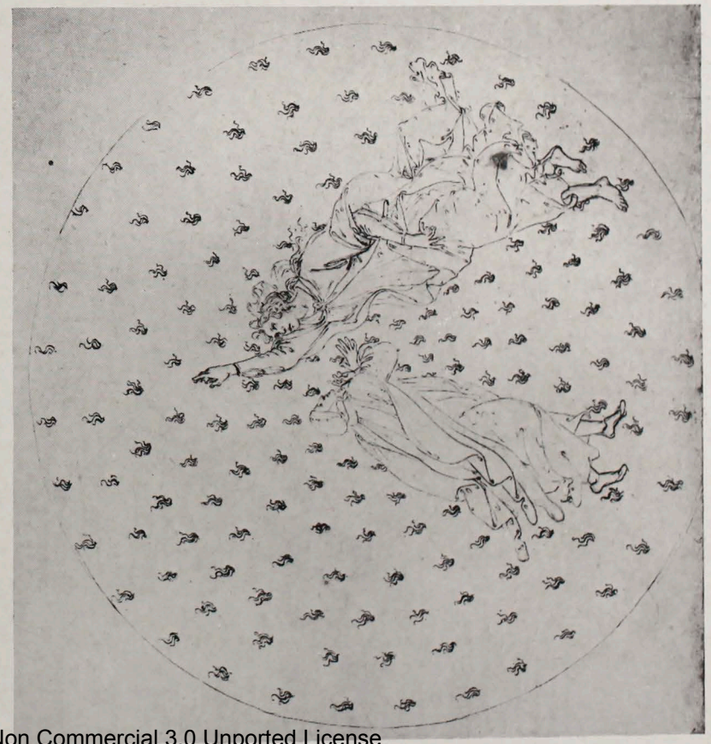
Print Room, Berlin

84. PARADISO III



Print Room, Berlin

86. PARADISO XXI



Print Room, Berlin

85. PARADISO VI

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

ENGRAVINGS
after
BOTTICELLI

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



87. ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN *Uffizi Gallery, Florence and elsewhere*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License



88. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH TWO SAINTS *British Museum, London*



89. INFERNO V



90. INFERNO XIX

Illustrations to Landino's Edition of Dante (1481) *British Museum and elsewhere*

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License

© The Warburg Institute. This material is licensed under a Creative Commons Atribution Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License