

Pre-Renaissance Franciscan and Tuscan Humanism

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The thirteenth century saw the rejuvenation of the Italian Church by the order of St. Francis. The Franciscans contributed to the new humanism that is identified with the Renaissance and expressed in the Tuscan painters of Florence (Cimabue and Giotto di Bondone) and of Siena (Duccio, Simone Martini and the Lorenzetti brothers).¹ In the Upper Church of San Francesco, in Assisi where Cimabue and Torriti worked in fresco, the new humanism appears in the "Legend of the St. Francis Cycle." In this work, life-sized human figures, conveying human emotions, made their first appearance in European painting.² In the frescoes of the Scrovegni chapel at Padua and in Santa Croce in Florence, Giotto evoked a whole new range of feeling and expression. His immediate followers at Florence, Bernardo Daddi, Taddeo Gaddi, and Maso di Banco, for all their narrative invention and human intimacy, were dwarfed by his genius. But at Siena the school of Duccio di Buoninsegna developed its own more lyrical and illustrative style, with jewel-like colouring and linear grace. If Giotto gave painted figures humanity, Duccio established them in recognizable settings, Simone Martini invested them with poetry, while Ambrogio Lorenzetti set them in their complete physical environment. It was at this time that Florence and Siena produced the tentative beginnings of portraiture and of landscape in painting. The Tuscan painters reflect the Franciscan joy and delight in the goodness and beauty of the world, the Franciscan appreciation of nature as the resplendent reflection of its Creator, and the Franciscan esteem and affection for the poor and ordinary people.

By 1300, the Italian Franciscans had become a force in learning, building, and patronage of the arts. At the new, splendid church of Santa Croce in Florence (under construction from 1295) the friars taught the doctrines of such eminent university philosophers as St. Bonaventure, and observed with pleasure the frescoes by Giotto and Daddi which the rich merchant aristocracy of the commune had commissioned for the walls. The friars built great churches everywhere throughout Italy. At Assisi, over the tomb of St. Francis, they erected one of the most impressive churches of Christendom and adorned it with the cycles of paintings by Cimabue, Simone Martini, and Giotto. These, on a scale unparalleled for any previous saint, exalted the life of St. Francis.

From 1290 to 1295, Giotto was able to study the expressiveness of Cimabue's frescoes in Assisi, and those of the Roman tradition by Jacopo

Torriti and Pietro Cavallini. Drawing on these experiences, Giotto evolved a style that was entirely modern, characterized by emotional pathos and powerful, epic forms within a tightly coherent narrative framework. In the fresco cycle of the Upper Church in Assisi, Giotto conveys the “theatre” of the Gospels in scenes that are true to the story but contemporary in style. Simone Martini’s masterpiece is the frescoed decoration of the Chapel of St. Martin in the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, painted between 1323 and 1326.

It was the Cistercians, rather than the cathedral builders of the *île-de-France*, who provided the chief exemplars on which Italian architects based their conception of the Gothic style. The severe beauty of Cistercian Gothic appealed to the Franciscans. From the first, the Franciscans’ churches reflected Cistercian influence and thus played a leading role in establishing Gothic architecture in Italy. Santa Croce, a masterpiece of Gothic architecture, may well claim to be the greatest of all Franciscan structures. It bears witness to the Italian architects who assimilated the Gothic style of France. Eventually, toward 1300, Gothic influence spilled over into Italian painting as well, and the interaction of this element with the neo-Byzantine produced the revolutionary new style of Duccio di Buoninsegna (c. 1255/60?–1319), founder of the Siennese School of painting.

Medieval Italy, although strongly influenced by Northern art from Carolingian times on, had always maintained close contact with Byzantine civilisation. As a result, panel painting, mosaic, and mural painting—mediums that had never taken firm root north of the Alps — were kept alive on Italian soil. Indeed, a new wave of Byzantine influence overwhelmed the lingering Romanesque elements in Italian painting at the very time when stained glass became the dominant pictorial art in France. This neo-Byzantine style, or “Greek manner” as the Italians called it, prevailed until almost the end of the thirteenth century, so that Italian painters were able to absorb the Byzantine tradition far more thoroughly than ever before. During this same period, Italian architects and sculptors, untouched by the Greek manner, assimilated the Gothic style. Renaissance art has Gothic and Byzantine roots, both of which are combined in the proto-Renaissance works of Duccio. Duccio’s livelier images are in keeping with the new Gothic spirit. The “Rucellai Madonna” (1285) in the Uffizi Gallery, and the “Madonna with Three Franciscans” (1295) in the Siena gallery, are typical examples, together with his greatest work, the “*Maestà* Altarpiece” (1308–11) in Siena’s Opera Metropolitana Museum. Duccio’s work was the major single Italian influence on the evolution of the international Gothic style, and he was one of the founders of the new Tuscan visual language which underlies Renaissance art. His “Madonna with Three Franciscans” implicitly acknowledges the impact of the Franciscan movement on Italian art and

culture.

Franciscanism also had its political associations. With the accession of the Guelf kings, Charles II (1285-1309) and Robert I (1369-43), the Franciscans were encouraged to settle and build in the kingdom of Naples. Mary of Hungary, wife of Charles II, founded S. Maria Donna Regina; and Sancia, King Robert's second wife, who had once wished to become a Poor Clare herself, built another Franciscan church, Santa Chiara. St. Francis became the principal patron of the Neapolitan kings and of their Guelf allies throughout the peninsula. King Robert, who was to die in the habit of the Third Order, had a genuine devotion to Francis and his friars. He had never forgotten the support he had received from the Franciscans when as a young man he had been imprisoned in Catalonia. Ever after Franciscans were welcomed at the Neapolitan court. Robert's elder brother, Louis of Toulouse (1247-97), had abandoned his right to the crown of Naples and become a Franciscan, and, after a life of asceticism, had died in the odour of sanctity. King Robert promoted the canonization of his brother, and availed himself of his patronage. In Naples itself, and everywhere throughout Italy where Neapolitan kings were welcomed as political allies, the figure of St. Louis of Toulouse was to be represented as the patron of the king and the friend of the Guelfs. The great Florentine banking family of the Bardi had him pictured in their chapel in Santa Croce, the Sieneese in the chapter house of their San Francesco. At Naples, Simone Martini painted the luminous panel in which St. Louis, himself crowned by two angels, places the crown upon the head of his brother kneeling respectfully before him.

Giotto of Florence (1266-1336) and Duccio of Siena (c. 1260-1319) heralded the Italian Renaissance in art.³ Although Giotto is the greater painter, Duccio had followers who kept Sieneese painting alive while Florentine painting, after Giotto, slumbered. Duccio and his followers are more closely related to Byzantine painting which was now dying in Italy, although it was to survive in Russia in the form of icons for another two or three centuries.

Both Giotto and Duccio di Buoninsegna were students of Cimabue (c. 1240-1301), a Florentine, who was the first to break through the traditional hieratic forms derived from the Byzantine tradition. Cimabue's portraits of St. Francis and St. Clare in the Lower Church at Assisi have both a human grandeur and a spiritual eloquence; they glow in the radiance of divinity. In Cimabue's portrayal of St. Francis and in the tenderness of his Madonnas we recognize his profound sensitivity to character. Cimabue is the last Byzantine painter in Italy. His students, Giotto and Duccio, are concerned with new things, even though Duccio and his followers remain Byzantine in style in a way that disappears in Florence with Giotto.

The artists of Siena and Florence developed methods which breathed

new life into Byzantine forms, though in exceedingly different ways. While the Florentines, under Roman influence, are intellectual, massive and geometric, the more conservative art of Siena reflects the delicate, mercurial lyricism and selfconscious refinement of its poets and mystics. Duccio, though akin to the contemporary neo-Hellenic tendencies of Constantinople, mirrors not only Franciscan tenderness but the Gothic spirit of the north in his linear narrative rhythms, organized within windows of "picture space." In the decades following Duccio's death, this Sieneese taste for spatially arranged illustration was developed by the Lorenzetti brothers into illusionistic landscapes and town panoramas. Simone Martini, who visited the papal palace at Avignon and greatly influenced the new courtly international style, interpreted heavenly beauty in sensuous terms: his feeling for magnificence and grace, evident also in contemporary Sieneese goldwork, is displayed in swirling silhouettes and sophisticated harmonies of sparkling colour.

Duccio, founder of the Sieneese school of painting, is first mentioned in 1278 as a decorator of chests for the municipal archives of Siena. His chief work is "The Virgin in Majesty" (1308–11), an altarpiece for the Cathedral of Siena. The main panel, 12 feet long, represents the Virgin as the Queen of Heaven, surrounded by the company of prophets, saints, and angels. On the reverse, a series of more than 40 panels portray the life of Christ. Duccio's art has the graceful character of Gothic sculpture and manuscript illumination. His forms are marked by a flowing use of line, a weightlessness and floating grace in the rendering of the human figure, and a subtle feeling for two-dimensional pattern. Duccio presents Christian stories concisely, with an eye for picturesque backgrounds. In observing spatial relationships in nature, Duccio heralds the development of linear perspective in the Italian Renaissance. Although the Byzantine elements in Duccio's work are readily observed, the spirit of Sieneese painting is different.

Duccio, no less than Giotto, humanizes sacred images, discovering elements in Christianity that had always been there, but that had been obscured by artists working in different circumstances. St. Francis of Assisi, for example, powerfully conditions the work of both Duccio and Giotto. Both painters were born in the century and in the country where St. Francis lived. The joyful poverty of St. Francis differs from the earlier poverty of the desert monks. St. Francis lived in the city. His poverty did not lead him to abandon urban society. He was enraptured by the beauty of the world, recognizing in it an enchanting reflection of the beauty of God. This Franciscan delight with the world inspires the Sieneese painters, Duccio and his fellow townsmen, Simone Martini (c. 1283–1344) and the Lorenzetti brothers, Ambrogio and Pietro.

Sweetness is one of the outstanding qualities of Sieneese painting. It departs from the Byzantine tradition. The faces of the Madonna and the

Infant in Duccio's masterpiece,"The Virgin in Majesty," irradiate sweetness. This new quality suggests the spiritual/psychological relationship of love among all the personages in the composition of the painting. The Franciscan spirit of joyful communion with God in humankind and nature finds expression in the sweetness of Duccio's people. They look at each other and they feel emotions of affection for one another. Although Duccio was trained in the Byzantine tradition, there is reason to class him with the moderns, inasmuch as he introduces a psychological relationship among all his characters. Faces, gestures, and the composition of the pictures express affective communion.

Colour is another quality of Sieneese painting that the Florentines did not achieve. It can be expected from the new painting that adheres most closely to Byzantium. But with Duccio and the Sieneese, colour is delightful for itself, reflecting the joy St. Francis brought to the world by looking at the world in the joy of its Creator who affirms its goodness.

Simone Martini, another prominent member of the early Sieneese school, is more Gothic than Duccio.⁴ If the art of Siena is more delicate and rarefied than that of Florence, Martini has these qualities to a higher degree than his teacher, Duccio. Both the Gothic sense of design and the peculiarly Gothic line, which in manuscripts could on occasion lose itself in pure ornamental flow, are more evident in Martini than in Duccio. Martini's "*Maestà*" breaks with the ranked saints and angels of Duccio's picture. Martini elaborates on the relationship between Mother and Child with a tender play of hands and feet that owes nothing to Duccio's picture, "The Virgin in Majesty". At the center of Martini's picture is the face of the Mother, and with it we are confronted with the very heart of Sieneese painting. The gaze of the Byzantine characters was generally out of the picture, staring ahead. Duccio let the eyes of characters relate them to each other. Martini, here, does neither. The Madonna stares within with a profound glance of introspection. She is engaged in deep meditation on the meaning of the sacred mystery which the painting represents. This quiet, removed quality is encountered often in Sieneese painting. The rare combination of quietness in the midst of joyful activity uncovers an essential aspect of the Christian life, almost ignored by the great Florentines who were to follow. Martini's frescoes on the "Life of St. Martin of Tours", in the chapel of St. Francis in Assisi itself, exemplifies this quiet withdrawal. We notice the musicians. In the midst of life's joy, military power, holiday clothing, and their own piping and strumming, their thoughts turn inward. They see and therefore speak of another world than the one we see. So, of course, did the Byzantines. The difference is that Martini's musicians are caught up in the outward world. In Byzantine art the visible world hardly exists.⁵

Martini's "Annunciation", now in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, has more to say about the Sieneese quiet. In response to the angel's message

the whole body of the Virgin shrinks away from the advancing line of speech and from the angelic announcement. Her face withdraws within and the shadow of concern appears on her brow. Martini shows her 'human' reaction to news of such consequence. The Byzantines were incapable of such a Mother of God, displaying human consternation and amazement.

Siena's painting embodies the soul of this profoundly refined and mystical city. The traditions of Byzantium and of early Siennese illuminations combined with a rhythmic line and glowing colour upon a gold ground to find expression in a style that reached its perfection in Duccio's "iconic Virgin" in Majesty and scenes from the life of Christ. Simone Martini, influenced by his friend Petrarch, developed a lyrical *linear style to express his intensely contemplated inner vision of Christian mysteries embodied in the story of Christ*. The brothers Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti assimilated the Giottesque influence and created a narrative style best seen in Ambrogio's frescoes showing "Good and Bad Government". The linear grace, the harmonious colour and expressive design of Duccio combine with the monumental realism of Giotto in the style of the Lorenzetti brothers. Ambrogio (c. 1290–1348), the younger brother, ranks in importance with the greatest Siennese painters. Only six of his documented works survive. They include four scenes from the legend of St. Nicholas of Bari in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence; the wall decorations in the Sala della Pace in the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, representing "Good Government", "Effects of Good Government", and "Effects of Bad Government"; the panels of the "Presentation of Christ in the Temple" in the Uffizi, and of the "Annunciation" in the Pinacoteca, Siena. Ambrogio's most important undocumented works are panel paintings of the "Madonna and Child". His early works indicate that his main inspiration derived from Duccio, his brother Pietro, and Giotto. These works reveal a realistic *individualism and an intense occupation with significant composition and form*. These characteristics are evident in the "Allegories" in the Palazzo Pubblico, the most important Siennese fresco decoration. In it we see his capacity for an acute observation of the world around him, an empirical explorer of linear and aerial perspective, a student of classical works of art, and a political and moral philosopher. His desire to depict spatial depth convincingly led Ambrogio to an increasingly accurate rendering of space in his paintings and almost to one-point perspective in his last work, the "Annunciation". His profound interest in perspective and in classical antiquity anticipate the Renaissance.

Pietro Lorenzetti (c. 1280/90–1348) painted the Madonna polyptych (1320), an altarpiece in the Pieve at Arezzo, and a Madonna and Child in Assisi, flanked by St. Francis and St. John. In both, the Madonna and Child are depicted intently gazing at each other. These paintings are

memorable for establishing communication among sacred figures. Both possess the Sieneſe quality of listening to music beyond the reach of the human ear.

The work of the Lorenzetti brothers is characterized by ornamental elegance, a monumental breadth, and a plebian emphasis. Their work exhibits greater variety, and holds more documentary interest, than that of Duccio and Simone Martini. Ambrogio's six scenes proclaiming the advantages of good over bad government in the city and in the country, decorating the Hall of Peace in Siena, adopts a bird's eye view to gain a panoramic effect of space. Ambrogio's exploration of the problems of landscape painting surpasses that of any painter since Roman times.⁶ In the history of art, Ambrogio stands as an important contributor to the technique of representing three-dimensional space. The sweet song of Siena is sung as if in a dream, beautifully coloured. These calm and harmonious dream figures by no means die with the death of great Sieneſe painting. Their spirit will move again in Venice and modulate the Florentine spirit itself in a few painters. That spirit becomes a permanent, if a minor, strain in the subsequent history of European art.

The Sieneſe painters, Duccio, Martini, and the Lorenzetti, were townsmen of relative affluence. Giotto (1266–1336), in contrast, was of peasant origin. If Byzantine art implied an aristocratic conception of Christianity in which Christ was seen exclusively as Emperor, Giotto's peasant origin is symbolic of a new non-aristocratic Christianity in art. Significantly, Giotto's first major surviving work is the fresco cycle of the life of St. Francis in the Church of St. Francis at Assisi. Giotto's greatest work, the thirty-eight scenes from the lives of Jesus and Mary in the Arena Chapel at Padua, is a translation into paint of what Francis and his companions had been doing throughout Italy.

The effect of St. Francis on Christianity in art and life is difficult to overestimate. St. Francis brought into the life of the Christian world a joyful attitude of delight in its true goodness. The world was not to be shunned and escaped in the quest for God; rather, it was to be accepted with joyous gratitude as the gift of God and the setting wherein we must live in communion with God. The "worldliness" of St. Francis manifests itself in his hymns to the sun and other aspects of nature as the sacrament of its Creator. It is evident in the foundation of the Third Order of Franciscans, which still today allows lay people, married, employed, living in the world, to participate in the degree of Christian commitment formerly reserved, at least on a regular basis, for religious who had renounced the world. If the Byzantines concentrated on the blazing image of Christ enthroned in majesty, coming again with glory to the Last Judgment or ruling the universe from above the firmament, the Franciscans saw Jesus of Nazareth, God become one of us, sharing our human condition for the joyful fulfilment of all humankind.

The Franciscan movement created a demand for visual narrative in sculpture and painting: for vivid scenes from the Bible, for stories from the lives of Christ, the Madonna and the saints, for dramatic episodes which had something in common with the presentation of mystery plays. These were sometimes linked in extensive cycles: on wooden panels, as in Duccio's "*Maestà*" in Siena; or in elaborate decorative schemes which peopled the walls and ceiling of a whole interior, as in Padua's Arena Chapel or the Upper Church of St. Francis at Assisi; or, carved in relief, round the circumferences of the rich Pisani pulpits of Pisa and Siena. The general tendency of this religious revival was to accentuate the human qualities of Christ, the Madonna and the saints, and to portray them, not as the remote and majestic divinities of the Byzantine style, but as beings capable of tenderness, emotion, pain and suffering. In the conquest of reality, sculptors naturally enjoyed some initial advantages over painters, since their figures stood or moved in space, and they did not have the problem of creating the illusion of depth on a flat surface. But painters, too, developed by the fourteenth century the skills which enabled them to transform the flat surface on which they worked into a window opening on a scene beyond, and to impart both weight and depth to the figures enacting it. The Renaissance has been equated with the discovery of the world and of humankind, and St. Francis and his movement have been justly credited with much of this. Initially at least, this discovery of the world did not imply the evolution of an irreligious or secularized system of values, since it was designed to draw human minds and hearts to God through the mediation of familiar, everyday things and people. God, Beauty itself, is reflected in all things beautiful.

Cultural changes in the *Trecento* corresponded in many ways to changes in religious sentiment and life.⁸ These changes were rarely sudden or dramatic, but worked slowly and in the long term; they can be described as "humanization". The tendency to dwell more and more on the human character of Christ and his mother, and on the human interest attached to his saints, first appeared in the writings of St. Peter Damiani (d. 1072); it was strongly emphasized in the reverence for the Virgin expressed by St. Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153), and assumed new freshness in the stories that grew up around St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226). Central to this humanization was the idea of nature itself as good. So St. Francis, who created the first Christmas crib with all its anecdotal associations with human life, with the kings or Magi as with the shepherds, was also the man who in his *Canticle of the Sun* had praised earth and fire and the heavenly orbs, wind and air and water, as manifestation of the divine beauty and goodness. St. Francis was the most impressive and influential exponent of the new humanization that would transform the religious and cultural life of the West.

The *Meditations on the Life of Christ* of the Franciscan, Giovanni di

San Gimignano, with its detailed accounts of Christ's childhood, and the *Life of St. Francis* by St. Bonaventure, no less than the writings of the Laudesi school, are works in which Christ is no longer the Christ in Majesty but a suffering human being supported by his mother, a child helpless in the cradle or filled with child-like gravity as he disputed with the doctors. The aim here was not to excite awe and dread but human sympathy and affection.

For art, the humanization of religion offered a novel world of feeling and a wide range of themes that demanded new styles of presentation, since the two-dimensional hieratic art was incapable of capturing its spirit. In this sense, the work of the Sienese painters, of the Florentines Cimabue and Giotto, fulfilled an imperative religious need. If the 28 frescoes of the life of St. Francis painted at Assisi were revolutionary in their expression of religious sentiment—never before had the Church so honoured a lay person in its religious art—then it is not surprising that they should have had a revolutionary impact on art. In the universities, the scholastic philosophers of the thirteenth century never discussed “art” as such.⁹ They did, however, consider the meaning of beauty, and elaborated a well-considered and perhaps influential aesthetic. Treatments of the theme all derived ultimately from a Latin version of the treatise *On the Beautiful* by the early sixth century writer, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite. They are to be found in Albert the Great's *Opusculum de Pulchro*, in the *Summa de Bono* of Ulrich of Strassburg, and in the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas. The views of Aquinas may be taken as typical. The beauty of an object or creature is only a likeness or symbol (*similitudo*) of that divine beauty in which all things participate. Thus in one sense, the beautiful and the good and the true are one. Yet in another sense, that of logical priority, they are different, for beauty adds to the cognitive faculty by which the good is known as such. Beauty then is the means by which truth is seen to be truth, and so it is easy to assign to it a didactic role. To achieve it, three things are necessary—*integritas* (wholeness), *proportio sive consonantia* (proportion or harmony), and *claritas* (brightness or illumination). The canon of St. Thomas and his contemporaries demanded clear expression; it considered any vagueness as a privation of form. It looked forward to the precision and clarity which was to be a leading characteristic of Florentine and Sienese art in the following century. The scholastic contention that just measure (*commensuratio*) is indispensable for beauty makes us think of Giotto and those new conventions of reality which were about to emerge in art. Both philosophers and artists were affected at the same time by intellectual, social and religious developments.

The legacy of St. Francis has had an incomparable impact on western civilization. As Vincent Moleta remarks in *From St. Francis to Giotto: The Influence of St. Francis on Early Italian Art and Literature*:

. . . the life of the Umbrian saint and wonder-worker was a gift to the high creative talent that proliferated in central Italy during the several generations that followed his death. Not only did the rise of a superb lay culture in Italy during the thirteenth and early fourteenth century coincide with the Franciscan rebirth of religious life in Italy. The ideal and example of St. Francis was present to the men of genius who founded that national culture, and St. Francis himself is the subject of some of their most important and moving artistic works.¹⁰

St. Francis' story stimulated the imagination of pre-Renaissance and Renaissance artists. He was the most frequently represented saint in Italian art. The large and spacious Franciscan churches, well suited to a more popular art of immediate impact on their large congregations, provided building projects and wide expanses for dramatic and influential frescoes such as those in the Assisi basilica. These works reflected a new, naturalistic style, provided visual accompaniment to a popular preaching not in Latin but in the spoken language. These works reflect St. Francis' profound humanity and his joyful response to nature, which contributed to the rediscovery of the world of nature and a fresh vision of the sacred story that mark the humanism of the best Italian art of the period. Their creations would astound the Renaissance artists as late as Vasari (d. 1574), who gave the Assisi chapel the highest praise for the variety of compositions, for the costumes of the period, for the arrangement, proportion, vivacity, and naturalness of the figures. He saw the verisimilitude of the events portrayed and took them as a celebration of life.¹¹

Dante exalts Francis over all the Doctors of the Church and the founders of monastic orders as the most perfect imitator of Christ (*Paradiso* 32. 34–36). Dante's panegyric calls attention to Francis' gifts of wonder, love, joy, and the appreciation of beauty. The psalms express the same wonder that leads to worship and praise: "O Lord how wonderful are your works!" (Ps 92:5). The beauty of nature expressing divine loveliness delighted Francis. Such beauty inspired him to delight in thanking and praising God, Beauty Itself. The same Absolute Love that is resplendent in the beauty of creation enables us to delight in all loveliness. The lady Matilda, whom Dante hears singing as she gathers flowers in the rich meadows of the Earthly Paradise, may be taken as a metaphor for Francis' attitude to nature, for she picks the flowers in appreciation of their beauty as God's gifts (*Purgatorio*). Enthralled by the beauty and mystery of creation, Francis showed that the love of God, the love of humankind, and the love of nature, are all of a piece. The way we love and treasure the things around us is an index of our love for God; and the love and joy of our commitment to God above all, grounds our true love for and delight in the things around us. Francis did not separate the interests of God, humankind, and nature. He has been called "the Orpheus

of the Middle Ages” because he recognized God in all things and sang of the harmony of all things in God.¹² He sang to the Creator whose creation had charmed him.

The most attractive characteristic of St. Francis for all people, according to Friedrich Heiler, is his all-embracing love and all-pervading joy.¹³ And yet, Heiler reminds us, Francis is a medieval saint: not a preacher of a boundless religious subjectivism, but a faithful adherent of the traditional dogmatic and sacramental Christianity. His love of nature has nothing to do with the pantheism of the Persian Sufi, of Giordano Bruno, Goethe, and Rabindranath Tagore, but the center of his life is grounded in the mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. The saying of Paul about Christ, who “though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor” (II Cor 8:9) was one of Francis’ favourite texts. The loving and joyful piety of Francis rests on a dogmatic belief in the mystery of the Incarnation. But, further, this mystery is not confined to the past facts of salvation; it becomes immediately present in the Church, her hierarchy, her priesthood, and her sacraments. Francis is a humble son of the Catholic Church. In his first Rule, he imposes on his disciples the strictest Catholicism of thought and action: “All brethren shall be Catholic, they shall live and speak in a Catholic way. But if anyone should depart from the Catholic way in his speech or actions and should not be penitent he shall be expelled from the brotherhood” (Reg. NB 19). For Francis, the Church was the upholder and guardian of the truth. He thought her doctrine true and her faith the guarantee of salvation. The joy which irradiates the whole life of Francis and his disciples has its roots in the Catholic faith. He lived in the joyful assurance of that faith to the extent that the word joy, *laetitia*, is found most frequently in the writings of and about Francis. His joyful poverty and delight in nature are rooted in his deep faith, the freedom of a heart not possessed or obsessed by any creature, to enjoy God in all things.

- 1 Brian Pullan, *A History of Early Renaissance Italy: From the Middle Thirteenth to the Mid-Fifteenth Century* (New York, 1972), 166, 168.
- 2 John Larner, *Culture and Society in Italy 1290–1420* (New York, 1971), 9–10.
- 3 Frank and Dorothy Getlein, *Christianity in Art* (Milwaukee, 1959), 74. See also Enzo Carli, *Sienese Painting* (Greenwich, 1956). Enzo Carli, *GiOTTO and His Contemporaries* (New York, 1958)
- 4 See Bernard S. Myers, *Art and Civilization* (New York, 1957), ch. 14, “From Castle to Commune: The Rise of Gothic Art,” 298–343. Peter Kidson, in *The Medieval World*, p. 166, affirms that “It was perhaps through Simone Martini more than anyone else that Italian Gothic began to exercise a reciprocal influence on its French sources”.
- 5 John Larner (*Culture and Society in Italy*, 5) notes that Martini’s Guidoriccio da Fogliano at Siena is the first surviving painting of a layman without any religious significance. Brian Pullan (*A History of Early Renaissance Italy*, 195) comments that Martini portrayed Siena’s mercenary captain, Guidoriccio, in the year of his great victory over Castruccio Castracane, lord of Lucca. Guidoriccio, a symbol of the strength of the commune abroad, was seen riding — the first equestrian painting in

- history — before the little towns of Montemassi and Sassoforte, which he had “liberated”.
- 6 John Julius Norwich observes in his text for *Charlie Waite's Italian Landscapes* (London, 1990) that there is one sort of landscape which can be instantaneously recognized as Italian. It is, he believes, typically Tuscan: “Not too flat, of course, but not mountainous either; just green, rolling hills, some of them quite steep, a few topped with little towns, each with its church and attendant campanile. In one of the valleys between there runs a winding river, crossed by an occasional hump-backed bridge. To each side of it, the fields are planted with olive and vine; others have been left for pasture, in which cattle or sheep can be added to according to taste. Here and there, apparently at random but in fact most carefully positioned, sometimes in lines, sometimes in clusters, but more often outlined all alone against the cloud-streaked sky, our eye falls on that most quintessential of Italian trees, the cypress. The picture is complete.” p. 10.
 - 7 The three major achievements of the Gothic period were these: (1) The integration of figures with the architectural or landscape backgrounds of the scene that they enact; (2) the introduction of emotional attitudes in the depicted figures; (3) the introduction of three-dimensional buildings, more particularly interiors. See Peter Kidson, *The Medieval World* (London, 1967), 164.
 - 8 John Lamer, *Culture and Society in Italy*, 42–43.
The German Henry Thode sustained in his book *Saint Francis and the Origins of Renaissance Art in Italy* (Berlin, 1835) that St. Francis and his movement paved the way for the Renaissance. Francis, according to Thode, dramatized the Christian religion and played a decisive role in the development of the “Laudi” and the “Mysteres”. He popularized moralizing anecdotes, the *exempla*, and references in painting to anecdotes and contemporary life. He is said to have rediscovered nature and introduced portraiture and landscape into iconography. From Francis are said to have come realism and narrative in art. See Jacques Le Goff in M.W. Sheehan, O.F.M., *St. Francis of Assisi* (1982), 15. Although there is much truth to Thode’s claim, he tends to overlook how Francis reflects his time and place in the halcyon days of communal Italy. As early as 1215, for example, Palioto de Berardenga depicts, in the art gallery at Siena, the history of the Cross in his six small anecdotal panels surrounding the reigning Christ. About the turn of the thirteenth century, the figure of Christ on painted crucifixes underwent a transition from the Christ in glory to that of the suffering Christ; the Virgin in Majesty gave way to the Virgin Mother; the iconography of the saints discarded the stereotyped figures and symbolic attributes in favour of biographically authentic truth and features.
 - 9 *Ibid.*, 51.
 - 10 Vincent Molica, *From St. Francis to Giotto* (Chicago, 1983), 1, quoted in Roger D. Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature* (Oxford, 1988), 143.
 - 11 H. Stubblebine, *Assisi and the Rise of Vernacular Art* (New York, 1985), 88f., quoted in R. D. Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature*, 143.
 - 12 F. Ozanam, *The Franciscan Poets in Italy of the Thirteenth Century*, tr. A.E. Nellen and N.C. Craig (London, 1914), 78.
 - 13 F. Heiler, “Saint Francis of Assisi and the Catholic Church,” in Maureen W. Sheehan, O.F.M., Ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Essays in Commemoration*, 1982. (St. Bonaventure, NY, 1982), 115.

**The Editor wishes to apologise for proof-reading errors
in the following articles:**

Judith Rist on *Zionism* in the February 1994 issue:

P. 85, line 21 should read "Since I first wrote this article has come the unlooked for breakthrough ..."

P. 87, line 41 should read " — as was done in reverse on an ITV programme during Holy Week 1993 — "

P. 88, line 19 should read: "... with the growth of Liberalism, that numbers ..."

P. 91, line 13 should read "...terrorist tactics — Their most notorious act ..."

P. 93, line 38 should read " ... as illegal in view of the Palestinian rejection of the U.N. partition of Palestine."

P. 95, lines 10 and 11 should read "The Palestinian refugee camps created by the Wars of 1947 and 1967 have been the cause of great scandal and have proved breeding grounds for terrorism ..."

P. 96, lines 17 to 20 should read "I hope that I have shown that the Arab-Israeli conflict is a much more complex matter than many people realise, and than many want them to realise and that the existence of the Jewish homeland is an accomplishment, for once, of Western justice."

Professor Michael Nolan on *Aquinas and the Defective Male* in the March 1994 issue.

P. 157, line 20 should read ... see below p. 159.

P. 163, the last paragraph should read : One can only be surprised that a single phrase has so readily been taken to express the kernel of Aristotle's and Aquinas's thinking. For of all the great philosophers, they believed most strongly that Nature acts for the best. "There too are gods".⁴¹ And Aquinas was a member of an order founded to combat the teaching that the natural world in general and reproduction in particular are evils, creations of a malevolent God. That, he thought, was the worst possible heresy.⁴² Neither Aristotle or Aquinas was ever in the least likely to believe that half the human species is defective.