CIMABUE: THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIS STYLE

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts

by
Janis Arlene Spurlock, B.A.
The Ohio State University
1972

Approved by

[Signature]
Adviser
Department of the History of Art
PREFACE: THE HISTORY OF THIS STUDY

My present study concerning the development of Cimabue's style is the result of several graduate courses taken under the direction of Professor Anthony Melnikas. I would like to thank Professor Melnikas for his patient direction during the past two years. His guidance has led me to understand more fully the History of Art and the manner in which one should attempt serious research in this field. Professor Melnikas greatly emphasized the process involved in an art historical study which will surely prove to be extremely valuable in my future studies. I would also like to thank Professor Franklin Ludden for his useful suggestions concerning the final stages of this thesis.

I first became interested in Italian painting of the thirteenth century during a History of Art course, "Precursors to the Renaissance," taught by Professor Melnikas. My first studies were centered upon the Trinità Altarpiece by Cimabue. After completing a paper on this panel painting, it became clear that in order to establish a conceivable date for such a problematic work as the Trinità Altarpiece, one would have to study other works painted by the same artist.
style. However, he could easily have seen other works in Rome such as the Bible of San Callisto which was possibly in San Paolo fuori le Mura during Cimabue's visit. Following the suggestion of scholars such as Ferdinando Bologna, Carolingian works could have been a source for the dramatic intensity evident in Cimabue's works at Assisi. Professor Melnikas again suggested that this area of Carolingian influence be examined.

This phase of my research also included an investigation of the naturalism and mysticism ("with a touch of pathos") evident in the Franciscan literature and the Balkan painting of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The last phase of my research involved the study of Cimabue's works at Assisi which exhibit many of the above noted sources from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, both Professors Melnikas and Ludden cautioned by reliance upon Cimabue's wholesale absorption of influences. After an examination of Cimabue's style and his possible sources it should be apparent that Cimabue was an individual artist and surely part of his stylistic development was due to his artistic personality.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE .................................................. ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ...................................... v

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ................................. vii

INTRODUCTION ........................................... 1

CHAPTER I: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIMABUE’S EARLY STYLE

1. The Crucifix in San Domenico at Arezzo ........ 7

2. The Phenomena of the East-West Exchange .......... 11

3. The Thirteenth-century Italian Panel Painting .... 16

4. General Byzantine Influences on Italian Painting of the Thirteenth Century .... 25

5. The Macedonian Renascence and Paleologian Painting .... 30

6. The Neo-Hellenism and Cimabue ................. 44

7. The Carolingian Impact upon Italian Art ........ 50

8. The Impact of the Legend of St. Francis ........ 56

9. The Impact of Contemporary Italian Sculpture .... 65

CHAPTER II: THE ROMAN IMPACT UPON CIMABUE’S ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Cimabue in Rome and the Roman Curia ........ 68

2. Roman Painting of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries .... 78
3. The Impact of Contemporary Roman Works on Cimabue's Early Style ........................................... 90

4. The Development of Cimabue's Style in Assisi ................................................................. 94

5. Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 103
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS


Pl. 4 Crucifix. San Domenico, Arezzo. Cimabue, c. 1265-70.

Pl. 5 Crucifix #15. Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa. Late twelfth century.

Pl. 6 Detail of Pl. 4.

Pl. 7 Crucifix #20. Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa. c. 1225.


Pl. 9 Icon. Byzantine Museum, Athens. Detail.

Pl. 10 Crucifix. Formerly at S. Croce, Florence. Cimabue, c. 1265-90.


Pl. 15 Lamentation. Nerezi, Yugoslavia. c. 1164.

Pl. 16 Crucifixion. Church of Nemanja, Studenica, Yugoslavia. c. 1208.

Pl. 17 Detail of Pl. 16.
Pl. 18 Deposition. Mileseva, Yugoslavia. c. 1235.

Pl. 19 Casting out of a Devil from the Daughter of the Woman of Canaan. Hagia Sophia, Trebizond. c. 1260.

Pl. 20 Feeding of the Five Thousand. Hagia Sophia, Trebizond. c. 1260.

Pl. 21 Dormition of the Virgin. Sopocani, Yugoslavia. c. 1265.

Pl. 22 Appearance to the Maries in the Garden. Sopocani, Yugoslavia. c. 1265.

Pl. 23 Betrayal. Detail of Pl. 11.

Pl. 24 Betrayal. Mileseva, Yugoslavia. c. 1235.

Pl. 25 Maestas Domini, San Callisto Bible. S. Paolo fuori le Mura. Fol. cclvi verso.


Pl. 27 St. Francis Preaching to the Birds. San Francesco, Assisi. Master of St. Francis Cycle.

Pl. 28 The Lament of Joseph's Parents. Baptistry, Florence. Cimabue (?).

Pl. 29 Dormition of the Virgin. Sopocani, Yugoslavia. c. 1265. Detail.


Pl. 31 Mary. Detail of Pl. 10.


Pl. 35  **St. Clement rescuing a Child.** San Clemente, Rome. c. 1100.

Pl. 36  **Reconciliation of the Princely Apostles.** San Pietro, Tuscania. Second quarter of twelfth century.

Pl. 37  **Apostles.** Santa Croce, Jerusalem. c. 1144.

Pl. 38  **Christ from the Entry into Jerusalem and the Apostles from the Last Supper.** San Pietro in Valle, Ferentillo. Last quarter of the twelfth century.

Pl. 39  **Noah receiving God's Order to build the Ark.** San Pietro in Valle, Ferentillo. Last quarter of the twelfth century.

Pl. 40  **Creation.** San Pietro in Valle, Ferentillo. Last quarter of the twelfth century.

Pl. 41  **Apostle.** S. Paolo fuori le Mura, Rome.

Pl. 42  **Madonna and Child Enthroned between St. John the Evangelist and St. John the Baptist.** San Silvestro, Tivoli. End of the first quarter of the thirteenth century.

Pl. 43  **The Saviour and Scenes from the History of Samuel.** Anagni Cathedral. Mid-thirteenth century.

Pl. 44  **Moses flying from the Serpent.** Abbey, Grottaferrata. c. 1270.

Pl. 45  **Crucifixion.** San Francesco, Assisi. c. 1280.

Pl. 46  **Angels of the Crucifixion.** San Francesco, Assisi. c. 1280.

Pl. 47  **Three Marys of the Crucifixion.** San Francesco, Assisi. c. 1280.

Pl. 48  **Hebrews from the Crucifixion.** San Francesco, Assisi. c. 1280.
INTRODUCTION

The works of Cimabue have been studied extensively since the late nineteenth century. Numerous articles and monographs have succeeded the early research. However, there has been neither any great change nor further developments in the art historian's approach to the works of Cimabue. It is—and has been since the time of Vasari—rather commonly accepted that the paintings by Cimabue are the classic examples of the Italo-Byzantine style. However, the literature in the area concerning this subject is either too general or evades the painstaking efforts needed in order to trace the specific formation of the artist's style. The purpose of this thesis is to show some of the most important sources in the painting style of Cimabue, both before and after he visited Rome. It is in no way to be considered as another monograph or catalog of the artist's works. In essence this thesis may be considered as a collection of two essays, each dealing with a specific source of influence evident in the style of Cimabue's painting.

Cimabue's style obviously changed after his trip to Rome. However, an investigation of the artist's style before he went to Rome must be considered indis-
pensable since Cimabue does not discard the earlier stylistic features evident in his later works. Therefore, one of the very important tasks of this thesis will be to define and explain as closely as possible the sources of Cimabue's style before his trip to Rome. Unfortunately only a few panel paintings remain that are generally agreed to be by Cimabue and only one of these works, the **Crucifix** in San Domenico at Arezzo, is commonly dated before the trip to Rome. A close observation of this **Crucifix** will make it possible to study the sources of Cimabue's style. The reader is cautioned, however, that the stylistic elements evident in this panel painting were not uncommon during the late thirteenth century in Tuscany. The organization and composition of the work, along with the drama evident in the suffering Christ, were actually not new elements. They had all been seen before in the works of the Florentines, Coppo and Salerno di Marcovaldo, and in those by Giunta Pisano and Guido da Siena. What is new in this work by Cimabue is the Neo-Hellenic treatment of these recently discovered forms.

Surely the most important influence upon the early painting by Cimabue may be found in the mosaics of the Baptistry of Florence which were executed by both Greek and Italian artists. Within a majority of the later
cycles in the Baptistry one can easily notice a new or at least uncommon movement and expression evident in the figures. This particular quality connects these mosaics with the Byzantine works done during the Macedonian and Early Paleologian periods. At times the forms seen to be manneristic in both the depiction of the figures and the often dramatic expressions. Although some of these Byzantine influences may be found in the works by Coppo and Giunta, it is Cimabue who realized a majority of the Neo-Hellenic qualities into his painting style. Because of the importance of these Neo-Hellenic qualities which appeared in the paintings of Cimabue, especially those at Assisi, it will be necessary to examine some of the possible sources. For this reason a short historical account of the exchanges between the East and West will be presented.

The possibility of Carolingian influence must at least be mentioned. Several scholars have discussed the similarities that exist between the tense Carolingian forms of the school of Reims and a corresponding tension noticeable in the works of Cimabue at Assisi. These parallels cannot be denied; yet, this does seem to be a forced comparison. There were connections with
the North during the thirteenth century and a proper consideration will be taken. Yet, the exchanges with the East along with the concern for the autonomous and individual development of the artist seem to be of far greater importance. A visual parallelism is quite convincing when one compares a Northern work from the Palace School of Charlemagne (Pl. 1) and an Eastern manuscript page (Pl. 2) with one of the works from the Assisi paintings done by Cimabue (Pl. 3).

The Neo-Hellenic forcefulness to be discussed in the works of Cimabue is already noticeable in the art of Coppo and Salerno di Marcovaldo. This may be seen in both a panel painting, the Crucifix #30 at San Filippo Neri in Gimignano, and in the mosaic containing the Hell scene in the Florence Baptistery. Similar formal tendencies may be seen in the Greek East. They will be compared with the wall paintings at Nerezi (c. 1164), Studenica (c. 1209) and Sopoćani (c. 1265). Another possible influence which requires attention is that of the teaching of St. Francis and the writings of his biographers as well as those of his followers. Moreover, the Franciscanism of the thirteenth century should also be considered in reference to the artists and patrons of the paintings at Assisi.

When Cimabue's later works (such as those at Assisi)
will be considered, it will become quite evident that a piece of the puzzle is missing. That is, if Florentine monumentality is obviously present in Cimabue's early works, such as in the Crucifix in San Domenico at Arezzo, these early works do not contain the volume, depth, and, in some cases, weight that is evident in several contemporary Roman works. These characteristics later appear in Cimabue's Assisi frescoes. An effort will be made to clarify whether Cimabue learned these new visual effects in Rome. Especially helpful in verifying this thesis will be the document placing Cimabue's presence in Rome in the year 1272.

A question will be raised if it was in Rome that Cimabue encountered the expressive Neo-Hellenic form or if the impact came from the works he saw in Florence such as the Baptistry mosaics. It will be important to note, however, that Rome offered other formal examples which were assimilated into Cimabue's painting style. Although Cimabue's works at Assisi may be considered Neo-Hellenic, there are other and new stylistic elements to be found there which must yet be accounted for and explained. The changes, or new stylistic aspects in Cimabue's frescoes at Assisi, will be seen from the viewpoint of the new humanity of St. Francis. Moreover, a broad painting technique and a new sense of form akin
to the classical, must be viewed in the light of the possible connection with Roman masters or their paintings in or around the year 1272. Although it is not known how long Cimabue remained in Rome, it is evident from his post-Roman works that he must have spent some time there studying both contemporary and ancient works of art.

After thorough research into this latter problem one is able to come to the conclusion that the late paintings by Cimabue are full representatives of Roman influences. His Tuscan and Neo-Hellenic origins remain apparent, but the essential 'modern' style of painting seen at Assisi must be considered a result of a Roman experience. It must also be remembered that although Rome was bound by its traditions, it was also a city that had and continued to be subjected to many foreign influences. Due to the renewed interest in the reconstruction and building of churches for the preparation of the Holy Year, artists from other areas, especially the Greek East, were brought to Rome. At this time Cimabue surely renewed an acquaintance with the Neo-Hellenic qualities while seriously studying classical monuments of the past. The results of these various experiences are to be found at Assisi.
CHAPTER I
THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIMABUE'S EARLY STYLE

1. The Crucifix in San Domenico at Arezzo

Cimabue's training in Florence resulted in his early but confident and probably mature style seen in the Crucifix in San Domenico at Arezzo executed under the patronage of the Dominicans.¹ This crucifix, generally accepted as Cimabue's earliest extant panel painting, is traditional in its basic format, but does include some rather unnoticeable differences or innovations when it is compared to earlier or contemporary works. The image of the dead Christ is flanked by Mary and John in the finials and crowned with the 'teaching image of Christ' in the cimasa. Although the figure of Christ, in some respects, may be considered an advancement from earlier or contemporary panel paintings, it must still, in the final analysis, be considered mostly traditional. The body does create a sense of volume; yet, the straight-edged and stylized effect is undeniable both in this form and in the depiction of

¹It is the view of this student that the Crucifix in San Domenico should be considered an example of Cimabue's mature style, if only because of the sureness and quality of execution.
the drapery. Overall there is a definite interest in the use of patterns, as seen especially in the arms, face, torso and the loin cloth of the Christ figure. Cimabue does not seem to be interested in creating a purely naturalistic effect, and, for this reason, the merits of this panel paintings should be judged accordingly.

As has often been recognized, Cimabue is a master of design. After creating the patterns and effects desired in the body of Christ, he sacrifices a bit of naturalistic truth in order not to impair his design. The most prominent illustration of this fact is seen in the elongation of Christ's left shoulder in order to counter-balance the extra weight thrust to the right by His lowered head. Then, in order to retain the balance of the design, Christ's hair is painted as flowing over part of this elongated area in the shoulder. When this crucifix is compared to the early Pisan crucifix panel paintings, such as the Pisa Crucifix #15 (Pl. 5) in the Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, it is quite evident that Cimabue had worked out a system of balance in contrast to the earlier system of static symmetry.

Contemporary with other Italian artists, Cimabue applied an S-curve or slump to the figure of Christ,
which is not evident at the time of the Pisa Crucifix #15 (late twelfth century). This curvature is emphasized by the rigidity in the design of the cross, the low angle of Christ's head, and the tension in His arms due to the weight of the body. Although naturalism is not a term that should be applied to this painting, the body of Christ is more naturalistically 'hung' upon the cross than is evident in crucifixes painted by Giunta Pisano or Guido da Siena, who either thrust the body far to the left or outward from the cross, respectively.

It is quite apparent that along with the design of the crucifix as a whole and the body of Christ, Cimabue was also concerned with the design of the individual parts of the body. The stylization in the arms and torso has already been mentioned and only a glance is needed in order to confirm the very stylized and linear conception of the drapery. More investigation, however, is needed when the face (Pl. 6) is concerned, since this area along with the curvature of the figure together create the great sense of pathos evident in the crucifix. It is also in the facial area that one can again easily observe Cimabue's merits as a designer. This area is composed of a series of sharp-edged lines, but they are neither straight nor uninte-
resting. In other words, a stylization is apparent, but it is not a flat piece of decoration. There is also a sense of volume, although it is not yet naturalistic. For this reason, this painting should perhaps be characterized as humanistic rather than naturalistic, for the representation is definitely human. The linear conception of Christ's face is much like that of the body—it is designed. The eyes are little more than slits emphasized somewhat by shading, with the furrowed brow above slightly echoing the same type of linearity. The nose, beginning at the forehead with a V-shaped area, leading down to the bridge area, and terminating in a round bulbous shape at the tip, is quite prominent.

Cimabue was apparently concerned with a more naturalistic representation in the beard of the Christ figure. This detour into naturalism perhaps can also be applied to the manner in which Christ's hair falls across His shoulders, although this conception is more linear and less natural than the depiction of the facial hair. Of course, it must also be accepted that this type of representation is somewhat traditional and seen as early as the Pisa Crucifix #20 (Pl. 7), c. 1225.

In the half figures of John and Mary the same basic characteristics may be observed. Quite apparent are the strong delineations of the facial features, the same
staccato linearity in the depiction of the drapery, a similar sense of volume created by the figure, and the same predilection for the creation of a design. The desire for a vivid sense of coloration is also quite apparent. It is quite possible that the shaft and arms of the cross along with other less significant areas were painted by one or more assistants; yet, one should notice that the interest in pattern and design was carried throughout the panel in a very sophisticated manner.

It is of course difficult to speak of Cimabue's early style since so few works can be attributed to this period. However, because of the maturity evident in the Crucifix in San Domenico, one is equipped with a fairly adequate knowledge of the painter's vocabulary, influences and abilities. Naturally it is impossible to study Italian panel paintings of the thirteenth century without including a discussion of the Byzantine characteristics which manifest themselves in a majority of the works.

2. The Phenomena of the East-West Exchange

There is no doubt of the vast amount of scholarship dealing with the East-West exchange of ideas, philosophies and artistic influences. Yet when monographs on
artists such as Cimabue are explored, there is a very evident gap between the influences absorbed and the formation of the artist's style. Nevertheless, in order to attempt a solution, it will be necessary to explore the particular points of interest regarding the historical exchange between the East and West.

A crucial date in the formation of the East-West exchange is 330 when Constantine decided to establish the seat of the empire in the East thereby creating the imperial and influential city of Constantinople. From this date onward there was an acceleration to the exchange, which reached a high point beginning at the end of the eleventh century with the Crusades. The Byzantine Empire had always been a distant and suspicious place to Western man. Nevertheless he could not help admiring the splendour and richness of the Eastern empire, especially since the symbol of the Western empire, the Imperial City of Rome, had fallen practically into ruin. This admiration was succeeded by a borrowing and surely a very conscious imitation of life, as is evidenced by the use of Greek personal names by the more affluent Romans, and art, such as the frescoes at Santa Maria Antigua in Rome.

For centuries there was great conflict between the East and West and, needless to say, there existed great
differences in the liturgies of the two churches. The Popes in the West claimed not only supremacy over the other bishops, but also claimed that they were given all power by God and that they in turn relegated the temporal power to the Emperors.

Attempts were made in the sixth century by Justinian to place the West under his rule. His forces victoriously took Ravenna in 539, but he did not have the extended power needed in order to continue his hold on this area. Nevertheless, a great deal of artistic evidence remained in Ravenna to testify to the Eastern presence. The most obvious example of this influence would of course be the church of San Vitale with the Eastern mosaic panels depicting Justinian with his court matched with Theodora and her attendants on the opposite wall. However, the interests in this paper are primarily centered in Italy and the Eastern influences which would have the greatest effect upon the art of the latter thirteenth century.

It is also necessary to discuss what made these exchanges possible. There are direct influences that have been documented, but it will be sufficient to discuss Venice and other trade oriented cities in order to understand the excessive amount of exchange that did occur. As mentioned above, the high-point of this
exchange began in the later eleventh century, when the First Crusade was preached by Pope Urban II. Documentation exists concerning business agreements between the Papacy and cities such as Genoa and Pisa for the transport of troops, arms, and other supplies needed in order to continue the Crusades to save Eastern Christendom. Of course magnificent material gains were to be made by these cities, not only in the form of payment and booty, but also in the form of new trading rights.¹

Venice is particularly interesting when observing this East-West exchange. She too received generous concessions in return for her efforts during the Crusades. With a city such as Venice, which was one of the first in Italy to become self-governing in any sense, there was surely more interest in the Crusades than merely "a deed of friendship and reconciliation towards Eastern Christendom."² The merchants were now not only rich individuals, but were also members of

²For more detailed information concerning the merchants and shipping during this period, see: E.H. Byrne, Genoese Shipping in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries (Cambridge, Mass., 1930).

rich corporations. They could afford to take chances since no great fortune would be lost to any one individual if a 'crusade' did not succeed. On the other hand if there was a successful mission, then each member was often guaranteed of a small fortune. This same attitude was surely the case during the Fourth Crusade in 1204 when the Imperial City, Constantinople, was sacked and looted, thereby providing Venice with a vast amount of booty. Among this booty of course were portable panel paintings, miniature mosaics, illuminated manuscripts, and other objects d'art. Another result of this revengefull mission is the fact that many Greek artists were either forcefully brought back to the West or came voluntarily. Evidences to this fact can be seen in the mosaics at Torcello and in San Marco in Venice. The Norman Kings even kidnapped Byzantine artists in order to make figured silks, icon paintings and mosaics.4

It is quite probable that the Byzantine style was especially common throughout Italy and evidences may be found that this was also the case in several other areas of Western Europe. The portable manuscripts not only increased the awareness of the Byzantine style but also

4Ibid., p. 78.
the awareness of the Greek language which was studied in centers of learning such as Pisa. With the great amount of exchange between the East and West, it is easy to understand the adoption of Byzantine characteristics in the art of the Italians. Runciman even goes so far as to say that the Fourth Crusade is "amongst the prime creative forces in the Italian Renaissance." 5

3. **The Thirteenth-century Italian Panel Painting**

In order to understand Cimabue's earlier style, it is necessary to examine what he most likely had seen or studied. It is quite probable that Cimabue saw various panel paintings by Giunta Pisano, Coppo and Salerno di Marcovaldo and Guido da Siena, among others. It is also possible that he saw even earlier Italian works which themselves probably influenced the formation of the styles of the artists mentioned. Therefore it is important not to exclude a glance at these earlier works.

One of the early crucifixes being considered, the Pisa **Crucifix #15**, has already been mentioned and discussed as a form of Italian Romanesque art that existed during the second half of the twelfth century. Another Pisan crucifix, the Pisa **Crucifix #20** (Pl. 7),

---

also in the Museo Nazionale di San Matteo in Pisa, exhibits quite a change in style from the earlier work. It is datable around 1225 and according to Oertel, "the style is almost pure Byzantine." The representation is of the Christus Patiens—the Suffering Christ and the figure is depicted dead with some sense of weight causing the body to slump under the pressure. The figure of Christ is flanked by scenes of the Passion, which were later eliminated in panel paintings such as Giunta Pisano's crucifixes, one of which is in Santa Maria degli Angeli and dated approximately 1236.7 The main focus is now upon the body of Christ while the depictions of John and Mary have been reduced to half-figures within the finials. The traditional Ascension scene of Christ in the cimasa (seen in the earlier Pisan crucifixes) was reduced to a half-figure representation of the Teaching Image of Christ. It is at this stage of development that the precedents for the form of Cimabue's Arezzo Crucifix may be found.

It is very possible that Giunta saw Byzantine works

---


7 Ibid., p. 344. References to other crucifixes by Giunta Pisano may be found in Chapter 3, Note 15, of this volume.
and this is made evident when his Crucifix (Pl. 8) in Bologna is compared to the Crucifixion at Daphni. An even better comparison would be a detail of an Icon (Pl. 9) in the Byzantine Museum in Athens dated in the mid-thirteenth century. A definite similarity is visible between the two Christ figures, and especially remarkable is the development of the intense and dramatic expression in the face. The only obvious difference between works such as Giunta's and those of the late thirteenth century in the Greek East is the greater amount of elongation in the Byzantine works. This is the feature that should lead one to compare the Byzantine works with Cimabue's Crucifix (Pl. 10) in Santa Croce at Florence. Although Cimabue's work is quite advanced, it was at this time that an Italian artist chose to adopt those characteristics which in this case Giunta left untouched.

The possibility of a student-teacher relationship existed between Cimabue and his Florentine precursor, Coppo di Marcovaldo. It is one of Coppo's later panel paintings, the Crucifix #30 (Pl. 11) in the Palazzo Communale at San Gimignano, that one must accept as a direct precursor to Cimabue's Crucifix (Pl. 4) in San Domenico. Great similarities may be found in the type of cross, although the traditional scenes after the
Passion are depicted in the side panels of Coppo's cross in contrast to Cimabue's simplification of this format. Perhaps this simplification should be considered more a debt to the inelaborate type of crucifix introduced by Giunta Pisano. The depictions of the figure of Christ in the crucifixes of both Coppo and Cimabue are quite similar, especially in the facial areas. No denial of these similarities can be made when the expression of Christ and the reliance upon a linear design are observed. When compared to the Crucifix formerly in Santa Croce at Florence, Coppo's work of course seems quite primitive in some respects; however, when the Crucifix at Pistoia, most likely a later work by Coppo and his son, Salerno, is examined one sees the very beginnings of a softer style which again comes to the fore in the Santa Croce work. Although it is rather insignificant, the similarity of the bands of decoration on all three crosses should also be noticed.

One of the most discussed works by Coppo is the Madonna and Child Enthroned (Pl. 12), c. 1265-70, in Santa Maria dei Servi, Orvieto. It is possible to see

---

8 Since Coppo's earlier Madonna and Child Enthroned panel painting in Siena has been repainted in the hand and facial areas, only the panel painting in Orvieto will be discussed in this paper.
several very obvious Byzantine characteristics such as the depiction of the drapery. However, this is not the same manner in which Cimabue conceived the drapery in his paintings such as the Madonna and Child Enthroned (Pl. 13) in the Uffizi, Florence. In Coppo's panel painting, the representation of the drapery is very close to that in the Byzantine work of the Madonna and Child Enthroned in the National Gallery, Washington (Melon Collection). There is a creation of volume, but it is not a volume created around a natural form as is more apparent in Cimabue's work. According to Nicholson, "the pattern of the Orvieto work is more circular and less angular than that of Cimabue." Although it is possible to misunderstand Nicholson's intentions in this statement, it seems that he is comparing details within the drapery scheme rather than the conception of the whole.

---

9 It is not the intention at this point to concentrate on the importance of Byzantine influence in the paintings of Cimabue. Byzantine characteristics, however, must be included in any discussion of thirteenth-century panel paintings in Italy, and this type of discussion will be carried out in reference to these panels, leaving the study of Neo-Hellenic qualities to a later stage of the thesis.

Other characteristics of Byzantine derivation in Coppo's panel painting are the cushion upon which the Madonna sits, the lyre-shaped throne and the type of angels. The lyre-shaped throne, which is often seen in both Byzantine and Italian works, is also found in the Madonna and Child Enthroned in Santa Maria dei Servi, Bologna, by Cimabue. The angels in Coppo's panel are very Byzantine in character and depiction, but they have been brought 'closer to earth' and in contact with the Madonna's throne. Cimabue is in part indebted to Coppo also for the type of Child with hand raised in blessing and especially for the sense of monumentality, which of course is brought to a high point in the Trinità Altarpiece (Pl. 13). However, even greater affinity may be found in a comparison of Cimabue's panel with the Madonna and Child Enthroned (Pl. 14) by the Master of San Martino in the Museo Nazionale, Pisa. The conception and decoration of the throne is very much the type used by Cimabue in each of his paintings of the same subject. The representation of the Madonna and Child is here very similar to that in the Trinità Altarpiece. Even more interesting is the fact that in the Pisa altarpiece one sees an uncommon bit of iconography in the depiction of a scene beneath the throne of the Virgin. This device is of course
later taken up and amplified by Cimabue.

As has been mentioned, Cimabue was a master of design and it is probable that this is also a result of his connections with Coppo. "Coppo's overpowering force is in the inflexibility of the geometric stylization, even of the smallest detail. With the ruler and compass, one feels, Coppo juxtaposed linear motif to linear motif . . . ."\(^\text{11}\) It is also with Coppo that the first concrete connections were made with Sienese art. Although Cimabue's art is definitely Florentine, he could not resist some influences that came from Siena via Guido. This relationship was also reciprocal since Guido was Cimabue's contemporary. Since very few Sienese characteristics are noticeable in the Trinità panel, the discussion will deal mostly with the crucifixes. The Sienese painters were not as interested in the monumentality, creation of space or feeling for more subdued coloring as were the Florentines. Nevertheless, borrowings still occurred. "Whereas Coppo's style is angular and sharp, crystalline and sculpturally hard, Guido's is rounded and elegant, smooth in its transitions, and fluid in its lines."\(^\text{12}\) Both artists were indebted


\(^{12}\)Dertel, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
to Byzantine art, although for different reasons. Coppo's interests were in the formal aspects of line and the creation of planes enveloping volumes, where Guido is more interested in the expression of feeling, or as Oertel terms it, the "melancholy". Basically the same may be said when the interests of Guido and Cimabue are compared.

A new problem arises when two contemporary painters such as Guido and Cimabue are compared. To say the least, the scholarship on the subject is somewhat confusing. In books dealing with Italian art in general, the reader is presented with a rather logical sense of development. Guido is most often discussed in comparison to Coppo and then the line of development takes one to Cimabue's works. However, when a monograph on Guido such as Stubblebine's is read, there is not only the discussion of a cross-influence between the two artists, but Stubblebine seems also to concentrate more upon Cimabue's influence upon Guido. It is obviously most important to consider such an influence-exchange situation between the two artists.

Guido was especially interested in the fluidity of line and delicate decorative aspects both of which are quite evident in his works. Even though he, along with other Sienese artists, had other interests, his development did not reach the sophistication evident in Cimabue's
panel paintings. When Guido's Polyptych No. 7 is studied, one may easily notice the more primitive character especially in the faces which seems to be indebted to works by the Berlinghieri and Coppo. One needs only to compare this polyptych with Coppo's panel paintings already discussed and the St. Francis Altarpiece by Bonaventura Berlinghieri to see similar stylizations. However, it must be accepted that Cimabue's works are at times stylized, especially in areas such as the faces of Christ, Mary and John in the Crucifix in San Domenico, but this stylization was incorporated into a very sophisticated sense of design.

Italian Romanesque painting must also be acknowledged. Although it is at times difficult to single out the Italianate characteristics in the paintings of the thirteenth century, it should be remembered that the Byzantine influence begins very early and, by means of new and repeated waves of influence, survives strongly even into the art of Giotto. Panel paintings did not become popular in Italy until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, beginning first with the representations of crucifixion scenes, leading into representations of the Madonna and Child theme and finally into the depiction of the lives of Holy personages. In the crucifixes of the early thirteenth century such as
the Pisa Crucifix #20 (Pl. 7), one can see the very evident and direct visual contact established with the viewer, which is definitely an Italian characteristic. This representation of the Christus Triumphant shows the figure as triumphant and alive with no hint of suffering. Another characteristic can be seen in the size of the panels, many being over twelve feet high. In the Pisa panel, the Christ figure is literally and flatly painted onto the cross with no attempt at creating a third dimension. He is depicted vertical and weightless. With this crucifix one may see the traditional format which was used throughout the century with only limited or isolated differences or changes. One needs only to glance at crucifixes painted by three Italian artists already mentioned such as those by Giunta Pisano, Coppo di Marcovaldo, and Guido da Siena.

4. General Byzantine Influences on Italian Painting of the Thirteenth Century

In order to analyze a work of art of the latter half of the thirteenth century, it is necessary to be aware of the Byzantine influences that were possibly assimilated by the artists. One of the common and most noticeable techniques used in Middle Byzantine
works is the gold staccato linearity apparent in drapery representations. It is "a means of enrichment, possibly ultimately a convention for light and shade, and often in scenes which include celestial as well as terrestrial personages, a device for conferring divine dignity upon the former."\textsuperscript{13} This technique can be seen in most Middle Byzantine works such as the Madonna and Child Enthroned in the National Gallery, Washington (Melon Collection). An example in Cimabue's painting would be Christ's loin cloth in the Crucifix (Pl. 4) in San Domenico or in the mantles in the Trinita Altarpiece (Pl. 13), where the gold linearity can possibly be seen as "a device for conferring divine dignity" upon the figures. In this example the most dignified personages, the Madonna and Child, are clad completely in Byzantine costume, while the lesser members of this celestial body such as the angels and prophets are depicted with only small areas of this gold linearity.

Another Byzantine traditional form is that of the Madonna and Child know as the 'Odigitria'. This same type can be seen in the panels of Coppo and most other thirteenth century Italian artists. The Byzantine

\textsuperscript{13}Evelyn Sandbert-Vavala, \textit{Uffizi Studies} (Florence, 1948), p. 20.
influence does not terminate with only the type of Madonna depicted, but is also apparent in the majestic and royal attitude of the Virgin presenting the Christ Child as the King and Saviour. However, this aspect is often combined with the Italian element of direct visual contact with the viewer. Battisti, in his monograph on Cimabue, sees this use of the Byzantine techniques as "an expression of a dream of a common religious idiom and not simply the consequence of an exodus of artists from Constantinople." ¹⁴

Further Byzantine characteristics evident in Italian painting can be seen in facial representations, such as the elongation of the nose, the almond eyes, small mouths and often the tilt of the head. The appearance of these characteristics in Italian art grew not only out of a tradition of repetitive painting, but also out of the tradition established or rather dictated by the Church. At the Ecumenical Council of the Church at Nicaea (325 A.D.) laws were laid down as to the depiction of Holy personages. Every part of the human body, excluding the hands and face, had to be clothed "in order that no question of the flesh might obscure the spiritual

¹⁴ Battisti, op. cit., p. 16.
issue."\textsuperscript{15} Yet it would be wrong to acknowledge this type of Byzantine art as only a representation of religious power. Byzantine art was not a shallow form of worship as Demus most aptly presents:

Every picture means more than is apparent and is in a sense an allegory—full of meaningful allusions. It was the 'universal' character of Byzantine expression that made it so suitable a vehicle for inner significance. Byzantine art was capable, as no other, of representing the 'intelligible' or transcendent.\textsuperscript{16}

The sophistication of Byzantine art is partly due to the fact that it is a continuation, in a series of renascences, of the art of late Antiquity. This antique survival which is usually termed Neo-Hellenism is a very important factor in the formation of Cimabue's style. The idea is supported by several scholars, although the terms used are often different. Panofsky states that the "Byzantine tradition is the heir to the late-antique and the Early Christian and that it transmitted to the practitioners of the \textit{maniera greca} what may be called the residue of Graeco-Roman illusionism."\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Arthur de Bles, \textit{Saints in Art} (New York, 1925), p. 12.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Erwin Panofsky, \textit{Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art} (New York, 1960), p. 129.
\end{itemize}
In reference to the depiction of the human figure, Koehler states that "the ultimate sources of the concept of the human figure from which the interest in the articulated body results, and of the means to materialize it in the work of art are both a legacy from classical antiquity." ¹⁸

Another factor contributing to the sophistication of Byzantine art was the stage of iconographical development. It was an art of signs and symbols; everything had a meaning and material reality, although this reality was kept to a minimum "so that it would be easier to suggest the super-sensible." ¹⁹ These and other characteristics were combined to make Byzantine art what it was: a clear, formal, monumental and, at the same time, complex and meaningful art form.

There is no doubt of the fact that Cimabue was influenced by Byzantine art. It is most significant however to determine what areas or periods of Byzantine art were most influential upon his style. Therefore it is necessary to view the works of Cimabue's precursors.


and also his contemporaries.

5. The Macedonian Renascence and Paleologian Painting

The research in the area of Byzantine art of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is primarily that of the past fifty years. Even at the present time when one is still confronted with the problem of not having a workable definition of the styles during this time period. In the early twentieth century scholarship concerning Byzantine art, this period of later Byzantine painting was either completely ignored or the writer saw fit to devote a paragraph to tell the reader that the Byzantine art of the thirteenth and later centuries resembled a decadence of the earlier styles of the Golden Age. In 1926 in Byzantine Art by Pierce and Tyler, the authors state that "the manner grows dry and hard before the twelfth century is half over, and although a few new ideas are seen stirring in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the story of Byzantine art really ends with the sack of Constantinople by the Franks in 1204."²⁰ During the past few decades, the scholarly view has changed a great deal and there is now a growing interest in the

Byzantine art of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries and particularly the part it played in the foundation of 'modern' painting in the West during the late thirteenth century.

In order to understand the origins of Byzantine painting of the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries it is necessary to review the styles of Byzantine art of the twelfth century. A traditional starting point for this type of investigation are the mosaics at Daphni (c. 1100) which according to Kitzinger "embody a rare synthesis, a moment of extraordinary equilibrium between the two antithetic elements always present in Byzantine art, the 'classical' and the 'abstract'." These aspects of the Daphni style can be seen especially in the Crucifixion scene. The figures of Christ, John and Mary are placed in relief against a gold ground. The forms are strongly outlined, but because of the modeling within this linear framework along with the typical Byzantine correctness of bodily proportions, the viewer is presented with a monumental 'classical' form, not only in the figure, but also in the depiction of the drapery.

---

As the twelfth century progressed, the styles of painting progressed and changed. The linear aspect of the works seen at Daphni ultimately came to the fore. Kitzinger compares the votive panel of the Emperor John II Comnenus at Hagia Sophia (c. 1120) with the head of St. Panteleimon in the frescoes at Nerezi in Macedonia (c. 1164) to demonstrate the increased linearity and complexity of the forms as the century progresses. It is especially the characteristic of complexity that can be found in the Nerezi frescoes and works of the latter part of the century. A good example of this complexity can be seen in the fresco of the Deposition at Nerezi. The artist seems to have been interested in the complicated linear design more than in the monumental conception of either the scene or the human figure. This linearity developing in the twelfth century denies the natural form of the human body and is essentially a framework which lacks further development. The forms at Nerezi seem to have lost the 'classical' grandeur which was seen at Daphni.

Another characteristic brought into the frescoes at Nerezi was a new quality of emotion not seen before in the twelfth century. This emotion seen in the Lamentation (Pl. 15) is what Kitzinger calls "more of the 'drastic' expression of grief of Roman times than of
heroic suffering as seen in truly Hellenistic art.  

Along with the new complexity of the forms and a new type or greater amount of emotion, there is also an evident agitation of the forms and draperies which adds to the drapery a life of its own, thereby suppressing the feeling for volume of the body underneath. This is the beginning of the 'dynamic' phase which was to dominate Byzantine art in the last decades of the twelfth century.  

According to Talbot Rice, "that work which was essentially metropolitan was done in the twelfth century in areas far removed from the capital is well known."

It is important to try to determine the possible provinciality of the works in the Balkan areas. The works mentioned in this paper are generally not considered to be provincial. Therefore, by means of an investigation of the Balkan frescoes, one will possibly be able to determine the type of work that was carried out

---


23 Kitzinger, "The Byzantine Contribution . . .," p. 31.

in the Imperial City. The paintings at Nerezi were under imperial patronage and were probably done by artists brought from the capital.

With the beginning of the thirteenth century new features appear in Byzantine painting that result in a greater feeling for humanism, greater drama in depiction and a greater volume, weight and individuality seen in the human form. "Except in certain provincial backwaters the phase of excessive, mannerist agitation was at an end by 1200." It seems quite plausible that the beginnings of the new features in the thirteenth century could be found in the twelfth century.

According to Talbot Rice:

". . . the paintings of the Byzantine Revival in the thirteenth century in fact represent a natural continuation of the developments that began in the twelfth, and if progress in Constantinople was brought to a stop as a result of the Latin conquest in 1204, it continued elsewhere in a most brilliant, accomplished and sophisticated way . . ." 

In the panel painting of Our Lady of Vladimir (c. 1130) a new humane quality and spirituality is seen by Talbot Rice as the birth of that new humanism that came to the fore in the art of the thirteenth century. One may also note the emotional quality at Nerezi as part of this

26 Talbot Rice, B.P., p. 56.
development.\textsuperscript{27}

Soon after the turn of the thirteenth century there appeared "a new simplicity and calm monumentality both of form and expression."\textsuperscript{28} The appearance of this new statement of form and expression is manifested in the frescoes in the Church of the Virgin at Studenica (c. 1208-09). According to Talbot Rice, these paintings are probably the work of artists from Salonika which would therefore explain the differences in style from those of Mileševa and Sopoćani. Nevertheless the frescoes at Studenica, whether or not they contain 'ethnic' elements or other non-metropolitan characteristics, represented a forceful statement possibly influencing not only later Byzantine works, but also the same developments that were later to occur in Italy.\textsuperscript{29} One of the most profound scenes at Studenica is that of the Crucifixion (Pls. 16 & 17). The human forms create a definite feeling of monumentality. Although one can still discern remnants of the

\textsuperscript{27}The writer will agree with Kitzinger that this emotionalism is a heritage more of the Roman 'drastic' phase than that of the Hellenic quality that is found in the thirteenth century.

\textsuperscript{28}Kitzinger, "The Byzantine Contribution . . .," p. 30.

\textsuperscript{29}The suggestion of 'ethnic' qualities developing in the Byzantine works was made by Professor Anthony Melnikas in a Graduate Seminar: Studies in the Italian Renaissance, Ohio State University, 1971.
'linear style' of the twelfth century, the framework is now given a volume and weight, thereby endowing the figure with a sense of humanity. This feeling for volume and weight is partly brought about by a greater knowledge and use of modeling. This new concentration upon the essential structure and integrity of the human form and the power of its simple presence is the basis of the entire subsequent development. 30

Although the writer would limit the definition of the Paleologian style to those works executed during the Paleologian Era, it should be noticed that works such as those at Studenica are definitely part of the formation and development of this style.

Another interruption should be made to explain the prevalence of fresco and panel painting in preference to mosaic in the Byzantine world during the thirteenth century. The effects of the Fourth Crusade were extremely severe for the East. Not only were countless treasures destroyed, but the imperial families were sent into exile to other centers such as Nicaea and Trebizond. This of course meant the loss of imperial patronage, at least for the metropolitan area. By previous standards the empire was on the verge of impoverishment, resulting in less patronage of the arts or at

30 Kitzinger, "The Byzantine Contribution . . . ." p. 32.
least of the sumptuous arts such as work in gold, silver, enamel, mosaic, etc. Another result was the increased amount of work in the less costly techniques such as fresco and panel painting. The possibility should not be dismissed that at least part of the credit for the creation of the new human form could be due to these mediums which were much more flexible than those of mosaic and metal work.

A continuation of the monumental forms achieved at Studenica may be found in the frescoes at Mileševa (c. 1235) in Yugoslavia under the patronage of the Serbian Kings. There was less dependence upon the linear aspects of the form and more dependence upon modeling, weight, the use of contours and color in order to develop a three-dimensional form that not only existed in space, but also created space. These characteristics are quite apparent in the figure of Judas in The Betrayal (Pl. 24). The linear framework continues, but it is not as dynamic as at Nerezi since the lines are controlled by the volumes and contours of the figures. Even more interesting are the sleeping soldiers from the Marias at the Sepulchre. With a very limited use of line, these soldiers are composed of a series of volumetrical forms. It is remarkable that the mail also
gives a sense of volume even though it is rendered in the form of a pattern.

Along with this development seen in the creation of a three-dimensional human form, there was also a development in the expression of the scene and of the figures incorporated into the scenes. In the Deposition (Pl. 18) the expression is not that almost wild and 'drastic' conveyance of pathos seen at Nerezi, but rather a delicate exhibition of human sorrow. The gestures also are not as forced and angular, but again are delicate and human. Perhaps one could even use the term 'individuals' instead of 'figures' since there is also an increasing interest in the individual qualities. This is especially noticeable in the portrait of King Vladislav who was the patron of these non-provincial frescoes. This portrait gives the impression that the artists worked from living models. There is a very natural and earthy aspect to the painting at Mileševa. "The colours of secular life reign here, with absolutely no concession to the sacred." 32

31 The use of expression in reference to this painting and others will be discussed in a following section of this chapter.

These same earthy qualities and interest in nature appear also at Trebizond on the other side of the Byzantine Empire. One must consider the fact that common traits and a common development can be seen in these thirteenth century works and "it may well be that Constantinople was the main generative center of this development throughout." 33 In the fresco of the Casting out of a Devil from the Daughter of the Woman of Canaan (Pl. 19) and in the Feeding of the Five Thousand (Pl. 20), from the Church of Hagia Sophia at Trebizond (c. 1260), one may again see the drama of the scene and of the individual and the greater interest in the representation of nature, seen not only in the figures, but also in the landscape and the fashion in which these figures are grouped 'into' the landscape. The colors echo the same characteristics of naturalism and individualism and according to Papaioannou they are "the colours of secular life."

The creation of the Paleologian dynasty occurred in 1261 with the reinstatement of the Byzantine ruler in Constantinople. Soon afterward at Sopoćani in Yugoslavia (c. 1265) frescoes were executed which are generally

---

33Kitzinger, "The Byzantine Contribution . . . ," p. 32.
considered to be most representative of the Paleologian style. Again the same general tendencies seen in the previous works continued their developments. Especially noticeable at Sopočani is the conception of the still human figure which is built up from a series of oval volumes. One may continue to note the presence of a linearity, but this is now a linear framework that enhances the natural, full, space-creating form of the human figure in contrast to what was seen at Nerezi, where the figure was essentially a linear framework built up of dynamic lines lacking volume. In these works at Sopočani it is not only the figure that creates space, but the other stage-props in the scenes work together to create what Kitzinger calls a "cave space." This flowering of the Paleologian style can be seen in the frescoes of the Dormition of the Virgin (Pl. 21) and in the Appearance to the Marys in the Garden (Pl. 22). Along with the formal aspects discussed one should notice the humane quality, which may now be called naturalism, in the expressions and most particularly in the gestures of the figures. According to Papaioannou, "the sublime paintings at Sopočani... can be regarded as possessing a plastic quality equal to the Hellenic productions of the period immediately preceding Phidias. But in their spiritual quality they surpass them, deepened by ten
centuries of Christianity."\textsuperscript{34}

It is not difficult to accept the fact that there were Hellenistic influences in Byzantine art. The problem lies in the fact that one must find which characteristics were transmitted, why these particular characteristics were chosen in preference to others, and most important, how the Paleologian artist used or transformed the sources. One must also consider the probability of the growth of indigenous and autonomous characteristics which are quite similar to those of Hellenistic times. "Fundamentally, this artistic language was a continuation of that of late Antiquity. This did not exclude modification and innovation—reflections of changing times—but the foundations, both as regards form and the means employed remained unaltered."\textsuperscript{35}

The transformation of Hellenistic or 'Classical' characteristics in part could easily have come from the artists own surroundings in the Imperial City. Constantinople contained ancient art treasures, libraries included literary treasures of ancient Greece and the favored literary language was the ancient Greek tongue. According to a writer of the thirteenth century: "By race and language we are the compatriots and heirs of

\textsuperscript{34}Papaioannou, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 98.

\textsuperscript{35}Grabar, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 54.
the ancient Hellenes.\textsuperscript{36} From this statement alone it is obvious that the Byzantines were very aware of their traditions.

The Byzantines never lost contact with their heritage. At times they would borrow greatly from the past, as for example at Daphni where the 'classical' can be seen in the monumental and serene presence of the human figure. At other times they would borrow specifically from Hellenistic works as seems the probable case in Paleologian works. This is again especially noticeable in the conception of the human figure and also in the expressions and gesture of these figures. An illustration of this point can be seen in the comparison of the head of an Apostle from the Death of the Virgin at Sopocani with a head from the altar of Pergamon. Not only is the depiction of the facial characteristics similar, but there also seems to be a conscious borrowing in the expressions of the figures.

When one compares the range of human forms and expressions in both Hellenistic and Byzantine art, it is quite apparent that the Byzantine artist was very selective and actually allowed the "survival or revival"\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{36}Papaioannou, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 17.

\textsuperscript{37}Kitzinger, "The Hellenistic Heritage . . .," p. 115.
of the particular forms that would serve his own purpose or rather the liturgical purpose. Again the integrity of the Byzantine artist must not be dismissed. As mentioned before, there is a probability that the expressions of the human figure, for example, were in part a creation of the artist or at least that he had specific reasons for seeking out particular expressions that he could revive.

The liturgy predominates greatly in Byzantine art, and of course was the prime driving force behind the artist. At the Council of Chalcedon (451) the formula asynkhytós (without mixture) was given the rank of dogma. Early Christianity expounded the idea of fusion of God and man while the Orthodox Church transformed this idea of the existence of God and man 'without mixture'. "It was this sanctified humanism which enabled it [Byzantine art] to rescue the human figure." 38 This, of course, is a very basic and surface explanation of the role of Hellenistic forms in Byzantine art. An entire study alone could easily be devoted to tracing particular Hellenistic traditions. However, it should be repeated that the Byzantine artist was quite selective in his borrowing, that when he did borrow from his

38 Papaioannou, op. cit., p. 20.
past he often transformed this tradition. It is only at this point that one may concentrate upon the evidence of Neo-Hellenic characteristics to be found in the art of Cimabue and his precursors and contemporaries.

6. The Neo-Hellenism and Cimabue

Cimabue was not actually the originator of any major new trends during his early work in Florence. This fact may well be proven by an examination of the works by Coppo di Marcovaldo. In the Crucifix in San Domenico by Cimabue it is of course practically impossible to discuss the presence or lack of space. The importance of this work remains to be in the greater amount of naturalism in both the depiction of physical forms and in the expression of the figures. However to prove the point in question one needs only to examine the Madonna del Bordone by Coppo which was very likely painted in Siena. Although, according to Gertrude Coor, this panel may not be the earliest example of the Madonna and Child of the 'Odigitria' type, other aspects found in this work may be considered new and original. "It is the earliest known Tuscan painting of the subject in which depth is exploited and a serious attempt is made to distinguish between foreground and back—
This panel is also much larger than any preceding panels in the Tuscan area. Other elements noted by Coor which later also applied to the paintings by Cimabue may be seen in the slight turn of the lower body of the Virgin, the legs of the Virgin which are spaced widely apart in order to allow the drapery to fall in sagging folds and with the use of a back on the throne. Although the slight turn of the Virgin is not evident in the Madonna of the Trinità Altarpiece (Pl. 13), it was used either by Cimabue or members of his school in the San Francesco Madonna and Child Enthroned (Pl. 32) in the Louvre, the Madonna and Child Enthroned with St. Francis at Assisi and also in the Madonna and Child Enthroned in Bologna. Although Cimabue was not the originator of the illusion of space created by the widely spaced legs of the Virgin, he was the principal artist to offer a more graceful solution to the awkwardness seen in the panel painting by Coppo. The solution was a result of consistently placing the feet of the Virgin on different levels. Cimabue also represented the throne with a back which served to differentiate between the foreground and the background.

---

In the Orvieto panel of the Madonna and Child Enthroned (Pl. 12), a change in Coppo's style may be noticed. It is in this panel painting that one is able to observe the Florentine interest for relief created by means of a contrast of light and shade. Although earlier examples of this use of shading may be found such as in busts of saints in the Baptistery of Florence, the Orvieto panel is the earliest definitely Tuscan panel in which the flesh surfaces are treated consistently in this manner.\footnote{For an illustration see: Ibid., Fig. 10.}

Another work by Coppo, although it is not universally accepted, is that of the Crucifix #\textsuperscript{30} (Pl. 11) in the Museo Civico at San Gimignano.\footnote{Ibid., p. 5.} The most interesting factors in this panel may again be seen in the use of contrasting light and shade in order to create that sense of relief along with a growing sense and accomplishment in design and composition. According\footnote{Ibid., p. 6. "The attribution was first made by Evelyn Sandberg-Vavala in 1929, and has found increasing favor during recent years, especially since the exhibition of the paintings in the Mostra Giottesca of 1937." Cf. Cat. Mostra Giottesca, pp. 185-91, Fig. 57a-f.}
to Coor it is possible that this crucifix was painted for the Franciscan Order because of the use of the scene of the Mounting of the Cross. 43

Coppo's works are important in this study primarily to show his assimilation of the Byzantine style or factors within that style. As is usually accepted, in a crucifix such as Coppo's at San Gimignano there is a combination of both the Byzantine tradition and the latest Italian developments. Both of these factors may be observed in the figure of Christ. However, the most interesting and probably most significant areas of this painting are the scenes depicted in the lateral panels on either side of the figure of Christ. The scene of the Betrayal (Pl. 23) is particularly important because of the innovative elements which are exhibited and also because of the composition. Of special interest are the central figures of Judas and Christ which immediately remind one of paintings of the Macedonian Renascence and Paleologian period which have been discussed. A logical comparison would be the Betrayal (Pl. 24) from Mileševa. The representation of the crowd of figures is quite similar as is the attitude and position of the central figures. In fact,

43 Ibid., Note 21, p. 18, for further information concerning the provenance of this scene and earlier depictions.
it is this basic scene which appears in Italy as seen in Coppo's work and was later used in the frescoes at Assisi, among numerous other paintings. It must be remembered that this work by Coppo is a panel painting and the medium did not allow such freedom as was exhibited in the frescoes of the Balkan areas. Nevertheless, Coppo must have seen such works or been acquainted with the artists of these areas, because of the sophisticated fashion in which he uses these 'Greek' elements. The greater liveliness and movement in Coppo's central figures is perhaps a result of later waves of influence from the Greek East. A possible source of these later influences is the painting at Sopočani which does evidence a greater amount of movement both in the figure and the drapery. In the betrayaI by Coppo one can see the use of contrasting light and shade, and of more importance, the use of white highlighting in both the figures and the drapery. This type of highlighting was used profusely in the frescoes of the Paleologian Period. Another conspicuously late Byzantine element to be seen in these central figures is the free action of the drapery which again is central to the development of the late Macedonian painting and becomes even more violent in the works of the Paleologian Period leading into the exaggerated mannerisms exhibited in the paintings at
Kariha Djami.

In any case it is important to see further than the surface Byzantinism displayed by Coppo. Obvious differences may be observed when comparing Byzantine and Italian works of the same period and subject matter. Most evident would be a comparison of the Hell scene of the Last Judgement in the Baptistry in Florence with the same scene in the Cathedral of Torcello. In the Florentine work, Longhi observes that "oriental conservatism becomes aware of its own decadence and so takes it to an extreme point where a nether world is petrified by the fear instilled by the monsters which hold sway there." 44 At Torcello (which must be accepted as Byzantine) Longhi sees a "bed of roses by comparison." 45

However, even more important in an investigation of the panel paintings by Coppo is the observation of what he actually adopted or rejected from the Byzantine conceptions. It is Longhi again who is most adept at a description of the new drama evident in these works.

It is a drama taking place within an automaton with a creaking, rusty heart; the deep shadows

---


45 Ibid., p. 75.
plunge beneath his leathery eyelids; the tendon beneath the armpit squeals like a train wheel on a curved track. We have here, in short, a feeling for the horrific and its effect in transporting the mind, even if these effects go beyond what one would expect in this Christ from the depths of Hell, defeated by death and yet irreconcilable with it.  

Bologna finds the same content in another important painting which is especially hinged to the late work of Coppo, the Crucifix in San Domenico at Arezzo by Cimabue.

In the bitter and agonisingly tearless drama imprisoned within the body of the Christ at Arezzo, whole lashless eyelids are like black, scarred wounds from which no wet tears flow; in the hallucinatory, rich concentration of the draperies of gold around that soiled figure, recalling the richness of Byzantine models, there is a force which is inseparable from that expressed by Coppo. These effects, moreover exaggerate the Oriental manner, just when it is about to be abandoned.  

7. The Carolingian Impact upon Italian Art

Another source or influence of the exaggerations and tensions seen in the works of these Italian artists has been observed in the Carolingian works from the School of Reims. This type of tension can be seen in works such as the San Callisto Bible in San Paolo fuori le Mura. Bibles such as this and others in the style of

---


the Ottonian Gospel Book of the Abbess Uta were apparently available in Rome during the thirteenth century. The essential importance of Carolingian painting is that it provided "a bridge between the vitality of expression of the Hellenistic Middle East and the visionary melancholy of the Latin West . . .". During this same time period in Italy, the art of painting had declined to the point of constant repetition of Byzantine forms, especially during the post-iconoclastic period. In Rome and Southern Italy notable works of art were being created such as the paintings at Santa Maria Antiqua and San Angelo in Formis. Although Bologna points out a type of tension evident in the paintings at San Angelo in Formis as is seen in the symbol of St. John or in the depiction of Christ in Majesty, he feels that this "agonised intensity . . . cannot be related to Byzantine models." He also feels that there is an "outright rejection" in Rome of the art of the Ottonian courts even though "those courts sat in Rome from time to time."

It may be puzzling at this point to understand the

48 Ibid., p. 17.
49 Ibid., p. 30.
50 Ibid., p. 32.
connection between the Carolingian works and the painting of Cimabue. Nevertheless, works of the Carolingian period such as the San Callisto Bible (Pl. 25) would easily have offered him another interpretation of the classical and Hellenistic past. During his stay in Rome it is quite possible that Cimabue discovered "the contemporary significance of the Carolingian miniaturists—those of the Vienna and Epernay Gospel Book and the Utrecht Psalter." It is Bologna who again compares Cimabue's painting to the work of the Carolingian miniaturists when considering the use and depiction of space. He states that Cimabue represented "space as an expanding metaphorical dimension . . . [which] was still a derivation from Hellenistic spatial illusion, . . . and the Carolingian miniaturists . . . succeeded in transforming Hellenistic 'infinity' into an expanding, vibrant space."

Although affinities between the works of Cimabue and those of Carolingian artists may be found, it is the opinion of this student that these similarities have been somewhat forced by the scholars that have supported this theory of Northern influence. It is of course true that

51 Ibid., p. 50.
52 Ibid., p. 83.
Carolingian art did draw from Hellenistic sources, as did many other artistic forms. This Hellenism was again revived during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the Balkan countries and during the thirteenth century in Italy. However, this fact does not necessitate that artists like Cimabue received these Hellenistic influences from the North.

Other important factors to be studied are those elements in Carolingian art which may or may not have appealed to the artist of the late thirteenth century in Italy. According to Hinks:

The three most notable aesthetic features of Carolingian art are its use of pattern and texture, its love of linear effects, and its sense of material. All these denote an art of surfaces, and in all the northern tradition is conspicuous. The Hellenistic art of the Mediterranean world, being interested in imitation and little else besides, neglected pattern because it was primarily concerned with the correct presentation of the individual elements in a spatial connexion; it neglected linear effects because it saw figures and other bodies as plastic units, and was only secondarily occupied with contours; and it neglected the peculiar qualities of a given material because the substance out of which a work of art was made had no function except to make an abstract idea accessible to the senses.53

One is able to agree with Hinks' abbreviated yet fairly precise description of the artistic content of these two styles. It would seem that a painter so near to

Rome as Cimabue would surely have been affected more by the actual Hellenistic sources in the area rather than a more decorative and pattern conscious style such as the Carolingian. In any case, the possibility remains that Cimabue could have first seen portable Northern manuscripts in styles that drew upon the Hellenistic and that he wished to become more familiar with the actual sources of these influences. He surely knew the antiquities available in Latium, or at least of their presence.  

This quality and intensity of drama and exaggeration of the normal Byzantine idiom can be found in the works of other artists, but because of the limited scope of this paper, the discussion shall be confined to the works by Coppo and Cimabue. As observed, Longhi, Bologna and others see this extremism as an exaggeration of the 'Oriental manner;' however, they neglect to single out which area of the 'Oriental manner' they are using as the source. Because of the many different forms of expression comprised under the single heading of Byzantine, the necessity arises to single out the specific time

\[\text{54} \] This paper has only touched upon this Carolingian influence. For references see: Bologna, Early Italian Painting (Rome, 1963); Kraus, Geschichte der christlichen Kunst (Freiburg, 1896-1908); Bertaux, L'Art dans l'Italie meridionale (Paris, 1904); and Anthony, Romanesque Frescoes (Princeton, 1951).
periods or styles that are being used for comparisons. If Longhi and Bologna are comparing the art of Coppo and Cimabue with the Byzantine work of the tenth, eleventh or early twelfth centuries, then their observations would be more acceptable. The other problem at this point is to qualify what these scholars have meant by the "exaggeration of the Oriental manner." Is this merely the exaggeration of the forms and expressions evidenced in the works of the tenth through the early twelfth centuries? On the other hand, if these scholars are referring to later Byzantine painting of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, then it must be accepted that they have grossly oversimplified the situation. It can easily be shown that the exaggeration of the 'Oriental manner' had already taken place during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries in the Byzantine realm or more precisely in the Balkan area. This is not to say that this exaggeration did not occur in the area of the capital, but the historical circumstances of the time necessitated the flight of most of the Byzantine artists from Constantinople during the Latin Interregnum.

At this point the major problem continues and the obvious question remains: Was this exaggeration of the 'Oriental manner' an innovation in the works by
Coppo and Cimabue, or should it be considered Oriental from the beginning? If this question is to be solved, further and more detailed research will first be needed.

8. The Impact of the Legend of St. Francis

If we are to search for a more likely source of the dramatic expressions and intensity seen in the works of Coppo and Cimabue it would seem plausible to first determine if this could be an autonomous development within Central and Southern Italy. It has already been observed that the painting before Coppo and Cimabue did not show any degree or great amount of emotionalism, and it is actually only with the late works of Coppo and Giunta that this almost wild expressionism comes to the fore. Many scholars have accepted the view that the rise of emotionalism in painting was a direct result of the Franciscan influence. Many bases may be found for such an hypothesis.

The Franciscan movement itself (after the death of St. Francis) used the arts in order to further their cause. "When . . . artistic language and artistic thought are used to express ideas of a high order, these do not fail to leave their mark on art and its style."

55

The laude was a result of the emotionalism of the Franciscan movement and was directed to the common people and by necessity written in the vulgar tongue. Similar influences may be found in the visual art of the time.

For some time it was more or less accepted that "the visionary faith of the Franciscans purified and animated the art of painting from its Roman pollution and its Byzantine palsy." What seems to have been more important with reference to the visual art was the teaching of the great Franciscan theologians. When this issue of the Franciscan movement and its relation to art is discussed, several other contemporary forces must also be considered:

This new art was born after those fateful and turbulent years which witnessed, within the life of only one generation, the decisive outcome of the century-old breakdown of the idea of the medieval empire, the rise of strong national states, and the birth of democracy in the free Italian cities. The reception of the Jewish-Arabian philosophy which brought about the rebirth of Aristotelianism occurred in the same short period, which was also a time of deep religious crisis out of which the two great orders, the Franciscans and the Dominicans, emerged. Thus, the rebirth of art took place at a time which witnessed the birth of the modern ages.

St. Francis himself was a medieval phenomenon and his asceticism did not favor art. Modern art arose

56 Ibid., p. 217.
only when the medieval state of mind had changed. This change, however, took place during the thirteenth century and was, to a very great extent, the work of the Franciscan thinkers who followed St. Francis,57

Along with the development of emotionalism was that of naturalism, also greatly influenced by St. Francis and his followers. The immediate world around the artist became a source of his artistic expression. This interest in the natural world can be seen in the more naturalistic representation of the figure as in the Crucifix formerly in Santa Croce by Cimabue and also in the depiction of the naturalistic leaves and flowers in either the decorative areas or within scenes themselves. This development can clearly be seen when comparing the scene of St. Francis Preaching to the Birds (Pl. 26) by Berlinghiero Berlinghieri with the same representation in the fresco cycle at Assisi (Pl. 27).

Also a fact not to be discarded is the growing individualism of the age and of the people themselves. As Bologna observes, there is ample evidence that individual artistic expression had already been developed during the Middle Ages and this possibility may be seen in St. Bernard of Clairvaux's reproof of the images that he found in the contemporary art:

57 Ibid., p. 218-19.
To what purpose are those unclean apes, those fierce lions, those monstrous centaurs, those half-men, those striped tigers, those fighting knights, those hunters winding their horns? Many bodies are there seen under one head, or again, many heads to a single body. Here is a four-footed beast with a serpent's tail; there, a fish with a beast's head. Here again the forepart of a horse trails half a goat behind it, or a horned beast bears the hinder quarters of a horse. In short, so many and so marvelous are the varieties of divers shapes on every hand, that we are more tempted to read in the marble than in our books, and to spend the whole day in wondering at these things rather than in meditating the law of God.  

From writings such as those of St. Bernard one can possibly accept the possibility that some—if not more than is generally accepted—artistic license was allowed the late medieval artist. The view of art was also changing in the thirteenth century as is seen in the writings of St. Bonaventure. In Liber II of the Sentences, Distinctio XXIII, Dubium IV, he acknowledges six different types of vision. "The fourth distinction is concerned with art; according to this, a special world of art is possible, and thus the autonomy of art is theoretically established and acknowledged by philosophy and theology, for the first time in the middle ages."

---


59 Gutman, op. cit., p. 227. See Appendix A for Bonaventura's description of the six types of vision.
The rise of individualism and naturalism, partly a result of the Franciscan movement was also influential upon the greater emotional content evident in the works of the late thirteenth century. As has been noted, this new emotional art has often been termed Franciscan, however, this is far too simplified. It is true that St. Francis offered this more personal and mystical interpretation of religion to all the people at a time when the political rivalry between the papacy and the empire had almost created a very impersonal and stereotyped, form of worship which was difficult for the common masses to understand. It should, however, be remembered that St. Francis' ascetism was not partial to art or any type of elaborate decoration. It was the legend of St. Francis which actually was the main influence upon the art. The agents in this transference of Franciscanism to the art were of course St. Bonaventura, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Thomas of Celano.

As was previously seen, there was an emotionalism apparent in Carolingian miniatures which drew upon Hellenistic sources. However, some scholars feel that a more likely source for the emotionalism apparent in the Italian art of the late thirteenth century was actually a Franciscan device. This thesis cannot be completely rejected but it must be acknowledged that the
same subjectivism and quality of emotion was seen in
Dominican art at the time. There is little doubt
that emotion was a great part of the life of Christ,
as it was in the life of St. Francis. Another important
point that must have been fostered by the theologians
was the similarity between the lives of these two reli-
gious teachers. Of course, this was soon to be the
case in the artistic depictions of the Life of St.
Francis. There is no doubt that Franciscan beliefs
were based on the most part upon emotion, individual
feeling and the expression of this feeling, as is exem-
plified in St. Bonaventura's *Legenda Major:*

*Dum enim die quadam, egressus ad meditandum in
agro, 60 deambularet iuxta ecclesiam Sancti Damiani,
quae minabatur prae nimia vetustate ruinam, et in
eam, instigante se spiritu, cause orationis intra-
sset; prostratus ante imaginem Crudifixi, non
modica fuit in orando spiritus consolatione reple-
tus. Cunque lacrymosis oculis intenderet in
dominicam crucem, vocem de ipsa cruce dilapsam
ad eum corporis audivit auribus, ter dicentem:
'Francisce, vade et repara domum meam, quae, ut
cernis, tota destructur!' Treme factus Franciscus,
cum esset in ecclesia solus, stupet ad tam mirandae
vocis auditum, correque percipiens divini virtutem
eloguii, mentis alienatur excessu. [Legenda Major,
i, I] 61*

60 See Genesis 24:63.

61 St. Bonaventura, *Legenda Major,* ii, i, as quoted
in Alastair Smart, *The Assisi Problem and the Art of
Giotto* (Oxford, 1971), p. 274. For translation see
Appendix B.
Vir autem Dei solitarius remanens et pacatus, nemora replebat gemitus, loca spargebat lacrymis, pectora manu tundebat, et quasi occultius secretarium nactus, confabulabatur cum Comino suo. Ibi respondebat iudici, ibi supplicabat patri, ibi colloquebatur amico, ibi quoque a fratribus ipsum pie observantibus aliquoties auditus est clamorosis gemitus apud divinam pro peccatoribus interpellare clementiam, deplorare etiam alta voce quasi coram positam dominicam passionem.—Ibi visus est nocte orans, manibus ad modum crucis protensis, toto corpore sublevatus a terra et nubecula quadam fulgente circumdatus, ut illustrationis mirabilis intra mentem mira circa corpus perlustratio testis esset.—Ibi etiam, sicut certis est comprobatum indicis, incerta sibi et occulta divinae sapientiae pandebantur, quamvis illa non vulgarit exterius, nisi quantum Christi urcebat caritas et proximorum utilitas exigebat. [Legenda Major, X, 4] 64

This sense of pathos and sentiment cannot be denied in reference to Franciscanism. However, there appears to be a misunderstanding when only this Franciscan sense of emotion is considered in reference to the contemporary art. A far more sensible artistic source can be found in the Balkan countries, for as early as the twelfth century one can find wall paintings exhibiting a degree of pathos not seen since Hellenistic times. Chastel sees this emotionalism in Italian art as "... but one more

63 See Letter of Paul to Corinthians 5:14.
64 St. Bonaventura, op. cit., X, 4. For translation see Appendix B.
aspect of Byzantine influence." The emotion exhibited in the wall paintings of the Balkan region has already been discussed and the importance of the works now becomes apparent. Inevitably the question arises whether these works or portable art objects in a similar style were not actually the initiators of the emotion-alism in Italian painting. The answer to this question should be affirmative because the emotional quality of the works is so similar. Another and more sound basis of proof is to note the artistic forms and motifs of expression that were surely brought to Italy from this Balkan region, rather than from any Carolingian or Franciscan sources. This is not to say that the quality of pathetic emotion in many of the Italian paintings of the late thirteenth century is strictly late Byzantine in origin. The influence of the Franciscan sentiment is undeniable; however, the manner of expressing these new religious manners was neither sought nor found by the Franciscan fathers, but rather by the artists who were affected by both the teaching of the Franciscans and the visual vocabulary of the late Byzantine artists.

The mosaics in the Baptistry of Florence are particularly interesting when this meeting between the East

---

and West is concerned. The composition is hieratic and Eastern which agrees well with the theme of the baptistry itself. The artists were probably from both the East and West. The later stages of decoration are most interesting for this study since their execution paralleled Cimabue's artistic development. It has often been suggested that Cimabue himself participated or directed the execution of the Life of Joseph cycle (Pl. 28). The intensity of emotion and tension that has been discussed is especially evident in the later stages of these mosaics and by means of stylistic evidences, it would seem that the origin of these Neo-Hellenic motifs would again be in the Balkan area. For example, a common depiction of grief may be seen in a figure from the Dormition of the Virgin at Sopocani (Pl. 29). This gesture of placing the hand on the cheek is found in numerous earlier works; however it does not seem to appear as early as the Crucifixion at Daphni (c. 1100). The motif appears as early as the late twelfth or early thirteenth century in Italy (Pl. 7) and is often used in later works. A very similar depiction of this motif may be seen in the St. John panel (Pl. 30) in the National Gallery, Washington, by the St. Francis Master. The same motif is again found in the mosaics in the Florentine Baptistery and in the works by Cimabue (Pl. 31).
These comparisons are by no means meant to be ends in themselves. The purpose has been to show the very common and similar use of a single motif in the Italian and Balkan areas. An even more convincing series of comparisons would be the tracing of the Lamentation scene from the frescoes at Nerezi (c. 1164) to the same representation by Giotto in the Arena Chapel.

9. The Impact of Contemporary Italian Sculpture

One last item that must be included into a discussion of the development of Cimabue's early style is the possible influence of contemporary sculpture. Several scholars have pointed to the work of Nicola Pisano as a source for the 'classicism' apparent in the figures painted by Cimabue. It is quite possible that Cimabue spent some time in Pisa during the early part of his career although this is not documented. In reference to the Madonna and Child Enthroned (Pl. 32) in the Louvre, Toesca observes that

. . . the deep and slender folds of the draperies envelop the Madonna with such clear plastic effect that they seem to be derived from a study of antique marble sculpture, as though Cimabue were now looking beyond Byzantine classicism to that of the sculpture of Nicola Pisano and his followers.66

66Bologna, op. cit., p. 81.
Bologna continues this comparison by stating that only "Nicola Pisano was capable of suggesting, through deep cavity chiseling, this quite original, realistic representation of draperies." Although similarities may be found such as the manner in which Cimabue and Nicola represent drapery (Pl. 33), it seems that these scholars are again forcing a comparison. A more comparative relationship exists between the sculpture of Arnolfo di Cambio and the representation of both figures and draperies by Cimabue. A glance at the Dornition of the Virgin (Pl. 34) by Arnolfo is sufficient evidence. It is in this work that the "deep cavity chiseling"—as seen in the Louvre panel painting—is especially apparent. It is also quite probable that the monumentality evident in most of Cimabue's paintings was also a result of contact with Arnolfo. Although Arnolfo worked in Florence it is more likely that Cimabue became more familiar with his later work in Rome, where he built a series of monumental tombs. This Roman question in regard to Cimabue's later work is the subject of the following essay; however, the possibility of influences from sculptural works also existed during his formative period.

67 Ibid., p. 81.
Although it is extremely difficult to speak of Cimabue's early works per se, it is the opinion of this student that the Crucifix in San Domenico at Arezzo was executed before the painter had studied the classical antiquities of Rome and also that this work exemplifies a mature master. This maturity in the case of Cimabue did however leave room for change as shall be seen in his later works at Assisi.
CHAPTER II

THE ROMAN IMPACT UPON CIMABUE'S ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Cimabue in Rome and the Roman Curia

Although there seems to have been a general avoidance of Strzygowski's findings and speculations in Cimabue und Rom, much of the recent scholarship on this subject has contributed little more than a repetition of the earlier findings. Strzygowski posed the problem:

Beim eingenenden Studium . . . seiner Übrigen Fresken in Assisi kamen wir zu dem Postulat, dass eine derartige Schöpfung nur möglich war, wenn Cimabue zuvor längere Zeit in Rom gewesen und von der Grösse antiker Monumente inspirirt worden sei.68

Fortunately, a document was found in the archives of Santa Maria Maggiore, dated June 18, 1272, which places Cimabue in Rome.69 He was apparently a witness in a juridical matter concerning a convent of the Order of San Damiano. His name is found on the document as "Cimabue pictore de Florentia." This document is much

---

68 J. Strzygowski, Cimabue und Rom (Vienna, 1888), p. 157. Author's translation: "By means of a detailed study . . . of his remaining frescoes in Assisi, we arrive at the postulate, that such a creation was only possible, if Cimabue had previously been in Rome for a long time and had been inspired by the great antique monuments."

69 This document is reproduced in Eugenio Battisti's book on Cimabue (University Park, 1967), p. 91.
more important than only to be used as proof of Cimabue's visit to Rome. It reveals that he was respected enough to be chosen as a witness in the presence of Cardinal Ottoboni Fieschi (the future Adrian V). Strzygowski concludes that the Dominicans chose Cimabue to be a witness among some of their own members, including "dem Patriarchen von Jerusalem Thomas, dem Bischof von Marsico Raynald, und dem Bruder Gualterus de Augusta." Nevertheless, he does not feel that it was the Dominicans who called Cimabue to Rome, but rather Charles of Anjou. According to Strzygowski, Charles of Anjou visited Florence and there saw the works of Cimabue and perhaps the artist himself. He states that Charles called Cimabue to Rome (c. 1270) in order to have him make a perspective plan of the city. During the development of this plan, Cimabue must have studied the monuments of Rome in great detail. Strzygowski feels that one result of this Roman experience can be seen in the miniature-rendering of Rome painted by Cimabue in the vault frescoes at Assisi.

If Cimabue was not invited or taken to Rome by Charles of Anjou, then there is the possibility that the Church could have invited him. However, one must

70 Strzygowski, op. cit., p. 158.
not dismiss the fact that Cimabue could have traveled to Rome for purposes of his own study. There is no doubt that Rome in the thirteenth century was experiencing a time of great revival. During the first half of the thirteenth century, the papacy was concerned with European politics on the highest level. Because of its involvements, the Church's character within the society changed a great deal. The Pope's power began to increase early in the century with the presentation of a new law-book, the 'Decretals' by Pope Gregory IX in 1234. Another important source of papal power was to be found in the financial realm. During earlier periods, a majority of the income was derived from landed estates controlled by the church, along with minor sources such as Peter's Pence, procurations, annual tributes, etc. "The turning-point came with the introduction of an income tax on the clergy. This was introduced in aid of the crusades, but was later put to any and every use."

Charles of Anjou had rid Sicily and Southern Italy of the last of the Hohenstaufens and had also been elected Senator of Rome. It was Nicholas III (1277-80)

---

however who was particularly interested in the revival of Rome. From the beginning of his pontificate, he must have been anxious about the fact that the King of Sicily, an outsider, was a Roman Senator. Nicholas finally asked Charles to resign his office, and this was agreed upon the condition that Charles be able to retain the office until September 16, 1278, which ended his term of ten years set by Clement IV. Not only did Nicholas rid Rome of this civil power in the Senate, but he also "decreed that the senatorial office should not in future be held by any emperor, king, or powerful noble, or by any of their near relations."  

72 The year 1278 was momentous concerning the re-union of political and religious power in Rome. Besides ridding the Senate and the City officials of the rule of Charles of Anjou, a new political constitution was implemented which gave the Senate greater authority.

The magnificent exploits of the alma city sound again, and events demonstrate that the same Rome excels over all for the immendity of her titles, and is called caput orbis. Here the Omnipotent God Himself willed that His Church be founded and that it be designated by the name Roman; and

here the Prince of the Apostles established the seat of the Vicar of Christ.\textsuperscript{73}

It remains unlikely that anyone will be able to determine Cimabue's first patron in Rome. Actually the importance of this is rather minimal. The student of Cimabue is more concerned with the fact that the artist must have already accumulated some fame by the time he had arrived in Rome. Proof of this can easily be found in the circumstances surrounding the document found in the archives of Santa Maria Maggiore. Therefore there must have been more than a feeling of "patriotism" that prompted Dante to call Cimabue the greatest painter before Giotto.

One purpose of this essay is to determine and examine the works in Rome that could have been seen and studied by Cimabue. A majority of the scholars that have examined the stylistic development of Cimabue have done little more than note the importance of Cimabue's Roman 'experience.' If Cimabue was indeed one of the first cartographers of Rome, or if he was called to Rome in order to execute papal commissions, he must have seen and studied a majority of the existing monuments. It

\textsuperscript{73}Friedrick Boch, "Il Registrum super senatoria Urba di papa Nicolo III," in Bollettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano, No. 66, Rome, 1954, as quoted in Eugenio Battisti, \textit{Cimabue} (University Park, 1963), p. 32.
would surely be a mistake to disregard the fact that Cimabue most likely studied ancient monuments along with the 'modern'. However, this paper is limited to a discussion of those works that probably appealed to the artist more because they were essentially modern and therefore offered the possibility of growth and development to the skill and mind of an artist. He was surely more concerned with the recent developments which had again brought the Eternal City to life.

The revival of Rome in the late thirteenth century has been suggested in the light of political and religious affairs. The same revival occurred in the arts, as exemplified by the rebirth of the technique of mosaic work. According to Oakeshott and Mâle, the Roman masters were re instructed in the art of mosaic by those Byzantine masters that had been called to Monte Cassino by Abbot Desiderius in the second half of the eleventh century. Appa rently these Byzantine artists were brought from Constantinople. However, in agreement with Franca stel, it is more likely that Rome could have been an exception in this case.

The city of Rome contained many basilicas which

were decorated with 'antique' mosaics, although many were in poor condition. It was during the reconstruction of these buildings that the Roman artists recovered "the secret of the mosaic in their endeavours to reconstruct and complete those [monuments] whose surviving fragments sufficed to teach them the lost technique." 75 Although mosaic work was continued on a large scale until approximately 1330, the Roman masters did not abandon the use of fresco. Reasons for the use of the fresco medium instead of mosaic are that it is much less expensive and that it allowed greater freedom in the

75 Galienne Francastel, Italian Painting from the Byzantine Masters to the Renaissance (New York, 1956), p. 21. "Now mosaicists were rare and the secret of the technique, having become the almost exclusive apanage of the Greeks of Byzantium, was no longer transmitted to the more distant countries. Already in the eleventh century when it was a question of decorating the edifices of Monte Cassino, the Abbe Didier was obliged to call in the artists of Constantinople.

Rome alone made an exception to this rule. That city had in point of fact preserved basilicas from the first Christian era decorated with mosaics entirely inspired by the spirit of antiquity. But most of them were in an extremely dilapidated condition. It was in the twelfth century when the reconstruction and restoration of some of them was undertaken—at San Clemente in particular—that a first school of Roman artists was formed who discovered among other things the secret of the mosaic in their endeavours to reconstruct and complete those surviving fragments sufficed to teach them the lost technique. At the beginning of the thirteenth century after the interruption caused by the Imperial wars, we are confronted by a flourishing Roman school of marblers, sculptors and mosaicists."
development of a more 'modern' style. The fresco technique could also be executed much more rapidly.

If the mosaicists of the thirteenth century learned their lessons from antiquity, the same may be said of those masters that worked in fresco. "It was certainly the alternate use of both techniques which was responsible for the transference of the lessons which the Roman artists had assimilated in their contact with ancient Latin mosaics to the domain of fresco." 76 Examples of this fact can presently be found in the works of Cimabue, Torriti, Cavallini, and others. For instance, in the frescoes at Assisi one can find figures based upon those of Latin antiquity. Not only are the figures more regular and natural, but they exhibit a greater degree of freedom of movement along with a unique power of expression. Surely some or all of these characteristics are due to some extent to the technique.

It is important at this point to remember that Cimabue was not the only exponent of the modern style developing at the end of the thirteenth century, and that "the problems raised were not peculiar to this or that artist, but rather to the fundamental needs of

76 Francastel, op. cit., p. 22.
the time." 77 It has been observed that the new developments arising at the end of the thirteenth century were based upon the works of Latin antiquity. However, Demus gives some credit to the East when he states that "Roman wall painting presented the antique in three forms: as Roman, classical-heathen antique, as Early Christian late antique, and finally as middle-age, Byzantine antique." 78 The revival of the art of Roman antiquity can be placed around 1100 and was concerned mostly with ornamental motifs, framing forms, and the stage-like compositions.

"Formulas which are no longer animated by any spirit of comprehension are handed on in a more and more threadbare condition and end by losing even their virtue of mechanical perfection." 79 According to

77 Bologna, op. cit., p. 87. "The extraordinarily rich cultural experience and originality of Cimabue's work had thrown light on nearly all the artistic problems of the previous eight or nine hundred years, constituting the major characteristics of the revival. It should not be supposed, however, that the key to the age is to be found here alone. In addition to this, there are the visions of other great spirits, who help to make it clear that the problems raised were not peculiar to this or that artist, but rather to the fundamental needs of the time."


Francastel, this was the case with the art of antiquity at the beginning of the Middle Ages. However, with the restorations that were begun in the twelfth century (such as those at San Clemente) the ancient formulas begin to be revived. This rediscovery of the ancient forms in the art represents more than merely an acknowledgement of their greatness. The artists at this time were searching for new formulas with which to express their art. The formulas had been present in Rome and Southern Italy for centuries. However, during the thirteenth century, new historical circumstances afforded the artist a new view of his surroundings. The habit of crusading had almost come to an end. The people were more interested with national and local problems than with those of some exotic and strange land far to the east. This fact gave the Roman artists a chance to become more interested in their own surroundings and past traditions.

As stated, one result of this renewal of the past was the revival of the mosaic technique. Along with this of course came the revival of some of the forms of antiquity. In contrast to the clumsy, irregular, and flat forms of the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, figures were treated as round, illusionistic forms, the transitional areas were greatly softened, draperies became softer and heavier and less linear and
angular, and the general attitude of the figures or actors established a living presence for the viewer.

Cimabue was among the first of these painters of the thirteenth century that drew upon the antique. He must certainly have been aware of the political and religious revival in the Imperial City and testified to this fact in the depiction of the Capitol in the vault of the Evangelist Luke at Assisi (Pl. 3). The Capitol, "the monument that more than any other, attests to the city's political dignity and which had appeared in the foreground of earlier plans of the city," glorifies not only the city, but also the family of the Pope, the Orsini. 80

2. Roman Painting of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

There can surely be no doubt cast upon the fact that Cimabue studied for several years in Rome. As mentioned, one of the purposes of this thesis is to investigate those works which could have been studied by this artist. The revival of Rome in the early twelfth century has been considered, and at this point it will be profitable to examine the revival evident in the art at the same time. The most important example of the

---

revival seen around 1100 is the decoration of San Clemente, which exhibits the Roman characteristics especially in the framing devices, the ornamentation and in the stage-like compositions. Byzantine forms are also apparent in the narrative style of depiction (which was most likely borrowed from book illumination) and in the depiction of a more picturesque technique. The antique ornament is noticeable throughout the decoration of the Clement and Alexius legends and in the lower ornamental zone. In the scene of St. Clement rescuing a Child (Pl. 35) the same antique ornament is found included in the narrative scene. Below the scene is a medallion of St. Clement presented in the Byzantine fashion of the Pantocrator. Another scene which combines these Roman and Byzantine elements is the Mass of St. Clement. The attitude of St. Clement is taken from Byzantine examples while the architectural staging and the ornament is typically Roman. A detail from the Legend of St. Alexius is a good example of the revival of forms of Roman antiquity. Although the concepts are not yet far advanced, the figures have become more natural, they begin to create an area of space about them and they are somewhat more convincing. Some time passed before the Roman artist completely
eliminated the angular contours and other unrefined areas evidenced in these paintings. According to Demus, this rediscovery of forms seldom refers to the "mimic or psychologic." However, one may easily see that the master of these frescoes exhibited a degree of originality not seen for some time. In contrast to Demus, Anthony feels that this master "had a gift for significant and telling gesture and even facial expression." Together with the greater feeling for naturalism, the figures also exhibit an air of elegance which is Byzantine even though the 'stiffness' is not present.

By the middle of the twelfth century there had already been a change and development from the works seen at San Clemente. Some of these changes may be seen in the paintings at San Pietro in Tuscania (c. 1150), where, according to Demus, the decoration of the apse for the first time reveals a certain connection with the

81 Demus, op. cit., p. 56. "It is seldom very characteristic for this phase of Roman art, that the rediscovery of Roman antiquity refers to the mimic or psychologic: the handsome, inexpressive faces of the figures in the Roman painting of the eleventh to thirteenth century remain completely unmoved by the actions and events in which these figures are involved." [Author's translation]

remaining Italian development. Demus also points to other new characteristics not seen before in Rome such as a new stirring monumentality, bold, far-reaching gestures, and broad areas of lively colouring.\(^{83}\) When comparing a scene from San Pietro in Tuscania with one from San Clemente some of the above characteristics may be noted. However, in certain comparisons there may not be as great a development as expected. At first glance no great change seems to be apparent between two similarly staged scenes from San Pietro and San Clemente. In the *Reconciliation of the Princely Apostles* (Pl. 36) from San Pietro (c. 1250) and the *Mass of St. Clement*, we have a three-partite scene divided vertically. The center area is occupied by either one or two figures which are flanked by groups on either side. The scenes are also divided by the architectural backdrops. However, differences or developments are noticeable. At San Pietro, the entire composition is not as flat. The architecture dominates more over the human figure while at the same time working with the figures in order to allow the composition to be more convincing. The sense of depth is greater and a most important development at the time is the new

---

\(^{83}\) Demus, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
feeling for movement seen especially in the central apostle figures from San Pietro. This almost exaggerated animation of the figures is most apparent in the apse area. Even more noticeable is the monumentality that has been expressed by the artists. Not only do the figures occupy space, they create a feeling of space around them. Yet the forms are not naturalistic. There are still inconsistencies to be found and the forms are generally sharp and hard to the eye.

Another factor which can be considered at San Pietro in Tuscania is the early depiction of what Demus would call the "mimic or psychologic." Although this is not extremely apparent, the figures at San Pietro do tend to psychologically express themselves. Rather than depicting merely blank expressions and restrained gestures as did the artists at San Clemente, the viewer is now aware of a pensive apostle, adoring angels, and the ruling Christ.

One of the most impressive examples of twelfth century Roman art is found at Santa Croce in Jerusalem (c. 1144). With the depiction of three apostles in medallions, the art historian is confronted with the question of how could such monumental, full-bodied forms such as this exist at this early date. One must now consider the presence of a broad painting technique which
includes an attempt at modeling. The linear qualities seen at San Clemente and San Pietro are still apparent, but they have been greatly reduced and simplified. Also present in these paintings at Santa Croce (Pl. 37) is a new feeling for color—a color that has been toned down and made more naturalistic. The naturalism is a result of the use of white highlights among the more regularized and lighter coloring. According to Demus, this coloring technique stemmed from the Byzantine world and resulted in an almost illusionistic form. The apostles actually seem to be emerging from the limited space within the medallions.

Although the characteristics evidenced by the apostles at Santa Croce may be agreed upon, determining the sources may be a more difficult problem. Two likely sources could have been the Early Christian works found in and around Rome or the influence from Byzantine masters. Demus states that these works must have been influenced by the "most modern painting experts of Byzantine art."84 This is a possibility; however, one must be very cautious in this type of statement since so little is known of the "modern" style of Byzantine

84 Demus, op. cit., p. 57.
painting.  

It is in the late twelfth century that one is able to identify some of the forms that will become central to the artistic development of the thirteenth century. Some of these characteristics are found in the paintings in the Abbey of San Pietro in Valle at Ferentillo (c. 1191). The figures continue to be fairly large, full-bodied and monumental even though the full concentration is not upon these monumental qualities as seemed to be the case at Santa Croce in Jerusalem. Here the artists were concerned more with naturalizing the monumental figure by molding rounded forms as is evident in the figure of Christ and the Apostles of the Last Supper (Pl. 38). A more important development

---

85 This area of Byzantine painting must be approached very cautiously. Although, as stated, many art historians agree on the existence of "modern" painting characteristics in Byzantine painting during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, there are also many who argue that the dating of several, if not many, of the works of the period is far too late. This controversy of course has a definite bearing upon the works in Italy which could have been influenced. At this point it must be accepted that until further convincing research, the student can only discuss the possibility of "modern" Byzantine characteristics existing in Italy during the mid-twelfth century. This student is under the impression that these "modern" characteristics manifested themselves in the East only at the very beginning of the thirteenth century with perhaps a few isolated examples in the latter twelfth century. It seems unlikely that such forms could have been brought to Italy as early as 1144.
can be found in the compositions which Demus calls "proto-renaissance" because of the simplification, the skillful inclusion of empty areas and the placement of the figures within these compositions. These factors are apparent in the scene of Noah receiving God's Order to build the Ark (Pl. 39) and in the Creation scene (Pl. 40).

It is particularly in the remains of San Paolo fuori le Mura that one can find works that are very much the results of the earlier developments and which are central to the artistic development of the remainder of the thirteenth century. It is commonly accepted that Byzantine influences had existed in Rome for some time; however, during the early thirteenth century new developments arose to give a great stimulus to the use of Byzantine sources. As a result of the Fourth Crusade, the Venetians became collectors of Byzantine art. They not only brought back those works of art which were transportable, but also were known to bring Byzantine artists to Italy. The splendor of the Byzantine works of art along with their 'modern' characteristics were greatly prized and admired by the Italians. This admiration increased to the degree that the "development linking individual [Constantinopolitan and Roman] spheres, became less and less intermittent and sporadic,
and finally formed the basis of a genuine cultural understanding." 86

There is no doubt that Roman patrons were acquainted with works by Byzantine artists and made use of their talents when possible. One testimony to this fact may be found in the mosaic fragments of four heads which are remains from the Honorius III mosaic in San Paolo fuori le Mura (Pl. 41). According to a letter which is quoted by Wilpert, Honorius III requested the Doge of Venice, Zaini, to send a Byzantine craftsman to execute the mosaic. 87 Apparently the Pope was quite satisfied since it was not long before he requested two more Byzantine craftsmen.

According to Oakeshott, the four fragments had been discarded before the fire of 1823. 88 There is also artistic evidence pointing to Byzantine workman-

86 Bologna, op. cit., p. 54.

87 J. Wilpert, Die Römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der Kirchlichen Bauten vom IV bis XII Jahrhundert (Freiburg, 1916), 4 v., p. 550.

88 Support can be found for the Byzantine influences in these works at San Paolo by investigating the apsidal mosaic which was reconstructed before the fire of 1823. In the mosaic the traditional Roman practice of depicting twelve sheep to symbolize the apostles is replaced by the lower area of decoration, that of the Hetimasia, an eastern theme. Above are inscriptions in Latin and Greek and for the first time angels are seen flanking the cross. See Oakeshott, op. cit., p. 297.
ship in the apostle head fragments. The use of very small tesserae for the face and hands is apparently a Byzantine procedure found periodically in Rome. This technique is quite evident in the fragments from San Paolo and allows a greater amount of modeling and naturalistic rendering of the forms. These fragments invite comparisons with those apostle medallions in Santa Croce at Jerusalem. The attitudes, anatomical conceptions and basic forms are much alike. Reasons for these facts can perhaps be explained by the development of Italian art in Rome or (as Demus would like to point out) by the continuing tradition of Byzantine influence found and used in Rome.

Further evidence of Byzantine traditions and influences found in Rome can be seen in the paintings at San Silvestro in Tivoli. Demus states that some of the artists connected with these paintings could have been unemployed workers from Sicily. This could explain some of the hardness evident in the painted forms. It is quite possible that if the artists were from Sicily that they were mosaicists and were here

---

89 This student does not consider these works at San Silvestro to be central to the present inquiry into the artistic development of Italy during the thirteenth century. However, these works will be mentioned since some of the details of decoration do seem to be used in later works.
imitating that technique in another medium. This could also result in some of the rigid and somewhat primitive-looking forms. These figures still retain some of the monumentality previously seen in earlier works such as those at San Pietro in Valle; yet, the animation and sense of movement has been lost, or for the time being, forgotten. In the *Madonna and Child Enthroned between St. John the Evangelist and St. John the Baptist* (Pl. 42) the same characteristics are evident. The expressions are again blank, the figures are motionless and somewhat less convincing than other contemporary works. These works, however, are not completely "primitive" as van Marle would have one believe.\(^{90}\) The artists did try to retain some roundness of form in certain areas such as can be found in the figure of the Madonna. The knees are clearly protruding and revealing their form beneath the drapery; yet, this retention of modeling is almost overruled and canceled out by the flatness of the remainder of the composition such as the throne and the flanking figures.

A follower of the Master of Tivoli may perhaps be found among the artists that painted at the Cathedral.

---

of Anagni (c. 1230's). According to Demus, this master
turned away from the Sicilian inspired monumental style
of his teacher and returned to the source of Roman paint-
ing—the antique composition. The head master painted
the vaults in the cathedral and in his work it is quite
evident that he had rejected the hard, rigid, and flat
forms characteristic of his master at Tivoli. The forms
in the depiction of The Saviour and Scenes from the
History of Samuel (Pl. 43) exhibit a greater animation
and sense of movement. The lines are not as hard which
results in a more graceful form. The artist has again
recaptured the more naturalistic formula for the depic-
tion of the human form. Another and lesser artist
painted the Martyrdom of St. John and the Miracle of
St. Magnus which is very reminiscent of the works at
Tivoli. It is also possible that this artist painted
the Chastisements sent by God to the Cities of the
Philistines. Although these works do continue some of
the primitive qualities apparent at Tivoli, they are
nevertheless a part of the development that is being
considered in this essay.

91 Demus, op. cit., p. 58.
3. The Impact of Contemporary Roman Works on Cimabue's Early Style

The material previously discussed in this chapter brought the reader in contact with the artistic and historical conditions existing in and around Rome during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is these factors that are important when considering the development of one artist during this period. There can be no doubt that Cimabue had repeatedly heard of the wonders and sights of Rome, and, of course, documentation exists which places him in Rome in 1272. In order to be able to show what was learned by Cimabue in Rome, his earlier work must be reviewed.  

In Cimabue's crucifix at Arezzo, the forms are hardly naturalistic, but the entire conception of the human figure is more convincing and sophisticated than those of the earlier part of the century. It seems that Cimabue was concerned with conceiving the human form with some anatomical accuracy, but he carried out his conception in rather graphic terms at this point which resulted in a hard-edged form.

\[92\] It must be acknowledged that the dating of Cimabue's works is far from certain. Many works continue to be disputed. This student will, however, consider the Crucifix in San Domenico at Arezzo to be one of Cimabue's earlier works done most likely before he went to Rome.
The same characteristics noted in the figure of Christ are also evident in the half-figure depictions of Mary and John in the finials. It is apparent that Cimabue was here searching for a fuller conception of form; but, he had not yet acquired the needed vocabulary. The figures are built up of forms that do give the impression of volume; however, this volume has not been naturalized. The result continues to be the hard-edged, angular form seen in the body of Christ. Nevertheless, the figures are not flat. They contain a weight and solidity which is typically Florentine. These characteristics combined with Cimabue's sense of design have worked together to produce a more unified and convincing form than seen in earlier examples of this subject.

Perhaps Cimabue realized that his figures were less than natural and for this reason he searched for new techniques in the development of form. It is possible that he was aware of the usefulness of the study of the ancients as evidenced in the works of Nicolo Pisano. The antique forms available in Rome, which influenced the development of modern western art, had actually never been lost. In truth it was the artists and patrons who had lost sight of the excellence of the antique forms and it was only during the mid-and late thirteenth century that the antique was again called upon to furnish
the answers.

Cimabue's painting style as seen in the Crucifix in San Domenico testifies to the fact that he was searching for greater naturalism—that is, a greater amount of naturalism in the human figure, spatial relationships and in human expression. This development of naturalism was typical of the late thirteenth century art and is more or less characteristic of Cimabue's painting style.93

As demonstrated in the document of 1272, Cimabue must have achieved fame rather quickly, and this probability of such an 'instant fame' lies in the fact that Cimabue had already developed a mature style before he came to Rome. After arriving in Rome, Cimabue must have certainly set out to study the styles and techniques represented by many works of art from various

93 The reader must accept this statement with caution because of the dating problems in reference to Cimabue's paintings. For example, if the Trinità Altarpiece was actually a work of the 1290's, then reasons must be found in order to explain the evident "regression" in style. However, if this panel is considered to be an early work, the "naturalistic development" of Cimabue's work would be more acceptable. This student is inclined to accept Cimabue's career as representative of a continuous development of naturalism in form, space and expression. Since the Trinità Altarpiece is an extremely sophisticated work for a young artist one must either accept his genius or the fact that the evident "dogmatic" style in the Madonna and Christ Child was dictated by the patron(s).
ages. The contemporary paintings that Cimabue must have studied in Rome were most important for the development of his later style.

It is quite possible that Cimabue saw the paintings in the Church at Grottaferrata. The depiction of the figures is less in the Byzantine style than a part of the new conception of form arising in Rome during the end of the thirteenth century. In the scene of Moses flying from the Serpent (Pl. 44) the viewer is reassured of the artists' intention of deliberately increasing the amount of naturalism. In this example one can find the early attempts at modeling and shading not only in the depiction of the drapery, but also in the facial characteristics. The movement of the body is not actually greater than earlier examples, but the movement is more graceful and natural. Nevertheless, the eyes are still stylized along with other facial features. Although the forms are softer, there are still some hard edges. It is difficult to determine if works such as the example of Moses flying from the Serpent were an influence upon Cimabue's style or vice versa. The possibility exists that Cimabue had been in Rome long enough to exert an influence upon the contemporary art. Nevertheless, the importance lies in the fact that this style seen at
Crottaferrata is similar to that of Cimabue and his painting style after 1272 exhibits a development as seen at Assisi.

4. The Development of Cimabue's Style at Assisi

Before attempting to study the works at Assisi, a look must be taken at the conditions that made such a vast undertaking possible. It is perhaps justifiable to consider Nicholas III to be the most important initiator of the work. He had been familiar with the Franciscans since his youth and was the primary force which enabled the sumptuous decoration of San Francesco at Assisi. He invalidated the proscription of 1279 which stated that "since it is demonstrated that the taste for the exotic and the superfluous runs counter to poverty, we order that capricious decoration of sacred edifices, be it painting, bas relief, sculpture, windows, capitals, or other like elements, be strictly avoided." Nicholas III's defence was justified by the fact that the Church could not have knowledgeable preachers without access to liturgical needs such as Books and Missals. The same argument must have also been used to justify the use of pictorial decoration

94 Battisti, op. cit., p. 31.
within the basilica.

The dating of the frescoes in the Basilica of San Francesco at Assisi has been disputed for some time. It is generally agreed that the work by Cimabue was probably carried out during the years 1280-82, and it is unlikely that his work was executed after 1288.\(^9^5\) A somewhat earlier date is possible as Battisti observes. As evidence he uses the crest of the Orsini house which is partly visible under the battlements of the Capitol depicted in the vault area of the Upper Church. According to Battisti, the crest on the Capitol signifies the heights of power the Orsini had achieved in 1279-80 when Matteo Rosso II (Orsini) and Gentile Orsini followed one another as senators, and at the same time, to make a pair as was the law, the Pope himself succeeded to the senatorial seat of Charles of Anjou. The homage to the Orsini is

---

\(^9^5\) Bologna, op. cit., p. 79. "The specious arguments which some art historians have used to date the frescoes in the Upper Church at Assisi later than 1288 need not be examined. They have been soundly refuted by Gnudi and White. But as far as internal evidence is concerned, the pictorial language used by Cimabue in the transept at Assisi—and hence also in the Virgin in Majesty from S. Trinità, which Teesca, in particular, rightly associated with the frescoes at Assisi—is certainly reflected not only in the frescoes of 1292 at Genoa by Manfredino da Pistoia but also in those of 1284 at Montelupo by Corso di Buono, and even in the polyptych in Perugia by Vigoroso da Siena, which belongs to 1281 or 1283 at the latest."
explained further by the fact that in 1279 Matteo Rosso II was named Cardinal Protector of the Franciscan Order.  

In Nicholas' address to his nephew, Matteo Rosso, one can see the importance he applied to the Franciscan Order:

Many are the benefits which we have conferred upon you; but no one of them is so nearly a pledge of eternal life as the one we now bestow upon you, for we gave you what may well lead you to Paradise, the meritorious prayers of all the holy brethren of this Order. We give you the best we have, our heart's desire, the very apple of our eye.

In the light of the previous evidence it is possible to assume that Nicholas III was the initiator of the interior decoration of San Francesco at Assisi and that this decoration was begun around and probably not before 1280. An earlier date would seem unlikely since it would have surely hurried both the planning and the execution of the decoration.

Other evidence pointing to a date around 1280 is the new program of the Franciscans (begun in 1278) in which representatives were sent to different areas of the world. "This implies the proposal of not only the

---

96 Battisti, op. cit., p. 30.

97 Mann, op. cit., p. 99. This statement was recorded by Philip of Perugia.
renovation of religious life in Italy and, by extension, of Europe, but also a direct intervention to heal the Eastern schism, to reconquer Palestine, and to bring Christianity to Asia." 98 This "extension" of Franciscanism to other parts of the world is depicted in the vault of the crossing of the Upper Church at Assisi.

Most important at this point is to determine as nearly as possible those factors which can be considered sources, influences or ingredients which worked together to form the advanced style found at Assisi. 99 This is most important since the painting at Assisi at this time is the closest extant to what can be called Roman painting of the 1280's. In other words, it is not unlikely to consider Cimabue's paintings at Assisi as examples of Roman painting. The most influential sources of this style can be found in those Roman works previously discussed in this chapter.

98 Battisti, op. cit., p. 32.

99 The general style of the paintings at Assisi are considered to be Roman including the work of Cimabue which was surely the early stage of the pictorial decoration. It should be remembered that the present discussion concerns Cimabue and not the other artists who also worked at Assisi, although the sources and styles in several cases are quite similar.
As was usual in the thirteenth century, the artist was more of less compelled to follow the program developed by the church theologians and patrons. At times, suggestions must have been accepted from the artist himself and he was perhaps even given the freedom to devise and carry out his own pictorial program. During the end of the thirteenth century it was not uncommon for the artist to display pride in his work. In fact several instances can be found which show this to be the case much earlier.  

The program at Assisi was surely a combined effort of the patrons, the church theologians and the artists. It is also important to remember that this was not only an undertaking of the church but rather of a very important faction of the church. Cimabue had experienced

100 Bologna, op. cit., p. 12. "... there is abundant evidence of the self-confidence, independence and freedom of expression of the artist. Sometimes he praises himself, sometimes others praise him. "This temple of marble as white as snow, has no equal," says the inscription on the facade of Pisa cathedral which goes on to praise the architect, Buschetus. The inscription of 1099 in the cathedral at Modena proclaims: "this building sparkles on all sides with fine marble sculpture"; and then speaks of the man who created it in words that recall the later eulogies of the Humanists: "the one who presided over this work and who was its architect and director, was Lanfranc, celebrated for his intellect, his learning and his ability". Another inscription, also at Modena, declares: "your sculpture, Wiligelms, now proclaims the position of great honour which you have attained amongst sculptors"."
a great deal before going to Assisi to produce his most impressive masterpiece. His early training in Florence resulted in his early but confident style of the Crucifix at Arezzo under the patronage of the Dominicans. His trip and probable extended study in Rome had surely acquainted him with both the ancient monuments and the newly evolving styles. His new contact with the Gothic and the Franciscans was also a determining factor of his resulting style to be seen at Assisi. The fact that Cimabue was not unknown is testified to by the Roman document of 1272 and by the often quoted comment of Cante in Chapter XI of the Purgatorio.

A most important factor which has been discussed in this paper is the amount of intense expression that is found in Cimabue's work at Assisi. Sources for this often almost wild expressionism have been debated. Some art historians such as Nicholson feel that this emotion present in the Assisi frescoes is a result of the Franciscan writings which clearly do proclaim an intense approach to divinity. The comparatively "new" iconography seen at Assisi was most likely taken from the Legenda Duae of Bonaventura along with other writings (both apocryphal and orthodox) and from the text of Revelation. The desire for the violent emotion evident in these works could easily have come from such writings,
but this does not provide the artist with the needed tools to depict such an emotional scene. In fact, it is this sense of exaggerated emotion that had previously not been seen in the thirteenth century Roman painting. In fact, one must go as far back as Hellenistic painting and sculpture to find such intensity and this is perhaps what Cimabue did in order to be able to express the intense form of religion practised by the Franciscans.

Nowhere is this sense of expressionism more apparent than in the Crucifixion (Pl. 45) depicted at the right of the crossing. The scene is not new, the basic actors are the same and the format has not changed. Nevertheless, no previous depiction of the crucifixion scene is able to compete with this dramatically expressive and unprecedented form of artistic expression. The entire scene is heightened by the wind-blown effect of the drapery of Christ, the sky filled with weeping angels and by the dramatic, angular gestures of those figures nearest the crucified Christ. This frenzied expressionism is somewhat balanced by the calmer figures such as the groups flanking the central area and the figure of St. Francis at the foot of the cross. Cimabue again displayed his magnificent sense of design in this painting. The dramatic emotion is not only character-
istic of the entire scene, but also of the individual figures or groups of figures. The weeping of the angels (Pl. 46), the great sorrow of the women at the left (Pl. 47) and the mixture of anger, fear and contemplation of the group on the right (Pl. 48) all work together to produce an unprecedented scene. This leaves the viewer with little doubt that Cimabue must have been an artist with the great ability to be able to call upon many past experiences and to transform these into pictorial imagery. Francastel bases his theory of Cimabue's emotional dramaticism as deriving from the artists own beliefs based upon the teaching of the Franciscans. He states that "the harshness of the Passion, the intensity of the suffering, horror and indignation are such as could only emanate from a soul vowed to fanaticism." 101

Because of the condition of the Crucifixion fresco at Assisi, it is of course difficult to analyze it stylistically, but it is well enough preserved that one is able to see that Cimabue has continued the Roman search for greater naturalism. The body forms are more rounded than those examples of the earlier part of the century. The forms have weight, solidity and most

101 Francastel, op. cit., p. 31.
important, they create a sense of space.

A stylistic examination of Cimabue's work at Assisi is better suited with the painting in the vault area of the crossing. With the figure of the Evangelist Luke one can see how far the search for naturalism had actually progressed as of c. 1280. It is also in these scenes of the Evangelists that Bologna finds that the "derivation [from Carolingian sources] stands out most clearly" by stating that "they have a striking parallel in the Evangelists in the codices of Vienna and Epernay."102 The similarity cannot be dismissed. However, it is more likely that both the Carolingian and the Italian works received impetus from the same source, that is, Byzantium. One Byzantine work very similar to the depiction at Assisi is a book illumination of St. Luke (Paris, Bibl. Nat., Cod. gr. 54). Yet, it must be observed that there are differences in the Italian (or Italo-Byzantine) and the strict Byzantine conception of this figure. The similarities are of course seen in the conception of the type of figure of St. Luke, the basic seated position and the furniture which supports his scriptorial tools. Nevertheless, it is in the Italian conception that changes or developments

102 Bologna, op. cit., p. 83.
are to be found. The figure of St. Luke is seated more firmly, he seems to have more weight and as a result of this he occupies space.

5. Conclusion

It is again at this point that one can review the Crucifix at Arezzo and see the changes that have taken place as a result of Cimabue's "Roman experience." It is obvious that much more work and research is needed in this area in order for the student to be more precise. However, it must be accepted that a good beginning has been made in this area. Rome was definitely an important center of art. As Francastel points out, there were existing side-by-side different tendencies at this time in Rome, "but we can at least be sure that their art presents special characteristics that one would look for in vain elsewhere than in Italy."\textsuperscript{103} Once further research is continued it may be possible to state that there were tendencies that could only be found in the area of Latium until influences had quickly worked their way northward.

In the final analysis, Cimabue must be considered as both Tuscan and Roman. Van Marle states it more

\textsuperscript{103} Francastel, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 21.
succinctly by saying that "to the former he owed his artistic conceptions, and to the latter his temperament and his technique." It is at Assisi that these characteristics are most evident. Unfortunately the problem of labeling an artist always arises. In Cimabue's case this happens to be one of the most perplexing problems. He is basically a medieval artist, with Tuscan-Byzantine and Roman-classical sources. As evidenced in his later works, Cimabue had the creativeness and talent that allowed him to suppress the Byzantine and medieval characteristics (or at least use them selectively and to his desired advantage) and accentuate the "modern" characteristics. He presents new concepts and forms to his contemporaries who build upon these forms, culminating in the most profound statement of this era (and the beginning of a new era)—the art of Giotto

---

104 Van Marle, op. cit., p. 472.
APPENDIX A

Dicendum, quod modi vivendi possunt dupliciter distinguere: vel a parte virtutis cogniscendae, vel a parte mediæ. Si a parte virtutis cognitivae, cum alia sit triples, scilicet sensitiva exterior, imaginativa, et intellectiva; sic triples distinguitur visio, vindelicet corporalis, imaginativa et intellectualis.

Si autem a parte mediæ, tunc sex sunt differentiae, quarum sufficientia patet sic. Omne enim, quod videtur per sui speciem, aut videtur per rem aliam, ab ipse simpliciter differentem. Si per sui essentiam videtur, sic est unus modus, qui ponitur sexto loco. Si per suispeciem, hoc potest tripliciter: nam illa species aut est omnino concreta materiae, partim abstracta. Concreta est, prout apprehenditur ab imaginatione; et sunt tres primi modi.

Si autem res habet cognoscendi par rem ab ipsa differentem, hoc potest esse dupliciter: aut quia comparatur ad ipsam sub ratione similis, aut in ratione effectus. Et sic duo sunt modi, vindelicat quartus et quintus. [Lib. Sent. I, Dist. XXXI, p 2, art. 1, q. 3]
APPENDIX B

For on a certain day, having gone out to meditate in the fields, he was walking near the church of San Damiano, which on account of its excessive age was threatening to fall into ruins, and prompted by the Spirit he went inside to pray. Lying prostrate before a crucifix, he was filled as he prayed with not small consolation of spirit; and as with tear-filled eyes he gazed upon the Lord's Cross he heard with his bodily ears a voice proceeding from that very Cross which said to him three times: 'Francis, go and repair my house, which, as you see, is falling totally into ruin!' All a-tremble, since he was alone in the church, Francis was astonished at the sound of that wondrous voice; then, experiencing in his heart the power of the divine utterance, he was carried out of his senses in a rapture of the spirit. [Legenda Major, ii, 1]

But the man of God, remaining alone and at peace, filled the woods with his sighs, bedewed the ground with his tears, beat his breast with his hand, and, like one who has found a secret sanctuary, conversed familiarly with his Lord. There he answered to his Judge; there he offered supplications to his Father; there he engaged in conversation with his Friend; and there also he was heard several times by the Brethren (who in their devotion would watch over him) invoking with deep sighs the divine mercy for sinners, and uttering loud laments for the Lord's Passion as though it was visibly present before him. There he was seen praying at night, his hands stretched out in the manner of a Cross, his whole body uplifted from the earth and surrounded by a shining cloud, as though the wondrous refulgence that enveloped his body were the witness to the marvellous lustre of his mind. There, moreover, as has been attested by sure proofs, the dark and hidden things of the Divine Wisdom were revealed to him, although he did not publish them abroad, except in so far as the love of Christ constrained him and the needs of his children demanded. [Legenda Major, X, 4]
GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY


Longhi, R. "Guidizio sul Duecento." Proportzioni, II (1948), 5-55.


Strzygowski, J. *Cimabue und Rom.* Vienna, 1888.


---

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**


Brand, C.M. Byzantium Confronts the West 1180-1204. Cambridge, 1968.

Bunim, W. *Space in Medieval Painting*. New York, 1940.

Byrne, E.H. *Genoese Shipping in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. Cambridge, 1930.


Koehler, W. "Byzantine Art in the West." *Dumbarton Oaks Inaugural Lectures,* I (1940), 63-87.


Murray, P. *An Index of Attributions made in Tuscan Sources before Vasari.* Florence, 1959.


Offner, R. *Italian Primitives at Yale University.* New Haven, 1927.

Olsufiev, Y.A. "The Development of Russian Icon Painting from the Twelfth to the Nineteenth Century," *Art Bulletin,* XII (1924), 347-73.


Siren, O. Toskanische Maler im XIII. Jahrhundert. Berlin, 1922.


Toesca, P. *Florentine Painting of the Trecento.* Firenze, 1929.
Weigelt, C. *Sienese Painting of the Trecento.* Firenze, 1930.
Pl. 1 St. Matthew. Coronation Gospels of the Holy Roman Empire. Palace School, Aachen, Bef. 800.
Pl. 3 St. Luke, San Francesco, Assisi, Cimabue, c. 1280.
Pl. 4 Crucifix. San Domenico, Arezzo. Cimabue.
c. 1265-70.
Pl. 5 Crucifix #15. Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa. Late twelfth century.
Pl. 6 Detail of Pl. 4.
Pl. 7 Crucifix #20. Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, c. 1225.
Pl. 9 Icon. Byzantine Museum, Athens. Detail.
Pl. 10  Crucifix. Formerly at S. Croce, Florence, Cimabue, c. 1285-90.
Pl. 15 Lamentation. Nerezi, Yugoslavia. c. 1164.
Pl. 16  Crucifixion. Church of Nemanja, Studenica, Yugoslavia, c. 1208.
Pl. 17  Detail of Pl. 16.
Pl. 18 *Deposition*. Mileseva, Yugoslavia. c. 1235.
Pl. 19  Casting out of a Devil from the Daughter of the Woman of Canaan. Hagia Sophia, Trebizon. c. 1260.
Pl. 20 Feeding of the Five Thousand. Hagia Sophia, Trebizond. c. 1260.
Pl. 22 Appearance to the Maries in the Garden, Sopocani, Yugoslavia, c. 1265.
Pl. 23 Betrayal. Detail of Pl. 11.
Pl. 24 Betrayal. Mileseva, Yugoslavia. c. 1235.
Pl. 25  *Maiestas Domini.*  *San Callisto Bible, S. Paolo fuori le Mura.*  Fol. ccxi verso.
Pl. 27  St. Francis Preaching to the Birds, San Francesco, Assisi, Master of St. Francis Cycle.
Pl. 28 The Lament of Joseph's Parents. Baptistry, Florence, Cimabue (?).
Pl. 29  Dormition of the Virgin. Sopocani, Yugoslavia. c. 1265. Detail.
Pl. 31 Mary. Detail of Pl. 10.
Pl. 35  St. Clement rescuing a Child.  San Clemente, Rome, c. 1100.
Pl. 36 Reconciliation of the Princely Apostles, San Pietro, Tuscania. Second quarter of the twelfth century.
Pl. 37 Apostles, Santa Croce, Jerusalem. c. 1144.
Pl. 38 Christ from the Entry into Jerusalem and the Apostles from the Last Supper. San Pietro in Valle, Ferentillo. Last quarter of the twelfth century.
Pl. 40  Creation, San Pietro in Valle, Ferentillo. Last quarter of the twelfth century.
Pl. 41 Apostle. S. Paolo fuori le Mura, Rome.
Pl. 42 *Madonna and Child Enthroned between St. John the Evangelist and St. John the Baptist.* San Silvestro, Tivoli, end of the first quarter of the thirteenth century.
Pl. 43 The Saviour and Scenes from the History of Samuel. Anagni Cathedral. Mid-thirteenth century.
Pl. 44 Moses flying from the Serpent. Abbey, Grottaferrata, c. 1270.
Pl. 46 Angels of the Crucifixion. San Francesco, Assisi. c. 1280.
Pl. 47 Three Maries of the Crucifixion. San Francesco, Assisi, c. 1260.
Pl. 48 Hebrews from the *Crucifixion*. San Francesco, Assisi.
c. 1280.