In painting, Giotto had taken important steps in developing a sense of solid form in space, which was influenced in a major way by sculpture. His figures move with some feeling of volumes in space with convincing action. Giotto had also begun to endow his people with a quality of individual personality and with an awareness both of one another and of the action, or situation, being depicted. His Arena frescos from the middle period of his work also show an interest in establishing "real" rather than "ornamental" space, typical of the International Gothic and Italio-Byzantine styles. Giotto attempted to define a space to contain his narrative, an important characteristic of the later styles of painting in the Renaissance. There is a possibility, not really documented, that Giotto had been to Avignon and that the theatre, with its use of backdrop sets to establish narrative space, was a specific influence on his work. This may be one reason that the scale of background material, buildings, and trees resembles theatrical scenery. In any case, space is defined for the purpose of providing a three-dimensional setting.

Giotto's important contributions in terms of a more "modern" approach to the art of painting were cut off, according to some theories, by the spread of the Black Death about the middle of the fourteenth century. This calamitous event helped trigger intellectual and philosophical activity in two opposite directions. On the one hand, there was a strong reactionary movement into the arms of a kind of hysterical interpretation of medieval theology with its superstitions and apocalyptic visions, and, on the other hand, there was an attempt to find a balance between the basic precepts of Christian faith supported by Greek philosophy and the humanistic ideals of mankind's intellect and capacity for logical thought. The former point of view prevailed in Church commissioned art for almost another century. The latter would not come to fruition until the third decade of the fifteenth century in the flowering of Florence.

The conservatism of the Church gave a strong impetus to the more conservative styles of painting, while the progressives allied themselves with the trends that would lead to the neo-paganism of the sixteenth century. The conflict raged not only among artists but also within the Church itself. Michelangelo himself was nearly torn apart by it after the death in 1498 of Savonarola, the leading spokesman for the conservatives in the Church.

One of the leading conservative painters in Florence during the time was Fra Angelico (1387-1455). His work, however, indicates that, in spite of his essentially conservative treatment of religious subject matter, he was fully cognizant of the new technical developments in painting--chiaroscuro, three-dimensional perspective, and treatment of spatial elements. A Dominican monk, Fra Angelico spent most of his actively professional life as an artist in the Convent of San Marco in Florence, where his primary assignment was to decorate the cells of his fellow monks with inspirational religious works. Whereas the religious subject is, in the work of many of the "modern" painters of the period, often humanized in the contemporary fashion or only a pretext for the technical treatment in the painting, Fra Angelico's works are always very spiritually convincing. Unlike the forms in heavy chiaroscuro of many of his contemporaries, his

modeling is light enough not to obscure the brilliant, more traditionally Gothic color system.

Of all the early experimental and innovative painters, Masaccio (1401-1428) stands out as the most important. He was the artistic heir of Giotto, almost a century after that artist's death, and became the foundation for a new way. His art, in tune with the new scientific realism, possessed a new kind of emotional intensity which reflected the human dimensions of tragedy. It was based upon an understanding of anatomy and personality (with psychological overtones) that was to characterize the high period of the Renaissance. Masaccio understood the possibilities of the new concepts of perspective, descriptive (as opposed to decorative) color as an element of reality, and natural lighting as a means of revealing forms with weight in space. Because he knew about the anatomical workings of the human figure, his people have a feeling of natural motion and convincing action. Like all the artists who followed him, Masaccio's major concern was to express mankind in human terms.

Two of Masaccio's greatest works are the *Tribute Money* and the *Expulsion from the Garden*. Both are frescos in the Carmine Chapel in Florence. In the *Tribute Money* the figures exist as sculptural volumes whose physical and psychological interrelationships convincingly depict the event as pure narrative in a three-dimensional space. The poses of many of the figures are obviously copied from Roman sculptures. The light is natural and comes from a single oblique source. In the *Expulsion* Masaccio uses the nude, not for its own sake as would be the case in later years, but to register a powerful emotional intensity appropriate to this important event in the Bible, with Adam and Eve depicted as tragic human beings. Psychologically, as well as physically, he dramatizes Eve's shame and defenselessness and Adam's terror and remorse in human terms.

These are landmark works of art, and there is no doubt that Masaccio is the originator of the "new style." This incredible young artist, twenty-five when these important paintings were done, was truly a one-man revolution. The importance of his influence becomes even more amazing when we realize that he died at twenty-seven without having painted more than about six major works. Allowing for the normal apprenticeship-journeyman period prior to registration on the books of the Guild of St. Luke as a master, he was a professional painter for only about six or seven years. It is interesting to speculate what he might have accomplished in the long lifetime of a Michelangelo or a Titian.

Early in the fifteenth century the arts began to flourish in most of the important cities of central Italy. Florence and other rich Italian city-states attracted many of the Greek scholars who went into exile from the areas in Asia Minor which had been overrun by the Ottoman Turks in 1453. Their influence was profoundly felt in the scholarship of various academies in Italy. Philosophical and scientific scholarship was most likely partly responsible for the fact that, unlike medieval artists, Renaissance artists were extremely interested in establishing an intellectual and theoretical basis for art as well as carefully thought out aesthetic systems. Inevitably this activity would raise the artist above the

standing of a mere artisan or craftsman to the rank of a serious professional, a scholarly as well as technically gifted person. Artists were now sought out by kings, princes, and learned men.

Most of the patronage now came from the important and wealthy families of such cities as Milan, Urbino, Mantua, Naples, and, of course, Florence, and not strictly from the Church. By 1430 Florence was in the firm grip of the Medici family, headed by Cosimo. Under the Medici rule enormous sums of money were spent on humanistic studies and the arts. Cosimo built the first public library since the time of the ancient Greeks in Alexandria fourteen hundred years before. Historians believe that Cosimo and his successors spent over $20,000,000 collecting manuscripts and books from monasteries and other sources.

Cosimo also established the Platonic Academy to educate promising young men in the humanistic tradition and to train artists, most of whom entered his employ to execute commissions in architecture, sculpture, painting, and in the so-called minor arts. The Academy was continued under Cosimo's son, Pietro, and reached its zenith under the firm guidance of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Nearly every one of the major figures in Florentine Renaissance art history was associated at one time or another with the Platonic A cademy.

The Medici, beginning with Cosimo, embarked on an "urban renewal" program for Florence and called every major architect in Italy to execute commissions. Where there was work for architects, there was also work for painters and sculptors, because in those days the arts were in inseparable. By the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent, grandson of Cosimo, who ushered in the Golden Age of Florence (1469-1492), it could truly be said that the Medici had financed the Florentine Renaissance by themselves.

Among the more important contemporaries and successors of Masaccio, the so-called "scientific" or "progressive" painters whose individual contributions were of great importance in the second generation of the Renaissance, were Paolo Uccello (1360-1427); Filippo Lippi (1406-1469); Piero della Francesca (1420-1492); Andrea del Castagno (1423-1457); Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), whose influence was to extend directly into Venitian art through his marriage to Jacopo Bellini's daughter; Antonio Pollaiuolo (1431-1498); and Perugino (1450-1523). Three other illustrious artists of the group were Andrea Verrocchio (1435-1488), master of Leonardo da Vinci; Domenico Ghirlandaio (1445-1494), master of Michelangelo; and Sandro Botticelli (1444-1510?).

In various individual ways all advanced the new system of perspective to create the illusion of three-dimensional space and used the element of light "sculpturally" (chiaroscuro) to create the quality of volume and forms with weight in space. All advanced the understanding of human anatomy, at their peril because the dissecting of corpses led to automatic excommunication from the Church and to prison. (In those times artists knew a great deal more than doctors about the human body.) Likewise, they were all fascinated by individual personality and individual differences among people and by the surface characteristics of different ages. This

fascination led to a rebirth of individual portraiture of a quality not seen since Hellenistic times. Again, classical portrait busts were a major influence on painters. Often even religious subjects were used as vehicles for portraying wealthy and well-known Florentines, most of whom were now among the growing number of patrons of the arts.

Botticelli is one of the most fascinating and original painters of the second generation of the scientific group. Although he was steeped in classical ideas and forms and painted some of the most beautiful classically inspired nudes of the period, Botticelli is best known for his elegant tapestry-like style, quite at odds with the three-dimensional space preferred by most of his contemporaries. His most important and appealing work is contained in the Pagan Trilogy commissioned by Guiliano Medici in 1478. The trilogy includes *Primavera (Birth of Spring)*, *Birth of Venus* and *Venus Disarming Mars*. The subject matter is from Greek mythology. Botticelli delights in playing gracefully contoured figures against fanciful backgrounds of flowers or waves of the sea. He concentrates on the richly brocaded costumes of his clothed figures or on a highly idealized nude with flowing contours, even incised into the panel to hold paint and sharpen the effect of the contour. The pattern is developed by essentially flat forms in contrast rather than by the traditional chiaroscuro which created rounded sculptural form. These panels are among the loveliest and most engaging works of the Early Renaissance.

In 1494 Botticelli became a follower of Savonarola's reform movement and abandoned all pagan subject matter for religious painting. Around 1501 he seems to have abandoned painting entirely, and his last years are not well documented. It is suggested that he may have entered a monastery, and even the date of his death is in dispute.

By 1490 the storm within the Church was growing. The conservative elements of the Church, existing mostly within the monastic orders, found their militant spokesman in Savonarola, a Dominican friar who preached against the neo-pagan (Neo-Platonic) position of the urban leadership and the Chair of Peter itself. The progressives, themselves enamored of the humanistic philosophy, had long been trying to strike a balance between Christian theology and classical philosophy. The Church was becoming more worldly and in many ways more formal than actual. Scandals rocked the Vatican and the militancy of the monastic orders grew stronger. Finally, Savonarola and his followers marched into Florence and sparked a wave of religious fanaticism. Citizens were induced to burn their humanistic books and works of art as well as many of their possessions of materialistic luxury. The Medici were deposed and driven out of Florence, and Savonarola established a theocratic government based on the precepts of the early Middle Ages. Savonarola was finally excommunicated and condemned to death. He was burned at the stake in the main square of Florence, and the Medici were restored to power. These events, however, signaled the end of Florentine leadership, and by 1500 the mainstream of the Renaissance moved to Rome.

The short but brilliant period between 1500 and the sack of Rome in 1527 by Charles V of Austria, though torn by the Protestant Revolt in the

north and Luther's excommunication in 1520, is the beginning of the High Renaissance in Italy. The Age of Titans--Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Titian (in Venice)--cuts across the ending date of this unit. Leonardo and Raphael were both dead by 1520, but their influence was profoundly felt into the High Renaissance. Michelangelo and Titian were both active, and in fact renowned, by 1520, but their mature years are part of the next unit, and they will be considered there.

Leonardoda Vinci (1452-1519) came to Florence to make his mark as the universal man of the Renaissance with an insatiable curiosity about every aspect of life, about human beings and the physical laws of nature. He had one of the finest minds in history and is the epitome of the artist-scientist so much admired in his time. His vast intellectual capacity in all fields marks him as one of the greatest geniuses, but, truthfully, his interest in scientific minutiae continously interfered with his art. His life is to some extent a record of brilliant things left undone. Leonardo was a restless, unhappy genius, admired but not really understood, far ahead of his time.

Art was only part of his interest and to some extent it was a means of proving certain theories and investigations. As a result, he left very few finished works of painting, no sculpture, and despite his many architectural sketches, not one erected building of his design. Of the hundreds of inventions and designs that flowed from the brain of Leonardo, none were actually built and only a few were even made into models, and then most of them were made after his death. Although his intellect was great and his concepts visionary, Leonardo was still a prisoner of his own time in much the same way that the Greeks were. The concept of applied science was still a long way off in history. Leonardo, like the classical Greeks, tended to practice scholarship for its own sake. He investigated every aspect of life because he had to know about it, but when his curiosity was satisfied, the matter at hand no longer really interested him.

A few of his remarkable creative ideas included a flying machine, a hydraulic pumping system, spring driven machinery, tooling machines and a variety of gear and reduction systems, the principle of the steam engine, a man-powered tank, a collapsible (portable) assault bridge, breech-loading artillery, a twenty-four barreled machine gun, shrapnel bombs fired by a massive steam cannon, and an air-conditioning fan system. There were countless other ideas, many for use in war, devised while he was in the service of the Duke of Milan (who did not really believe they would work).

As a pupil of Verrocchio, Leonardo had mastered the techniques of drawing in the modern manner and most of the technology of painting, casting, and architectural drawing by the age of fourteen. At twenty he painted the Hermitage *Madonna* (Leningrad). In 1483 he entered the service of the Duke of Milan, for whom three of his early masterpieces were done. The *Madonna of the Rocks* (*Grotto Madonna*) is an egg tempera with varnish on a panel, as is the first version of the *Virgin with St. Anne and the Child.* (Only a cartoon for the second version remains in London.)

The best known of the early works is the fresco of the *Last Supper* in the Refractory of Santa Maria Milano. Typical of the artist, whose consuming interest was mankind and its psychological make-up, is the establishment of Judas in psychological rather than physical isolation from Jesus and the other disciples. In the painting, Leonardo was experimenting, unfortunately, with a different kind of plaster and ground, and a deteriorating chemical process began almost as soon as it was dry. Despite many attempts to restore it,it is rapidly disintegrating.

In the years between 1503 and 1506, when Leonardo lived in Florence, he painted *Mona Lisa*, with her captivating, enigmatic smile, posed as a pyramid form against a lush, cool landscape. He never really completed it to his satisfaction and never delivered it to his patron. When he left Florence, he took it with him to France, and it ended up in the royal collection of the Louvre. Its spatial and atmospheric perspective (not typical of the Florentine sculptural approach) rivals that of Giorgione. Other portraits, some of which are not completely authenticated and others of which exist only in the form of drawings and studies, indicate that Leonardo's major interest was in human personality and the effects of aging, mental aberrations, and other individual differences.

In 1513 Leonardo journeyed to Rome in the hope of securing a papal commission. Raphael and Michelangelo, who had just completed the Sistine ceiling frescos, were securely in favor with the Holy See and Leonardo was unsuccessful. Titian, the great Venetian painter, was also in residence, working on a portrait of Pope Julius II. Disillusioned, Leonardo accepted the offer of King Francis I to work in the French palace at Fontainebleau and died in France in 1519, it is said in the arms of the king.

Raphael Sanzio (1483-1520) was the most precocious painter of the Renaissance. In contrast to Leonardo and his restless search for the solution to scientific problems and to Michelangelo and his struggle to find a means of expressing his inner turmoil, everything came easily and naturally to Raphael. He was one of the most facile and gifted artists of the Renaissance. He had influential friends and was a nephew of the famous architect Bramante, chief architect of the Vatican--all of whom provided him with many opportunities to develop his natural genius. In sharp contrast to Michelangelo, Raphael moved freely in the brilliant social life of Rome, and his sophistication is reflected in his work. He became one of the most successful painters of portraits of upper-class Rome. Sometimes he tended to be uneven as a painter when he tried too much to please his clients instead of himself, and in many instances he lacked originality in his concepts, but he was a master technician and uncanny in his ability to elaborate on the various styles of his contemporaries (especially Leonardo and Michelangelo).

Raphael did have a good sense of design, and when he faced the huge wall decorations for the Vatican apartments, this ability served him well. He had worked as a journeyman with Perugino on the Siena Library frescos and was much influenced by the Golden Mean experiments of della Francesca while working in Florence from 1504 to 1508. Bramante, who disliked

Michelangelo intensely, brought Raphael to Rome in 1508 in the hope of talking Pope Julius into assigning the Sistine ceiling to him instead of Michelangelo. The ploy, of course, failed, and two months later Michelangelo began the ceiling, but Raphael also received some important commissions, many of which reflect his absorption of much of Michelangelo's treatment of figures (*Fire in the Borgio*).

Raphael impressed the pope and made his reputation in his early years in Rome with his many Madonnas. Through engraved copies, they became well known in other parts of Italy and in the north of Europe. Several cartoons for tapestries for the papal apartments were woven in Flanders, and his work was well known in the Low Countries. Unlike either Michelangelo or Leonardo, Raphael had a large workshop with many assistants; therefore, work executed entirely by the hand of the master is sometimes difficult to determine.

Raphael's best known works are his portraits and Madonnas. These, after all, were portable, having been done on panels, and they were also known through engraved copies. The Madonnas, while beautiful and also somewhat sentimental and occasionally downright syrupy, had wide appeal. However, Raphael's true mastery as an artist and large-scale designer rests on the splendid frescos of the Vatican Palace in the form of two allegories fitted into half-circle arches. They are the *Glorification of the Sacraments* and the *School of Athens*. The *Glorification* deals with the mysteries of faith supported by Greek philosophical ideas concerning the nature of universal truth. The *School of Athens* pays homage to the great philosophers of the Classical Age and to several important Christian theologians and writers. At the center of the composition is Plato, which is a portrait of the great Leonardo da Vinci. Many other figures are portraits of important contemporaries. The frescos, which occupied Raphael between the years 1514 and 1519, are perfect examples of the Neo-Platonic fusion of Greek philosophy and Christian principles so characteristic of the age.

The composition of the *School of Athens* is brilliant. The semi-circular field is cut into three major parts vertically, which are locked in by strong horizontal bands made by the complicated arrangement of the figures on the stairs. The binocular field is in one-point perspective which comes to a focal point at the head of Plato. Raphael is never as daring as Michelangelo in terms of contrapposto or foreshortening, but many of the figures are obviously taken from Michelangelo's ceiling. Another picture, the *Entombment of Christ*, also echoes Michelangelo, especially in the figure of Christ himself, which appears to have been lifted almost intact from the St. Peter's *Pieta*.

Perhaps great and gifted as he was, Raphael felt the futility of competing with Michelangelo and elected to remain in his shadow, content to work within narrower defined boundaries.

THE EARLY RENAISSANCE IN VENICE

Venice did not even exist in the days of the Roman Empire, and its background and heritage are quite different from those of the city-states of western and central Italy. Members of the officer corps of the Roman army, wealthy merchants, and members of Roman aristocracy had fled Rome when it was being repeatedly sacked by the Vandals in the early fifth century. They picked the marshes dotted with islands as the site for their city because it could be easily defended. As the power of Rome declined and the Byzantine Empire expanded, Venice settled within the orbit of Constantinople. Classicism, therefore, did not become an influence in Venetian art until quite late. Even then, it was not Romanized classicism but more pure Greek because of the ties with Byzantium. Eastern influence was strengthened by strong commercial ties with the Orient as the Venetians became a seafaring nation. Because it was less insulated than most of the city-states of the rest of Italy, Venice was also an extremely sophisticated city, whose citizenry, dominated by merchants, loved the lush, materialistic life of the here and now. Neither its artists nor its intellectuals were especially interested in a reconstruction of the past or in a formalistic art supported by research and archeology.

Venice had also resolved the conflict between Church and state very early--in favor of the state. It maintained a republican form of government ruled by the merchant-maritime class in the organization of a city council (Doges). Venice was the only place in Catholic Europe where the clergy was subject to civil (rather than Church) law for a civil crime. Its ties to Rome were not strong and seemingly its churchmen did not aspire to the papacy and remained out of Curia politics.

The dominant architectural masterpiece of the city was St. Mark's Cathedral, an outstanding example of eleventh century Byzantine architecture, with its Near-Eastern onion domes and rich mosaics. Most of the buildings of the city were much more reminiscent of the East than of the West. Likewise, most of Venice's earliest artists were trained in the Byzantine manner in which the emphasis on design, color, and rich surfaces bore little relationship to the art of the west of Italy.

The Venetian style, which was to have such a profound and lasting influence on Western European painting, began with the illustrious Bellini family. Jacopo (1400-1471) had studied with Gentile da Fabriano in 1423 in Florence but is said to have fled after prosecution for a fight. In spite of his short time in Florence, he must have been influenced by the example of Masaccio, who was without a doubt the most famous Florentine artist. Jacopo's eldest son, Gentile (1429-1507), named for his old teacher, became his pupil and later first assistant. Gentile also became an ambassador to Constantinople and painter to Sultan Mohammad II (who defied the ban on imagery until he was deposed and executed). Giovanni (1430-1516) was the greatest Bellini and important as the teacher of Giorgione, Titian, and other noteworthy Venetians of the High Renaissance.

It is very unfortunate that most early Venetian art is conjecture be-

cause the major part of the city, built on water, was, inronically, destroyed in the great fire of 1577. Happily, some examples in the newer parts of the city and in the country estates of merchants and other collectors survived. Those works by Giovanni Bellini that survived show that he was, without a doubt, the forerunner of the great Venetian style.

At about the time that Giovanni came to maturity as a painter, a very important development took place that was to make a difference between the painting of the Venetians and that of the artists of Florence and Rome. It was the importation of the oil painting method from the north of Europe. Invented some time during the Gothic period in Flanders, it was first exploited by the van Eyck brothers and supposedly introduced into Venice by Giovanni d"Alemagna (John the German) around 1450. It became popular immediately, replacing the egg tempera on gesso panel method.

There are some important, unique characteristics of oil paints. First, pigments suspended in highly transparent, cold-pressed linseed oil are richer and fuller and can be worked in systems of glazes, that is, one color over another after proper drying and varnishing. Secondly, oil paints can be worked and reworked to soften edges and model tones of color, thus allowing a more controlled approach than either fresco or egg tempera. In the skilled hands of Giovanni Bellini and his successors, light and color in softly modulated tones became the building elements of painting. The Venetians were not imitators of antique sculpture with its sharpened edges and contours but tonal painters in the purest sense. Form was not created by the strong chiaroscuro method, which resulted in a marble-like appearance, but by cool-warm progressions of color, which created more natural shadows.

Giovanni was much revered in Venice. He first became known for his various and imaginative depictions of the Madonna and Child. One unique version led to the so-called "Gypsy Madonnas" of the later period. These are Madonnas in beautiful landscape settings, posed in front of a banner which seems to have been used to establish a separation between the reality of the landscape and the vision of the Madonna and Child. Giovanni's late work greatly emphasized landscapes painted with lovely tonal qualities that give them atmospheric perspective. He established a trend in landscape painting, carried to greater heights by his successors, Giorgione and Titian, that was to become the dominant influence on European and American landscape artists from the eighteenth century on.

The subject matter of much Venetian painting reflects their love of poetry and music. Giovanni's famous picture of his last years, *Earthly Paradise (Pilgrimage of the Soul)*, is actually an illustration from a Cistercian ballad that was popular in the early sixteenth century. Bellini's most important student, Giorgione del Castelfranco, also developed some of his most successful pictures around themes of popular music and poetry, although he concentrated on idyllic landscape settings (which came to be known as the Arcadian style, from the legendary region in Greek mythology called Arcadia, birthplace of many of the gods and goddesses).

Giovanni Bellini was also the finest portrait painter before Titian. Among his most important portraits is the famous *Doge Loredano*, which not only displays a fine feeling for the tones of human flesh and an extraordinary treatment of the sitter's brocade robe but a great depth of character and dignity as well. He was commissioned by many other leading Venetian citizens from both the Church hierarchy and the merchant class. Giovanni Bellini's fame spread throughout Europe and he received many offers to visit and work in the greatest courts of Europe, which he politely declined. However, in 1505 Albrecht Durer of Nurenburg walked from his home in Germany across the Alps to Venice to study with Bellini for two years.

With the painting of Giorgione del Castelfranco (1478-1510), the Early Renaissance in Venice reached its climax. He set the direction which Venetian painting was to follow through the High Renaissance and on into the landscape painting of many subsequent European schools. Titian's style was to a large extent built on the lessons of Giorgione. Furthermore, Giorgione accelerated the movement away from strictly religious subjects to secular ones. Even in his own time the Renaissance biographer and art critic Giorgio Vasari referred to Giorgione as a "modern artist" whose work was so innovative that it was not completely understood. Durer's diary records that Giorgione had set up his own studio as a licensed master at the age of eighteen.

In spite of his reputation, no painter is quite so obscure in terms of authenticated works. Many were destroyed in the fire of 1577; others have been retouched with disastrous results by second rate painters who did not understand his work. Giorgione expert Duncan Phillips of the National Gallery believes that fewer than four major works can positively be authenticated as being entirely by Giorgione's hand. Also, he died young, at the age of thirty-two, of the Black Plague, which had entered the port of Venice from the Middle East.

One of his first important pictures is the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, painted in 1502-03. The picture hangs in the National Gallery and is the only major Giorgione in the United States (Kress Collection). The setting of Christ's birth is a cave (standard in Byzantine art), and although the event is important in the picture, the greatest attention is devoted to the landscape setting, bathed in light and constructed with a stunning arrangement of forms in space. Two years later he painted one of his most engaging works, inspired by a fifteenth-century love ballad, called *The Tempest* (sometimes the *Soldier and the Gypsy*, which may have been the title of the ballad). *The Tempest* is a fascinating painting which utilizes a unique idea called "materialization." A lonely soldier is standing watch and dreaming about his bride and baby who have "materialized" in his fantasy and sit tranquilly by a stream in a lush landscape. Giorgione creates an air of tension by suggesting an approaching storm with a jagged bolt of lightning in a darkened sky. The picture is highly fanciful and romantic. Technically the artist makes use of a system of dynamic tension by a subtle adjustment of planes, tilting axis, and rhythms to set the picture in a kind of plastic locking system. Over 450 years later *The Tempest* would inspire painter Paul Cezanne to spend his

last twenty years adjusting nature's forms to fit his idea of esthetic arrangements on canvas.

The idea of materialization was used in at least one more major canvas, *Pastoral Concert,* in 1508. In this instance two young men are sitting in an Arcadian landscape playing lutes and singing about beautiful women, who have been materialized in the painting to convince the viewer of the power of fantasy. All of the figures and the tranquil village in the background are enveloped in a softened light with a myriad of subtle tones and reflections of colors. Softened edges cause shapes to merge into each other.

Giorgione also painted, according to written records and critical commentary of the day, many romantic Venuses surrounded by idyllic landscapes. One example that remains is the famous Dresden Venus (executed for a merchant patron in Dresden), properly entitled *Sleeping Venus*. Depicting a nude reclining at a slight diagonal within the rectangular horizontal format, it became the inspiration for countless painters in history including Titian, Goya, Manet, Cezanne, Modigliani, and Renoir.

The Venetian phase of the Early Renaissance ends with the death of Giorgione in 1510. In 1508 Titian had become Giorgione's junior partner, and since he had also been a student of Bellini, he had had no trouble absorbing Giorgione's style. It was Titian's responsibility to complete the contracts left unfulfilled by Giorgione's death, and it is difficult to know which painter did what on many of the canvases completed during the next year or two. Titian continued to work in the style of his partner for at least six more years, but then, bursting forth into his own highly individualistic style, he became the major figure of the Venetian High Renaissance and without a doubt one of the greatest artists in the history of painting. He worked in Venice until his death in 1576.

THE EARLY RENAISSANCE IN THE NORTH OF EUROPE

There has always been considerable argument as to where the line lies that separates Late Gothic from Early Renaissance in the north of Europe. While it is perfectly true that in many respects northern art was an unbroken continuation of the more conservative Gothic style (in some areas even medieval) and that the north did not experience a Renaissance in the Italian sense with a revival of classical culture, it is also true that several new features in culture and art did emerge.

While there was nothing like the great inspiration of classicism with statues and ancient ruins to observe first hand, artists were interested both in solving esthetic problems with regard to painting and in creating objects of beauty which could stand by themselves. Further, there was an intense interest in realistic interpretation of the physical world. This interest, of course, had begun to manifest itself in art in Late Gothic times. As in Italy, a curiosity about human personality and individual differences led to a revival of painted portraiture. These portraits

were much more realistic than those found in Italy, where they were more inspired by the sculpture cliches of antiquity.

Catholicism in the north tended to be more conservative in terms of doctrine, since there was much less awareness of Greek and Roman philosophy and neo-paganism had not yet intruded. Much of the northern Church still rested in the hands of more reactionary monastic orders, who often controlled all but urban bishops. Actually, the Church was not a major patron of the artist. Most often paintings, many of which were donated to churches, were commissioned by middle class merchants and burghers. In the north the artist found it necessary to become much more materialistically oriented in an essentially commercial atmosphere where the level of sophistication of patronage was not as high as in Italy. His approach became factual, very realistic, and most often genre in feeling.

Lastly, there was a very important difference between the two areas: in the north the painter was never allowed to attain a status much beyond that of an ordinary craftsman; but the artists of Florence, Rome, and Venice were truly admired as professionals who were very much above the ordinary craftsman. The Italian artists were much more versatile, in keeping with the idea of the "Renaissance man" and his range of competence and intellectual achievement. Almost all Flemish, Dutch, and German artists who made trips to Italy mentioned this status in their correspondence or diaries. Albrecht Durer became much embittered about the problem after his two years in Venice.

The first important center of painting rose in the city of Bruges, Flanders, under the control of Burgundy, in the earliest decade of the 1400's. The Flemish school became devoted to all visible details and material facts. It was a style of external realism in which there was expressed a passion for the surface appearance of both objects and people. The understanding of the nature of light and how light (and only light) reveals all form came from intense direct observation rather than from the imitation of sculpture as was the case with the early Italians. Every aspect and element of the painting was treated with equal respect and revealed to the fullest in complete visual, tonal effect. The rich, luminous color of the Flemish painters, their natural lighting, and their ability to reproduce natural textures are simply amazing; they are among the supreme technicians in the medium of oil paint. Unlike the Venetians, who made use of the brushstroke itself to create both texture and vibrating tones, the Flemish developed a smooth, glassy surface with every brushstroke carefully concealed. This passion for detail and naturalism was perhaps deeply rooted in the spirit of one of the Gothic world's most brilliant philosophers and theologians, Thomas Aquinas, who had declared that all things in the natural world were intimately interrelated as important aspects of God's world.

Certainly the greatest of the fifteenth century painters was the legendary Jan van Eyck (1390-1441), who worked both in Holland and in Bruges under the patronage of King Phillip the Good, for whom van Eyck painted his principal masterpiece, the *Ghent Altarpiece* (as a series of hinged panels). The work consists of two rows of panels in three main sections.