

Encyclopedia of World Art
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✓ **RENAISSANCE.** The term "renaissance," when applied to the relationship of one civilization to a more ancient one that serves as its model, concerns not only the representational arts of a particular period and culture but also that culture's literature, philosophy, science, and even its politics and mores. Nor can the term be restricted to Italian culture and society, though these were indeed preeminent in the 15th and 16th centuries. The term is applicable in a general sense to all or almost all the European countries that experienced during that period a process of cultural, political and even religious renewal from which their modern forms emerged. This article deals essentially with the manifestations of this renewal in architecture and the representational arts — within the framework of culture generally — and with related theoretical and critical developments. It must be remembered that this process of cultural renewal had widely varying limits, durations, and periods of decline: it began in some countries when it was already at its height in others and came to an end in some places while it was in full flower elsewhere.

According to the traditional concept, to the etymology of the word, and to the statements made by its protagonists, the Renaissance was the resurgence of the spirit and of the forms of antiquity or, at the least, it was the consciousness of the inevitable relationship between present action and the meditated experience of the past; it was also the manifestation of a new concept of the world and of man's place in history. The articles to be consulted as necessary complements to this one are ANTIQUE REVIVAL, CLASSICISM, HUMAN FIGURE, HUMANISM, MANNERISM, PERSPECTIVE, and TREATISES, as well as the biographical articles on the major artists of the period, which of all the great cycles of human creative activity was the one most strongly characterized by the highest expression of individualism. The stylistic developments of the period were reflected in the minor arts of the Renaissance (see CERAMICS, ENAMELS, GLASS, GOLD- AND SILVERWORK, TAPESTRY AND CARPETS, and TEXTILES).

✓ **SUMMARY.** I. The Italian Renaissance. Introduction (col. 1): *Changing concepts; Survey of styles.* Early Renaissance (col. 10): *Architecture; Sculpture; Painting.* High Renaissance (col. 69): *Architecture; Sculpture; Painting.* Late Renaissance (col. 98): *Architecture; Sculpture; Painting.* II. The Renaissance outside Italy (col. 121). Introduction. Spain: *Architecture; Sculpture; Painting.* Portugal: *Architecture; Painting and sculpture.* France. The Low Countries: *Architecture; Sculpture; Painting; Engraving.* Germany: *Architecture; Sculpture; Painting; Engraving.* England. Scandinavia. Eastern Europe.

✓ **I. THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE. INTRODUCTION:** *Changing concepts.* The spiritual and esthetic movement known as the Renaissance, and clearly distinct from the Middle Ages, emerged in Florence in 1410-20 as the fulfillment of a new artistic need. It was the result of a gradual development that had its source in the Humanism of the 14th century and the fascination and stimulus exerted by classical antiquity, whose forms had also been repeated in the art of the medieval period. Moreover, the representation of the physical world took on new aspects at the beginning of the *novus ordo* ("new order") because of a systematization that brought about artistic mastery

of concrete and measurable space by means of the laws of perspective. Thus, when the artists of antiquity represented objective reality, they interpreted it as the embodiment of the very ideals to which they aspired. The Romanesque and Gothic styles also contributed some elements to the Renaissance search for models (although the Gothic taste has often been erroneously regarded as antithetical to the Renaissance). The conscious inspiration toward concreteness — that is, toward a more assured and profound knowledge — must be related to the Humanist moral order, according to which individual man could make what he wished of his own life. This concept had also been reached on the spiritual level during the course of the Middle Ages in a long, laborious process aimed at reconciling classical and Christian thought; therefore, even in this particular aspect there is no sharp break between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

However, a very vital movement such as this could not possibly have remained static in its principles, which from the very beginning were applied in a variety of interpretations that corresponded to the different sensibilities of individual artists. So the movement developed, its many facets changing to reflect a diversity of personalities and tastes and, also, of influences from beyond the Alps. This has led to a division of the movement into early, High, and late Renaissance (the last is often confused with mannerism) within chronological limits that are inevitably only approximate.

The initial phase, which began in the second decade of the 15th century, lasted approximately until the end of that century, though a later date applies in some cases; the two later periods occurred during the 16th century. Prior to a study of the development of the Renaissance the history of the word should be traced, though its connotations do not correspond to the actual significance of its art (an anomaly that also arises in the case of the term "Gothic"). In this connection it is also necessary to state the positions assumed by art history and criticism.

The word "renaissance" implies the rebirth, the resurgence, of something that has disappeared. Since the 14th century there had existed in Florence an awareness of an artistic awakening brought about through the robust genius of Giotto, still deemed by some to have been the first pillar of the movement. Thus Dante (*Purgatorio*, Canto XI), taking a debate on moral issues as a starting point, refers to the repute of the great painter with regard to the then-eclipsed fame of Cimabue. In this Dante echoed the art masters and the scholars, not the common people; this view was confirmed by Petrarch (*De remediis utriusque fortunae*), who as a Humanist extolled Giotto, while as a poet (*Canzoniere*) he held Simone Martini to be the painter closer to his heart. That Giotto was appreciated only in the intellectual milieu was also affirmed by Boccaccio in the fifth tale of the sixth day in the *Decameron*, where in connection with Giotto's art he introduced the Aristotelian concept of naturalistic illusion; but he also stated that Giotto had "brought to light that art which had been buried for many centuries through the error of those who painted more to delight the eye of the ignorant than to please the intellect of the wise." These words outline the idea of a "revival," opposed to the medieval world before Giotto; at

Bernardo Rossellino, is decorated with six reliefs with scenes illustrating the life of the saint that are in a somewhat contrasting chiaroscuro, quite different from the absolute formalism of the pulpit in Sta Croce. Hence the hypothesis of a collaboration with Rossellino seems tenable. The work of Benedetto da Maiano clearly reveals his search for a strengthening of figural values, and this explains his preference for a type of sculpture in which he could most easily satisfy this aim. Apart from the small freestanding Virtues in niches in the Sta Croce pulpit, of a stateliness that does not seem to be compatible with their modest size, he pursued his goal in his sculptures of a young St. John (a theme adopted previously by Donatello) and a figure of Justice above the double door between the Sala dei Gigli and the Sala dell'Udienza in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence (VIII, PL. 192). The figure of Justice foreshadows the *Madonna dell'Ulivo* (1480) in Prato Cathedral, of a compact and regular pyramidal movement, with a density of mass also found in the figures in the extremely ornate altarpieces in the Chapel of S. Fina (1475) in the Collegiata (Cathedral) and in the Chapel of S. Bartolo (1473-95) in the Church of S. Agostino, both in San Gimignano. Falling chronologically between these two works, the tripartite altarpiece (1489) in the Mastrogiudice Chapel in the Church of Monte Oliveto (S. Anna dei Lombardi) in Naples has a grandiose but rather inflated Annunciation between the figures of the two St. Johns. Also outstanding among the many products of the Maiano workshop are the arcosolium tomb of Filippo Strozzi in the chapel of the same name in S. Maria Novella and an earlier group — another example of the artist's aims in sculpture — representing Cardinal Latino Malebranca Orsini crowning Ferdinand of Aragon (Florence, Mus. Naz.). This group, commissioned by that ruler in 1485, remained unfinished after the artist's death; it is noteworthy for the values of its mass, values which underline the fact that Benedetto da Maiano's expansive treatment of form foreshadows that characteristic of the second phase of the Renaissance.

Similar trends are also evident in sculptures by Matteo Civitali of Lucca, who was trained in Florence and who had a confidence in his craftsmanship that led him occasionally into superficiality. Civitali's style was close to that of Antonio Rossellino and even closer to that of Benedetto da Maiano (*Madonna della Tosse* in SS. Trinità, Lucca). In Lucca Cathedral Civitali repeated the design of the Brunni monument in his tomb for Pietro da Noceto (1467) and gave clear evidence of links to Benedetto da Maiano in the altar of S. Regolo, which is overelaborate and decorated with statues. However, he surpassed Benedetto's sculptural power in the statues (of Adam and Eve, Elizabeth, Zacharias, and the prophets Isaiah and Habakkuk) in the Chapel of S. Giovanni Battista in the Cathedral of Genoa.

In Siena, Vecchietta trained Francesco di Giorgio, who was thus indirectly influenced as a sculptor by Donatello's style. While retaining his own stylistic consistency, Francesco, who felt the influence of ancient art, attenuated Donatello's dramatic impact, abandoning his contrasts of light. His splendid bronzes (*Flagellation*, VIII, PL. 202; *Deposition*, PL. 18, containing the portraits of Federigo da Montefeltro and of his young son Guidobaldo) are in a sustained relief that is remarkably effective for its diffused chiaroscuro, in which it is possible to trace the influence of Ghiberti and perhaps even of Verrocchio and Pollaiuolo, and, as always, that of the Florentine milieu. Francesco's pupil, Giacomo Cozzarelli (1453-1515) never equaled his master's excellent command of chiaroscuro effects; he was nevertheless skillful, especially in his *St. John* in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Siena and in the *Pieta* in the Church of the Osservanza near Siena.

The subtle chiaroscuro of Francesco di Giorgio recalls the work of Andrea del Verrocchio, whose training as a goldsmith is evident in the tomb of Piero and Giovanni de' Medici (1472; XIV, PL. 353), which is supremely aristocratic in taste, though its aims are almost exclusively decorative. However, when Verrocchio modeled the human figure (*Resurrection*; XIV, PL. 352) he used a soft line and alternated light and shadow, producing subtle pictorial effects. In freestanding sculpture he combined

this tendency with a highly individual feeling for composition that led to the creation of open and dynamic forms in perfect harmony with their surroundings (*Putto with a Fish*; XIV, PL. 355); this harmony was achieved by placing the human figure against realistic backgrounds (*The Doubting of Thomas*; XIV, PL. 358). Verrocchio, who was greatly influenced by antiquity, gave evidence of notable psychological insight in his portraits (*Bust of a Lady*, XIV, PL. 357; Colleoni monument, XIV, PL. 359); these works support the conclusion that he was undoubtedly a major figure in early Renaissance sculpture. Respected but surpassed by his pupil Leonardo da Vinci, Verrocchio had a less worthy successor in another pupil, Francesco di Simone Ferrucci from Fiesole, who combined ornamental and figural elements in his work. An extremely productive artist, Francesco popularized his master's style and works especially in Emilia (tomb of Alessandro Tartagni, 1477, S. Domenico, Bologna, one of the many imitations of the Brunni monument), in Romagna, in the Marches, and in Umbria.

In complete contrast with Verrocchio's mode of expression within the sphere of Florentine Renaissance sculpture was the style of Antonio del Pollaiuolo. Also trained in the goldsmith's art, which, like Verrocchio, he was never to abandon altogether, he worked alongside Verrocchio on the sumptuous altar of St. John (XI, PL. 184). The essential element in Pollaiuolo's art is the vibrant line that disciplines the planes, which are in sharp relief heightened by chiaroscuro, creating dynamic form and dramatic effects (*Hercules and Antaeus*; XI, PL. 179). Pollaiuolo displayed great vitality in portraiture and endowed the important works he executed in Rome (tomb of Sixtus IV; XI, PLS. 184, 186; tomb of Innocent VIII, reconstructed, in St. Peter's) with a contrasting light that contributes full stylistic uniformity to the creation of sculptural effects and a sense of movement that derived in part from Donatello. Unlike the classicizing sculptors, ranging from Ghiberti to Verrocchio, Pollaiuolo continued the freer and more spontaneous Florentine trend.

Like architecture, Renaissance sculpture was spread throughout Italy by Florentine and other Tuscan artists. Among the major artists, it was Donatello, the initiator of the new style in sculpture, who introduced it into the Veneto region; his influence was enthusiastically received in Padua, where his style was imitated in the fine terra-cotta altarpiece of the Ovetari Chapel in the Eremitani. This work, which was formerly attributed to one of his assistants, Giovanni da Pisa, is now recognized as the creation of Nicolò Pizzolo, who collaborated with Mantegna in the fresco cycle of the chapel. Donatello also had Bartolomeo Bellano from Padua among his many pupils. Bellano followed the master to Florence and worked with him on the pulpits in S. Lorenzo; then, an expert foundryman, he cast a large bronze statue of Paul II for Perugia (1466). Although the statue was destroyed in 1789, at the time of the French domination, on the basis of the artist's surviving works (*Madonna*, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.) it can be assumed to have reflected the ardor of Donatello's later efforts. After his return to Padua, Bellano's style was tempered, probably through the influence of Pietro Lombardo, in the relief *Miracle of the Mule* (Padua, S. Antonio, Treas.); however, in the ten bronze reliefs illustrating scenes from the Old Testament (1483-88), in the choir of S. Antonio, he reverted to an emotional and dramatic expressionistic style, which became gradually subdued in his last works (bronze panel with the Madonna, a putto, and two saints, Roccabonella monument in S. Francesco, Padua).

In Padua the examples of Donatello and of Bellano brought into favor the use of the smelting technique, which was applied to the small bronzes that responded to the aulic taste of the Renaissance. One of Bellano's pupils, Andrea Briosco, known as Il Riccio (d. 1532), was steeped in classical culture and dealt by preference with subjects evocative of antiquity, with a freshness of style comparable to that of Alexandrian art (PL. 502).

Giovanni Minelli de' Bardi of Padua (ca. 1460-1527) modeled powerful and realistic terra cottas (statues of Christ, St. Peter, and St. John; Padua, Mus. Civ.) that tend toward violent

though he retained a preference for ornamentation. The four saints in the niches of the altar executed by Bregno for S. Maria del Popolo are typically Lombard in conception and reveal a certain distinction and dignified restraint. The altar was commissioned in 1473 by Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, who was to become Pope Alexander VI, at the beginning of Mino's Roman period. Bregno's fame spread as far as Tuscany, to Siena in particular, and between 1481 and 1485 he worked on the Piccolomini Altar in the Cathedral there; this altar, similar to that in Rome, though somewhat richer, is notable as an affirmation of the Lombard decorative taste in the Siense milieu. The altar was later included in a larger, ornamental architectural framework that included niches containing statues by Michelangelo (1501-04). Bregno's presence in Siena had immediate repercussions: Neroccio de' Landi (1447-1500), a pupil of Vecchietta, who had derived from his master the typical structure of the minor Roman funerary monuments — that is, rectangular, with a solitary image of the deceased in an edicule — then enriched it with ornamentation, as in the tomb of Bishop Tommaso Piccolomini del Testa (1485) in Siena Cathedral.

In Rome, in the tomb of Cardinal Bartolomeo Roverella (1476-77) in S. Clemente, Giovanni Dalmata elaborated on the simple trabeated structure by inserting behind the sarcophagus bearing the figure of the deceased a niche with figures in high relief accompanied by lively decorative elements. Giovanni Dalmata, who was at the head of a group of artists who worked with him on the Roverella tomb, was called to Hungary in 1481 by Matthias Corvinus, and he introduced there the stylistic idioms of the Renaissance. In two high reliefs bearing the profiles of the sovereign and of Beatrice of Aragon (both Vienna, Hofmuseum) he showed himself to be a portraitist and, in the use of color, to have remained faithful to the Venetian tradition.

From the maze of Lombard sculptors in Rome, which was reduced to executing variations on existing formulas (mainly in the production of funerary monuments), emerged the artistic personality of Luigi Capponi of Milan. In an altar frontal in S. Gregorio Magno, illustrating episodes from the saint's life, Capponi delicately reiterated the style of Amadeo. However, while retaining some impeccable decorative elements in his Roman works, he amplified and simplified forms (relief with Leo I before St. John the Evangelist, in the Lateran Baptistery; *Crucifixion with the Virgin and St. John*, Church of S. Maria della Consolazione).

Among the many artists from other regions, a local sculptor, Paolo Romano (Taccone) from Sezze Romano, was also active in Rome. He attempted to revive the myths of antiquity in expressions connected ideally with those in the triumphal arch of Alfonso of Aragon in Naples, where he worked with Isaia da Pisa. His huge statue of St. Peter and the one of St. Paul by Mino del Reame (1461-62), which originally flanked the steps in front of St. Peter's and are now in the Palazzo della Radio Vaticana (formerly known as the Museo Petriano), are cold and coarse imitations of ancient sculpture, as is the statue of St. Paul (1463-64) on the Sant'Angelo bridge. In the same coldly classicizing style are the anonymous reliefs with the glories of the major apostles carved for the ciborium of Sixtus IV (I, PL. 306), which the Pope commissioned together with the statues of the Twelve Apostles (two ascribed to Mino da Fiesole, one to Giovanni Dalmata) and the busts of the evangelists and of the four doctors of the Church. The reliefs, produced by many different artists and varying widely in quality, contain an exalted echo of Roman monuments and ancient architecture, although these are represented in mistaken proportions. It is of little importance to distinguish the rather mediocre authors of the reliefs, which reveal a Roman-Lombard collaboration (it was at this time, 1480-81, that Bregno's workshop was executing the screen and the singing gallery of the Sistine Chapel; PL. 24). Of primary interest, however, is the prevailing influence of antiquity, which is evident even in the lack of unitary vision and which has its source in the Roman triumphal arch. Some classicizing tendencies in the reliefs acquired an academic tone that eventually reappeared on a much higher artistic level in the work of Gian Cristoforo Romano, who understandably

found a perfectly congenial atmosphere in the courts of Milan, Mantua, and Urbino.

The reliefs on the ciborium of Sixtus IV are significant because they were intended for the major church in Christendom; they prove, in fact, that in the field of sculpture the realistic trend originated by Donatello had been superseded in Rome by a trend toward idealized classicism. Notwithstanding some artistic compromises, the overwhelming effect of this second trend affected almost all of Italy, paralleling developments in early Renaissance architecture.

✓ *Painting.* Masaccio was the initiator of Renaissance painting; but both in his native San Giovanni Valdarno and in Florence he lived in that late Gothic atmosphere whose principal exponent was Lorenzo Monaco. Nonetheless, in an eclectic spirit, Masaccio adopted some delicate and soft chiaroscuro effects of Emilian origin derived from Arcangelo di Cola da Camerino from the Marches; this chiaroscuro was endowed by Masaccio with a stirring, vibrant quality that created figural expressions of great clarity and luminosity. Within the new discipline of space defined in perspective (*The Trinity*, IX, PL. 345) man appears in Masaccio's paintings, as in Giotto's, with prevailingly sculptural qualities, but Masaccio's figures have a cohesive physical substance that is lacking in Giotto's works. Moreover, in achieving a moral characterization, the artist created not just types, but individuals, expressing himself dryly and emphasizing essentials. His style was tersely described by Cristoforo Landino as "pure and without ornamentation" (*La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri col commento*, Florence, 1481). Masaccio's style is therefore clearly distinct from the late Gothic style of Masolino, even in the paintings on which they collaborated (*The Virgin and Child with St. Anne*, IX, PL. 341; frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel of S. Maria del Carmine, Florence, IX, PLS. 347-350; a dismantled triptych from S. Maria Maggiore, Rome, IX, PL. 374). However, some medieval elements are present in his earlier works (triptych, Church of San Giovenale at Cascia di Reggello), which are also clearly distinguishable.

Although Masaccio died young he managed nevertheless to express his precocious genius in memorable works. However, unlike Donatello, he had no direct disciples. When, not yet twenty-seven, he died in obscurity in Rome, his death was lamented by Brunelleschi and (this author believes) also by the gentle Frate Giovanni da Fiesole, called Il Beato Angelico. Angelico's style, like Ghiberti's, had its beginnings in an idealized medieval classicism, the result of an apprenticeship under Lorenzo Monaco, and gradually rose to a level of spirituality; he produced truly unearthly Madonnas and saints, who are suffused with an abstract luminosity (PL. 28). Instead of remaining isolated in the silence of the cloisters, he studied Masaccio's perspective layouts and demonstrated a complete understanding of them (as, for instance, in the fragments of the predella depicting the *Marriage and Death of the Virgin*; Florence, Mus. di S. Marco); his awareness of other contemporary artists is also revealed in his prolific artistic activity in the Convent of S. Marco (I, PLS. 266, 272), the Chapel of S. Brizio in Orvieto Cathedral, and the Chapel of Nicholas V in the Vatican (I, PL. 270).

A number of Masaccio's contemporaries interpreted the new order according to their individual sensitivities. Among them was Paolo Uccello, whose beginnings were Gothic also, but whose enthusiastic study of perspective led him to spatial definitions that were of the Renaissance (e.g., *The Flood*, XI, PL. 37; *The Drunkenness of Noah*, Chiostro Verde, S. Maria Novella, Florence). He sought geometric solutions, defining human forms and objects within regular volumes, sometimes endowing them with monumental power, as in the equestrian portrait of Sir John Hawkwood (PL. 27) and in *The Battle of San Romano* (XI, PLS. 39, 42, 43), thus giving them inhuman and fantastic aspects. The art of this painter, who delighted in completing his figural compositions with unreal colors, eventually acquired a quality of fable in the predella illustrating the legend of the profanation of the Host (XI, PL. 44). During his second stay in the Veneto region (in Padua, about 1445; on his first visit he had remained in Venice from 1425 to about 1431), Paolo