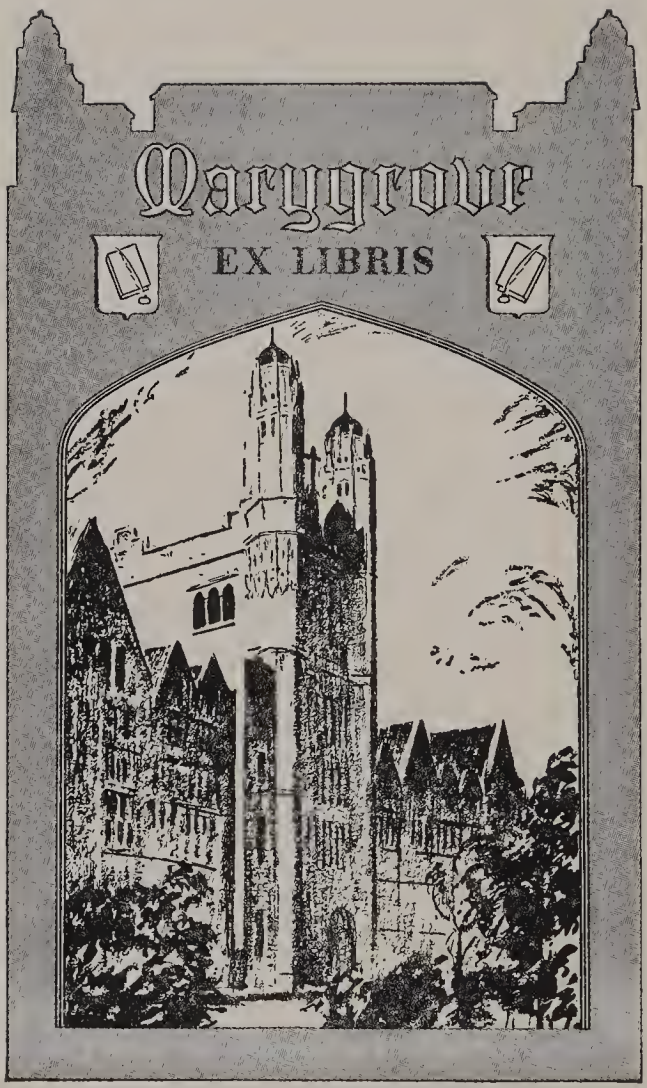

Marygrove
EX LIBRIS

Art and Science

by the same author

★

INSIDE OUT

VENICE

COLOUR AND FORM

STONES OF REININI

QUATTRO CENTO

Art and Science

A Study of Alberti,
Piero della Francesca
and Giorgione

by

Adrian Stokes

Faber and Faber
London

First published in mcmxlix
by Faber and Faber Limited
24 Russell Square London W.C. 1
Printed in Great Britain by
R. MacLehose and Company Limited
The University Press Glasgow

To
ANN

Illustrations

Piero della Francesca

1. The Baptism of Christ (detail)
   National Gallery, London (*photograph Anderson*)
2. The Scourging of Christ
   Ducal Palace, Urbino (*photograph Anderson*)
3. The Scourging of Christ (detail)
   (*photograph Anderson*)
4. The Scourging of Christ (detail)
   (*photograph Anderson*)
5. Legend of the Cross. Adam announces his death (detail)
   San Francesco, Arezzo (*photograph Anderson*)
6. Legend of the Cross. Meeting of Solomon and Queen of Sheba (detail)
   (*photograph Alinari*)
7. Legend of the Cross. The Annunciation
   (*photograph Anderson*)
8. Legend of the Cross. The Annunciation (detail)
   (*photograph Anderson*)
9. Legend of the Cross. Constantine's Dream
   (*photograph Anderson*)
10. Legend of the Cross. The Victory of Heraclius (detail)
    (*photograph Anderson*)
11. Legend of the Cross. The return of the Cross to Jerusalem (detail)
    (*photograph Anderson*)
12. The Resurrection of Christ
    The Town Hall, Borgo San Sepolcro (*photograph Anderson*)

Giorgione and Giorginoesque

13. The Adoration of the Shepherds (detail)
    National Gallery, Washington: formerly Allendale collection (photograph Metropolitan Museum, New York)

14. The Holy Family
    Duveen & Co., New York: formerly Benson collection: 21 × 25 cm. (8¼ × 9⅞ in.) (*photograph Duveen & Co.*)

15. Judith
    The Hermitage, Leningrad 144 × 65 cm. (56¾ × 25½ in.)

16. Apollo and Daphne (detail)
    Seminario, Venice (photograph Brogi)

17. Tempesta
    Accademia, Venice: 78 × 72 cm. (30 × 28½ in.) (*photograph Giacomelli*)

18. Portrait of a Young Woman
    Melchett collection, London: 32 × 24 cm. (12½ × 9½ in.)

19. Venus
    The Gallery, Dresden: 106 × 172 cm. (42½ × 68¾ in.)

20. The Concert
    Pitti Gallery, Florence: 108 × 122 cm. (42½ × 48 in.)

21. Self-portrait as David (detail)
    Brunswick Gallery

22. The Pastorale (or Concert Champêtre)
    Louvre, Paris: 110 × 138 cm. (43½ × 54¼ in.)

23. Shepherd with a Pipe or Apollo
    Hampton Court Palace: 61 × 51 cm. (22 × 20 in.)

24. Christ Carrying the Cross
    Church of San Rocco, Venice: 70 × 100 cm. (27½ × 39⅜ in.)

Acknowledgement

Thanks are due to the great scholarship of the Warburg Institute, for courtesy and unique guidance and for the use of the library: to Mr. Eric W. White for reading the MS. and for making some most valuable judgements: to His Majesty the King for permission to reproduce Shepherd with a Pipe which is at Hampton Court Palace: to Duveen & Co., New York and the Metropolitan Museum, New York: to the Cambridge University Press: to Miss Olivia Popham and Mr. Derek Hill for very prompt help in obtaining other photographs.

Art and Science

A Study of Alberti, Piero della Francesca and Giorgione

There is an embodiment of fifteenth century Italian art that is pure to the point of mystery. One of our artists is the painter sometimes accounted to be the greatest of the fifteenth century, Piero della Francesca. Two others, also supreme though their surviving works are few, Alberti and Luciano Laurana are known to us as architects. If Alberti is first the subject, it will be with occasional reference to Piero but not because of a hard link between them. *

Piero and Alberti were both theorists. Vasari starts his life of Piero as of one who was a mathematician, a writer of theoretical treatises, also a painter. Piero's book on perspective, severely mathematical, does not help us to formulate his art. Most of Alberti's many writings have come down to us, including his principal aesthetic treatises. Of Laurana, the Dalmatian, we know next to nothing.

Two of our immediate heroes—Giorgione, though linked with them, must remain for a period in reserve—were of a speculative type. We may come to feel very close to Piero in his painting, though from such perfection we can infer a timeless rather than an individual aim. Many travellers have found their visits at Borgo San Sepolcro, his

*It is likely they met often, especially at Urbino; Alberti and Piero over a long period; Laurana as well in the late 1460's.

native place, to possess the solemnity and the intimacy of a pilgrimage, in virtue of the town and the landscape as much as of the *Resurrection.*

The case of Alberti* is altogether different. He was eager to give his views on every subject: and there is consistency in his teaching. We may attempt, therefore, to approach the central aesthetic of the early Renaissance through Alberti. This context has been left blank by the present writer more than once, always with the promise that it would eventually be filled. Now that the opportunity occurs, there is added the enormous stimulus of Sir Kenneth Clark's recently published essay(1), a masterpiece of disclosure and of elucidation, presenting Alberti for the first time in the round.

We shall have little to say of Alberti's power to excel, unrivalled even at that time, of his multiform genius or physical prowess, except in so far as this power to excel was strengthened by the current faith in a reasoned perfectibility. The 'revival of learning' was partly the cause, but more the result, of a new faith in the sanity of man and of his environment.

Alberti was a wanderer, a contemplater of all Italy. As well as homelessness, he possessed deep roots in belonging to one of the great Florentine families which had been exiled. When, at the age of twenty-four or twenty-five, he was able to go to Florence for the first time, his reaction to circumstance had already caused him to express a sensitive yet robust temper in terms of a broad aristocracy of mind. He had seen a way, a hard way, for aristocratic omnipotence free of estate. Though Alberti was no more independent of favour than were the wrangling, plebeian lions of learning, yet he ordered his life, there is evidence enough to show, so that the vision of his own power and of the calm extents of

*Born 1404, died 1472.

his many intellectual domains reinforced a lofty aristocratic candour. And if, none the less, he was a deeply wounded man, wounded rather than embittered, to enmity and disappointment he opposed his many different talents of constructiveness and a great industry, marshalling them for what may be called a common-sense triumph. It was an expression, we surmise, of his tenderness, of his noble hard-won patience and of his now fanatical health. More than an aristocrat, he was a constitutional monarch of the mind, cruel and ruthless in one respect only (if we except his tirades against women), in self-discipline and in studious application to this humanist end.

In spite of persecution from some of its members of which he complains bitterly—the experience doubtless helped him to feel dissociated from any party or group—Alberti had great pride in his family's cultural achievements. Spiritual inheritor of princely men of commerce, he fostered the will to be practical and communicative in learning, as well as sound. Thus, without a trace of eccentricity he freed himself from Scholasticism. It was natural for him to write copiously on liberal lines about education or the need for prison reform or the treatment of servants, without calling in question the very structure of his society. He looked for the power of reason and good sense in all men's affairs. The term 'good sense' is joined with the word 'reason' in order to suggest the inductive originality of his mind rather than philosophical abstraction; his developed senses, particularly his acute observation allied to his learning and good memory.

So far, the subject is not dramatic; but that will come. We associate with Alberti's partisanship for the Italian language and for the new perspective art, with his roles as inventor and experimental engineer, a belief in a weight and in a gravity as belonging to his epoch, independent of an ancient dream.

He was perhaps the only confident Roman of those days. The Roman heritage crowned those of Florence and the Alberti, a new empire to be exploited by the exuberance of a new candour. Applied mathematics inspired much of his view of art and through art, of all kinds of practice, allocating the novel vehement impressions from the measurable, near thing; serving as a solvent to the barriers between men and a fully independent outside world.

A few Florentine artists, chiefly Brunellesco, were the first to find in this new exactitude a sensuous inspiration. Alberti tried to build, in the *della Pittura* especially (his book on painting), the scenery for all vision. As well as discoverer he was schematist and popularizer: the condescension, the largesse of it, suited him. Accurate disposition in space, we soon realize, possessed for him a tangible, as if new-found, order as well as an extraordinary loftiness. We are reminded of the lyrical fire that could accompany careful, adult observation dismissive of magical generalities; that arose at the end of the century from the inductive Aristotelian researches of Almoro Barbarò and his followers, some of whom were to be the patrons of Giorgione.

We are approaching Alberti the new Roman yet romantic architect who was innocent of any hint of the Baroque, so electrical, so unfanciful were his sublimities; and the art at the centre of the early Renaissance which was soon overlaid. But concerning Alberti the writer on art, we must also view the dreary latter length of academic tradition still tied to this same approximation between science and art long after the force of a once huge impetus was spent, judging it to be a trailing offshoot from the doctrines proposed by Alberti in his youthful treatise on painting.*

*"There is practically no part of academic teaching during the next 400 years which does not lie, compressed yet calculated, in

Let us see what they meant in the first necessitous days. It was hardly an aesthetic of naturalism. Though the lily should not be gilded and individual character affords life, yet Nature, in detail, is thorny, deficient and must be improved upon. 'Nothing in Nature is perfect', we are told at the end of the *della Pittura*. The codification of art which always has its beginnings in Nature, is therefore made most difficult. But 'He who comes after me,' adds Alberti for his final words, 'should he exceed me in diligence and talent, will make of painting an absolute and perfect thing.' (2) This sentence does not refer to a succeeding painter but to a succeeding theorist or expounder of art. The later theorist will entirely solve the equation, as it were, in which art consists, will solve an almost mathematical problem.

Alberti's conception of perfectibility for painting does not imply advocacy of a conceptual shorthand for Nature, a simplification or generalization. It means the choice from appearances, viewed with impersonal exactitude, of those forms that express harmoniously a state of mind or exhibit harmoniously their own function: for that is beauty. Concurrently, he stresses dependence upon Nature and deprecates those who would paint 'without having an example'. The word is perhaps revealing. Nature is conceived as the wide example of order and of beauty which the artist, without distortion of any kind, must concentrate or intensify, retaining the natural balance that typifies the structure of all living things, whether it be a movement of a leg with the opposite arm, or light with dark (retaining as well an out-

its pages.' Clark, *op. cit.* The author opens with the remark that Alberti's treatise was the first ever to be written on painting, and concludes by showing that Leonardo, as he wrote *his* Trattato (more commonly regarded as the fount of academic shibboleths), must undoubtedly have had a copy of Alberti at his elbow.

wardness or expressiveness of pose that typifies the spirit). An applied mathematical approach—and thus did mathematics lend such power to art—brought in its train a thorough cognisance of observed relationship, of quantity and quality in terms of comparison, so that the trained eye grasped a widening order of interdependent values comprising the vast system of the outside world. The surveying of this undistorted territory, therefore, was by no means restricted to size, to perspective. Alberti's most pregnant sentences in the *della Pittura*—consider the date, 1435—are concerned with the relativity of tonal values: and he suggests that since all visual attributes are defined only by comparison, the norm of differentiation comes from man, 'the constant measure of all things,' a saying he attributes to Pythagoras: perhaps this is the correct interpretation of the saying, Alberti wonders (3) . . .

A measuring of phenomena served the humanism of that age to the end of supreme art, an art which therefore embraced, incorporated science. Behind Alberti's view of painting there lodged, of course, the Platonic idea of Absolute Beauty whose rules and regulations were to be appropriated. An aesthetic, drunk with outwardness, blind to any psychological consideration, which would seem, if applied to present-day circumstance, either jejune or sterile, mystic at best,* was the expression and the means in the early Renais-

*At the same time we may well consider whether there is not to be found here—in the matter of identifying a measure and a divine proportion with actual sense-data—the root formula (deriving from the ideal naturalism of the Antique), not only of academism in the West, but of the prevalent architectonic patterning and the formal concepts behind the naturalism of most European pictorial art since the Renaissance: we may wonder whether there may not be found here a parent of Cézanne's or Seurat's aesthetic, for instance, and of a great deal of present-day art from the best to the worst.

Among the many reasons why the visual arts, under the aegis

sance of a sublime exuberance, of man's most comprehensive attempt to rule the universe with the least withdrawal from the world of the senses. In art it has eternity.

Alberti wrote in one of his later moral essays, the *De Iciarchia*, 'Nature by herself never errs.' It would appear that when it was not a question of art the 'imperfection' of Nature lost importance. Many more cogent quotations, though not as brief, could be advanced to show how he constantly appealed to Nature for a Platonic prototype. Even in the *della Pittura* he wrote, wishing to show how ancient is the desire to paint: 'Nature also likes to paint, it seems, since we see in the fissures of marble the likenesses of Centaurs and long-haired, bearded kings.' (4) This sentence means no less than it states. The first words of the book on sculpture, the *De Statua*, are as follows: 'I think the desire to represent and express the likeness of natural things has this origin. Those who will be practising the arts have chanced to see in a large tree-trunk or on the ground or in other material, an effigy of some kind which encourages them to vie with these faces wrought by Nature.' (5) And in the book on architecture, the *De Re Aedificatoria*, writing of fossils which he takes to be natural carvings, Alberti says: 'It is particularly remarkable that you never find on the ground one of these carved stones which is not reversed, whereby the carving is turned to the ground. It suggests

of architecture, were so closely interrelated before and after, but particularly during the Renaissance, foremost is the architectural impression of Antique art, offered then as now by Antique remains, particularly in Rome, a colourful version of the truth. Modern painting is, we say, pure painting. That does not conceal the fact that the leaders have sought to re-create architectonic structure without reference to other than the plainest shapes and surfaces. But can painting be mother to the visual arts?

that Nature has made these things, not for men's admiration but for her own delight.' (6)

If we remember the fervent astrology and superstition of that age, we will find it remarkable that Alberti should be content with so vague and impersonal a natural agent. He refers to astrological consultations before beginning to build (for which he finds classical parallels), but offers no enthusiasm, though he would blame no one for wanting to be on the safe side: it might well be prudent. He sometimes engages upon wonder stories, especially if their poetry is judged to help as well as lighten his discourse and to illustrate his reading, but on the whole he shows a disinterest—he expresses, for instance a contempt of alchemy (7)—based less upon argument than upon a disinclination for the exotic: though he does, it is true, think there may be something in the idea for warding off lightning, by enclosing in the wall of the house a fragment of eagle or a piece of laurel or a piece of 'vecchio marino'. (8) Alberti sometimes falters when blatant superstition can be linked with a classical author or a classical myth. It would be true to say, however, that he shows no more inclination towards superstition than to the schoolmen. It would, moreover, be absurd to expect him always to be able to distinguish superstition; a cumulative work by no means finished to-day; perhaps no more than half finished.*

*A decline in superstition should not be immediately connected with alteration in the poetic power of legend. Art drew enormous support at that time, and for centuries to come in a slowly diminishing degree, from an immense and wealthy iconography, both religious and pagan. We have only to read in Panofsky's rewarding book (*Studies in Iconology*, Erwin Panofsky, New York, Oxford Univ. Press, 1939) concerning the various, precise, alternative and even contrasting meanings of the nude in medieval iconography, to realize how wealthy were the motifs and differing stresses under the hand of the artist. If used by us to-day they retain no more than a tithe of their sharpness and

Magic, medieval fantasies in general, are distasteful to him, being more offensive to his aesthetic appreciation of the harmonious indifference of natural forces than to his reason. We have already observed Alberti as artist, in the name of reason embracing science: now we envisage him as would-be scientist embracing art, for the sake of fantasies attached to a mathematical order. By demanding a new degree of objectivity, the simple measurements and experiments of that time wore an ennobling, a humane look.

On a larger estimate, this approximation between art and science may be found to have borne dead or constricted fruit in many seasons. But the *Quattro Cento* aesthetic served a tense compulsion: the objects laid out in Piero's representations and the face of Alberti's and Luciano's stone, calm, incontrovertible, yet immediate, in robust flower, pose the knotted courses of living. . . .

The scion of a noble house who was 'cut off' because he would not go into the family business, who 'made good' in his chosen sphere, Alberti may seem to resemble the heroes of countless novels. In addition, his humourless preaching, his immense self-satisfaction and his ceaseless attempt, as Sir Kenneth Clark has pointed out, to convince his readers that

precision. Still-life, landscape and portraiture are largely or entirely independent of iconographical meaning in the restricted sense of the term. The connection of modern art with an art serving a precise iconography, is mostly a matter of substitutes, but perhaps, none the less, all-pervasive; and it is possible that the wider vistas of modern art will best be seen from this rather demoded viewpoint.

We must also take into account the lessening after the seventeenth century of neo-Platonic magical tendencies whereby emblems, representations and harmonies could be considered as corporeal adaptations (*not* symbols) of supernal Ideas. This view, however vaguely held, brought fire to allegorical 'subjects'. *Cf.* E. H. Gombrich's very brilliant paper, *Icones Symbolicae*. Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, Vol. XI.

virtue pays, complete an almost Victorian picture. The parallel is not without some justice; yet, though the clichés be much the same, a Victorian conception of perfectibility is as distant from the one of the Renaissance as is their art, as distant as middle-aged, post-prandial good fellowship and optimism from the ecstasy of a hard and youthful dawn. Victorian optimism, reinforced by a cast-iron belief in evolutionary progress unknown to Alberti, accompanied a now wintry academism that contrasts with his emotion and achievement though he was the ancestor. To re-establish painting after Nature on firm ground, it will first be wise to invoke against the coarse academic stupor Alberti's and Piero's passionate researches.

For the moment, however, it is necessary to come between Alberti and Piero lest we may seem to draw them specifically together in the sense of master and disciple. Though there exists at least one hypothetical instance of a reflection of Alberti's architectural form in Piero's painting, the present writer cannot find a text in the *della Pittura* for Piero's use of colour. Where Alberti treats of colour, the emphasis is almost entirely upon chromatic tone. Following on black and white, 'All colours', says Alberti, 'are means for the painter to achieve a degree of shade and a degree of light.' (9) He writes with approbation, it is true, of a certain *amicitia*, a certain amity between colours. But the phrase is employed in rounding off a passage wherein the author admires the effect of one colour against another that is far different in hue and of a contrasting tone. (10) The emphasis upon light, upon tone to which colour is subsidiary, issues from the point of view of attaining relief rather than of an even reciprocity. 'All painting is there', says Alberti in concluding the second book of the *della Pittura*, 'in outline, composition and light.'

Those passages which demand from painting nobility, *contraposto*, compositions crowded with figures and with life, conjure up the Raphael of some seventy or more years later, as Sir Kenneth Clark points out, to a degree that is startling. Admittedly, however, the emphasis upon illumination *might* have had an influence upon Piero's system of colour or upon his master Domenico Veneziano who, with a softness, alone among his fellows attempted for itself the painting of light. (11) But is it probable that instructions meant primarily for relief would have been turned to the uses of a finer mosaic of co-ordination? Longhi's suggestion is to be preferred, of a 'Franchescan' movement between 1440 and 1460 imposed upon late Gothic painting in several parts of the Mediterranean sea-board. . . . (12)

While we are thinking of the Raphael to come, Alberti slips in his only reference to a modern painter, Giotto, praising him without a word of qualification for the expressiveness of his poses. The praise is just; indeed, most apt, since Giotto is the father of modern painting. But a doubt rises in the mind whether Alberti, though well-placed between the two terminals, could have beheld the course between Giotto and a Raphael (whom at times he seems to envisage), a course that, though it be straight, appears vast to us, even after the telescoping performed by time. On the other hand we master easily the full implication when Alberti says that the first necessity of the painter is to know geometry or when, in his book on architecture written some fifteen years after the *della Pittura*, he speaks of the sisterhood of pillars. Neither speed nor light and shade characterize Alberti's architecture. Florentine art was no longer his focus.

There is, however, a simple explanation, apt to the text, of what Alberti visualized for painting. It has long been

remarked that the Treatise is dedicated to four sculptors and to one painter only (13); that what the sculptors had begun was as yet without wide pictorial application. Here lay Alberti's first great task to which his genius was particularly adapted. He took it upon himself to induce, as it were, the potentialities of painting from the works of sculpture around him. The clue no doubt was antique sculpture (14) from which the image must be built up, then as now, of the Greek painting to which Alberti's classical authors referred. But the line of thought was vastly strengthened by the contemporary sculpture, especially of Donatello who was himself swayed by antique reliefs. It is, surely, Donatello's agile and copious reliefs (15) in particular that Alberti visualized in paint, those with a strong suggestion of distance unknown to antique reliefs. Possessing the definite image, with his strong inclination for relevance he was quickly able to isolate the problem of the transposition, the outstanding question of tone (outstanding, that is, beyond perspective science). And due to this and other figments possible only in painting, the reliefs, dignified by greater space, would be set out with a subtle life as well as with stronger contrasts. . . . It is likely that an immediate effect of the *della Pittura* was to direct the influence of Donatello on to painting.

There was no Roman school during the greater part of the fifteenth century. The first twenty years in the city were a time of ruin and barbarity, the next twenty only a little better. Early Renaissance art, led by Brunellesco and Donatello, grew in large part amid the more ancient ruins. Yet there could be no school of Rome herself. Brunellesco first rifled the treasure house. It is not known how long he stayed: possibly his visits added up to a decade or more, possibly far less. The margin is wide, yet we do not have the

sense from his buildings and from the little we are told with apparent truth, of cumulative sensibility. Instead, we feel him to have been a very active man, driven by well defined problems, the greatest of which, counterpart to his genius, was the dome for the Cathedral at Florence. Alberti also surveyed and measured the Roman remains. Unlike Brunellesco who conceivably may have spent more months in Rome, Alberti had his home there, lived there on and off for some forty years. Working in the papal administration, continuing to live in Rome after he had been dismissed from the service, he was the only major artist of his time who was likely to *contemplate* as well as measure the grandeur; to permit those giant ruins, arches and embossments glimpsed diurnally from the corner of the eye, to mould his mind in a sense deeper than the seeking from out the rubble a lore of engineering feats. Alberti too, we have said, went out on surveying expeditions. But the perspective of the ancient city meant a great deal more to this lonely, contemplative man. The dominant image now may not have been of the mathematic and the grandeur, of a springing and a counterpoint: the dominant image, perhaps, was in a convergence of the surveying and sight-seeing expeditions themselves, of the mass of traversed rubble, the jagged, ruined brick-work and the incorruptible face of the stone capital or carved stone aperture. Certainly in Alberti's Tempio encasement at Rimini there is a passionate stillness, a smoothness and a small carved flowering from the stone that cups and concentrates smoothness, foreign not only to Brunellesco and his school and, indeed, to Florentine art generally, but also to the posturing of painted figures advocated by the youthful Alberti of the *della Pittura*.

Added to the belief in the mathematic perfectibility of art, there was a less conscious yet unparalleled belief in the

dominion of stone.* White stone, prime material of this Franchescan aesthetic, possesses an even, gradual radiance, revealing relations in the mode of all appearances as they stand reciprocal in an evening light. Where stone lies on brick it will have the dynamic radiance of a flower. Exuberant as is this flower of decoration from the wall, it is not to the effect of mere richness or of ornament.

Calm, steadfastness, measure, are celebrated in the chief Quattrocento buildings, affording instantaneous apprehension to the eye; exuberances of the wall whose apertures are cavernous, encrusted, whose protuberances are those of branch and flower. The more massive Antique is sometimes staid when compared with so passionate yet uncontorted a love of wall-space governed by Pythagorean-Platonic calm, amassed from dreams of self-fulfilment to rival ordered stone. The Tempio encasement transcends all other building in such respect. We may instance the unusual poignancy (since it is allied to so single or immediate an impression) of the doorway arch on the Tempio façade, a span a third greater than the flanking arches: and for the effect of stone-blossom, we may point even to the frieze of plain Roman lettering adopted by Laurana at Urbino. But in regard to decoration

*The contemporary scientific theory retailed by Alberti (he reserves judgement) as to the origin of stone, a gradual growing from soil and water in the earth, like a seed that is planted, is of interest from the point of view of fructification fantasies connected with stone. Bonucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. 4, pp. 290 and 342. In his accounts of building stones, Alberti speaks of them as almost living materials. In Book 8, cap. 5 of the *De Re Aedif*, he exclaims on the extraordinary outburst of stone building throughout Italy, how that the drab cities known to his childhood now shine in marble. For him, as for Piero, and as later for the Lombardi and Mauro Coducci in Venice, the use of slabs of precious coloured marble deriving from the Byzantine or the Romanesque, enhanced white stone.

as in regard to the geometry, only negative precepts issue from analysis. Although the parallel is still alive in some part of the mind, we no longer believe a work of art to be as unassuming a form as a scientific truth. Nevertheless we do well to reflect on the creative ability which could possess this belief so deeply, how that there was conjoined on occasion a perfect calm with the rediscovered world of the senses, the prolix Shakespearian world; a steady dawn with all the vigour of mid-day. We do well to know and enjoy this supreme moment of art, the model of the extent to which the soul of man can assume an outward guise.

Dr. Rudolf Wittkower, in two papers (16) written for the Warburg Institute Journal, has shown in the case of Alberti, and in the case of Palladio with a larger wealth of both theoretic and executed material, that we must regard references to music such as the one in the ninth book of Alberti's *De Re Aedificatoria* to be no generality but a precise mathematical doctrine of ratios, adopted rather than adapted from Pythagorean musical harmony. Alberti's words are: 'The numbers by means of which the agreement of sounds affects our ears with delight, are the very same which please our eyes and our minds.' In the paper referred to on Palladio, Dr. Wittkower writes: 'The splitting up of ratios for the sake of making the proportions of a room harmonically intelligible appears to us very strange. And yet, this is the way the whole Renaissance conceived of proportion. A wall is seen as a unit which contains certain harmonic potentialities. The lowest sub-units, into which the whole unit can be broken up, are the consonant intervals of the musical scale the cosmic validity of which was not doubted.'

For instance, in 1534, Titian was called in, with Serlio, to

give opinion about Francesco Giorgio's memorandum on Sansovino's model for San Francesco della Vigna. This memorandum entirely identifies visual proportions with musical harmony. Titian, of course, like Giorgione, was a musician. Music ranked in the medieval *quadrivium* of the mathematical arts. The Renaissance sought to raise the visual arts within this category. 'A familiarity with musical theory', says Wittkower, 'became a *sine qua non* of artistic education.'

The Pythagorean ratios were employed primarily upon the division of a flat surface since, at the Renaissance, unlike Roman and still more, Greek times, at the early Renaissance supremely so, *the wall was the architectural focus*, its apertures, demarcations, protrusions, which were never more fruitful to the mind. 'In the relatively short period of twenty years', concludes Wittkower, 'Alberti passed through the whole range of approaches to classical architecture which was possible in the Renaissance. He developed from an emotional to an archaeological outlook. Next he subordinated classical authority to the logic of the wall structure. And finally he repudiated archaeology and objectivity and used classical architecture as a storehouse which supplied him with the motives for a free and subjective planning of wall architecture.' (17) In accordance with his conception of the logic of the wall, Alberti, if we consider only undisputed buildings, always used pillars to support arches. Columns, rounded units which eventually he ceased to think of as being remnants of a pierced wall* like the arches above an aperture, provide a principle of ornament, engaged with

*Though he did write of columns as being imaginatively such remnants of the wall. The arch-supporting column may well be thought to represent the wall's three dimensions; *cf.* most notably, Luciano Laurana's courtyard at Urbino.

pillars, or they may support flat entablatures like houses raised on piles. 'In practice, therefore, Alberti's conception of the column is essentially Greek, while his conception of the arch is essentially Roman—in both points he is followed by his great successors Bramante and Palladio.' (18)

We shall consider in the light of Alberti Piero della Francesca's architectural representations, though not in the sense that Piero was directly subject to Alberti's precept or example. Piero has more than once represented columned porticoes with straight entablatures. But his use of the column is determined by rectangular pictorial conception, and though we may care to look further, even to the length of considering that conception, nothing firm can be concluded on this basis alone about the relationship between the two artists. Moreover, double columns supporting arches (and little else) provide the *mise-en-scène* for the Annunciation at Perugia. These columned arches are similarly related not only to the composition of the picture but to its complicated pointed shape, that of the *cymatium* to a Gothic altar-piece, painted below on gold for the nuns of Sant' Antonio. (19) Piero's architecture is part and parcel with his non-Albertian figures and with his conception of the subject matter, in a mode so profound as to give rise to mystic utterance. Such architecture could not have been derived by rote. (20) Except in the background of the Madonna di Sinigallia where a doorway and window are represented which may closely reflect the work of Francesco di Giorgio, Luciano Laurana's successor at Urbino, and in the apse behind the Brera Madonna and Saints which (Bramante apart (21)) calls to mind (22) the Lombardi's Santa Maria dei Miracoli at Venice, soon to be begun—Piero's buildings do not reproduce an actual architecture employing the new classical members, as much as they suggest the preciousness and the smooth-

ness of ivory conceived upon an Olympian, mathematic scale. Yet, ideal in smoothness though it be, subject to the needs not only of his design but of colour and tone (his friezes are zones of dark-coloured marble (23)), Piero's architecture translated and magnified the new concern with wall-significance, if only because of the noble affinities—indeed union—of the wall with the figures that have been projected within that orbit. His shallow mouldings and gradual curves possess a most profound intent: coffered recesses and the distinct beauty of column and demarcated pavement not only embody but most surely inspire the love of stone.

The beautiful wall, door and entablature of the Arezzo Annunciation (Pl. 7) is topped by cloud, by the figure of the Almighty and the softest blue sky. Like the rest of the building with the slow plain aperture above, like the tapering column between the Virgin and the announcing Angel (Pl. 8), this wall, thus measured against the majesty of the holy subject, becomes the record of perfect spatial interval.

In his book on perspective Piero came near to identifying painting with this science. Except in front of his paintings it is difficult to grasp how much emotion, and in particular a sense of explicit order, how much sense of discovery could have been both stimulated and released by the employment of geometric perspective. The transcendental medieval culture was hostile to the apprehension of homogeneous space, as if the medieval Aristotelian concept of the four elements in the terrestrial zone *below* and of the divine element *above*, outmoded the easy contacts of normal vision. But stress upon mathematics, both in the case of Alberti and of Piero, by itself explains nothing of their art. Similarly Platonism, neo-Platonism, was but a necessary garment, the cover of a

nameless joy in things; paradoxically, since the philosophy of Plato is far from the senses, allowing no more value to the sensible world than to the individual, that other god of Renaissance man.* A worship of mathematics (24), then, subject to different connections, to different unconscious tendencies, might result in an extremely conceptual, abstract or even archaic painting. As it was, renascence of the near thing, of a steady, untroubled, adult regard, the most tremendous triumph of man, provoked our science no less than our art: in the first moment of completeness, before elaboration and back-sliding, with a vast inherited iconology still undispersed, they were as one. Physical proportion took the place of medieval light from on high: verisimilitude evoked the moodless majesty of Nature.

Piero pushed this aesthetic to an extreme, he alone in painting. And whereas Alberti was able to find the Franchescan synthesis for his architecture, it may have been that from out of his more literary interest in painting, in the

*It is not surprising that the philosophies of the humanists abound in contradictions. The position for which the majority of them strove is clear, namely, the justification of an harmonious external world ruled by law, immanent in every detail, and an emphasis upon the individual in an universal scheme. But the feeling of certainty, even for many humanists themselves, was expressed better by art than by thought. Painting was called an art rather than science because, to give one reason, it is a *fare*, a doing. It therefore conveyed more certainty than many of those sciences. Mathematics and painting founded on the new geometric perspective, had in common a power of exposition, a demonstrability in advance of philosophical treatment. Here, in painting, was best seen the reconciliation of the individual with the type or mean, of particular nature with the ideal. Because, like a science, art makes known the state of Nature, enormous and varied knowledge was expected of the artist. *Cf. Piero della Francesca. De Prospectiva Pingendi.* Edited and introduced by G. N. Fasola. (Sansoni, Florence, 1942.)

rhetoric of painting, he felt Piero's art to be almost a vulgarity, stilted, perhaps archaic in the application of scientific truth which he, Alberti, had first codified, treating of perspective in the *della Pittura*. There is no evidence whatsoever for this view; but in classifying Alberti with Piero, we must at the same time recognize the possibility of a situation so often met with, wherein a partner apparently takes as the one and only formula what for the other is but an initial scheme: a familiar situation that may involve acute and often bitter difference.

Piero achieved equation between true science and a majestic rapture from the earth. We sense geometry and number expressing the amplitude of love: we witness an untorn naturalism: a universal myth that is apart.

Love and the love of perspective were one, the perspective, for instance, of tilted circular shapes expressed with the slow piety of very exact drawing. Yes, piety, but more than piety, far more than the Gothic bent for the encrusted curve of a gold nimbus, inspired the correspondence that is broad and temperate between his volumes. We have from him the widest vistas and therein the equal simultaneous constancy of things; a stillness that is not archaic, a fullness without boast, a massive self-containment in the very stream of adult life. But he delighted also to show the virtuosity, as it were, of his rooted shapes in his fondness of temporary structures or of any such apparatus to whose related forms he could, like the dying sun on an autumn day, unexpectedly attribute a durable and self-sufficient sense. Similarly his men, even on the battlefield, in virtue of volume, of affinities between volumes and their intervals, vibrant, earthly, engrossed, possess the flux and the chance. Piero's science serves both to distinguish exactly each particular and to embrace it. Agitation borrows the broad arc of calm. The

geometry is at peace with a deep-rooted organic structure, product of chromatic sense. Franchescan forms are brothers and sisters at ease within the ancestral hall of space.

There are, then, three starting points for the critique of Piero's painting. First, the potential coincidence of science and art in the early Renaissance, founded on the new victories of perspective. Secondly, his sense of colour as the basis of his sense of form. Although connections are many between these two approaches, only the first has a literature. To the detriment of art-criticism, form is rarely envisaged from the end of colour. The two roads prove to be but branches of the third, the quality of love by which Piero's bare geometry is seen by us as warm and rich as well as noble; a nakedness of love, numbers that in bareness may thereby be clothed with magnificence as may the study-object of anatomist and physiologist, shared also by poets and by every human being.

Piero's forms are familiars, we have said. No form accepts sacrifice to the emphasis of another. Distributed by perspective they converse through spatial simultaneity, through their affinities that search it out. The postures of these forms acknowledge the same sublime homeliness. Angels and princes make themselves known with the slow gestures of a calm peasantry. Noble science gives more than the framework, gives undying accent to the straight mysterious growing of the countryside. Perspective separates, colour and form bring together in family circle the crupper on a horse and the shoulder of a hill, the fluting of columns and the hanging folds of a dress. To our eyes a slow majesty as of white oxen upon the white ribbon of a road between the terre-verte hills, belongs to the valley of the upper Tiber where Borgo San Sepolcro lies, Piero's town.

If there is an emphasis it is upon the homogeneity of

space ignored by the medieval mind, an emphasis previously unknown to painting. Though a fraternal relationship between objects appeared in archaic and decorative art, the timeless unity of their space which could have permitted a wider divergence of family traits and a less summary organization, was neither comprehended nor desired. All the same, in the interests of that simultaneity, Piero, as did Cézanne whose sense of colour was equally dominant in his sense of form, preserved the two-dimensional character of the picture-space—a certain archaic flatness, then, of forms—in conjunction with a great depth and a great volume.

Piero suffered no contrast between man, his circumstance and his heavy body. The Franchescan elders are Semitic for the most part, hirsute, watchful, but it is as if their low raucous fire, subject to the architectural involucre of outwardness, cohered like a squared clod; as if the abysmal contradictions of the spirit were transmuted into the density and demarcation of a heavy turve. A transmutation, we feel (though not to the effect of those symbols that are so easily won in decorative art), a transmutation into the simultaneity of space. Space, to a less degree the perennial subject of all painting, was Piero's rigid concept: whereas conceptual art substitutes a convention for mathematical space.

When we remember his paintings we first think, perhaps, of broad calm heads, of an oaken calm, of head-dresses and blameless trees; of entablature, of foliage, linked as if by hands: of tufted ground and feet in profile on a marble floor, of open surfaces that bloom from open surfaces, spheres that respond to cylinders, fibrous hair to non-deciduous trees. No other painter, except Giorgione and Cézanne, transposed as completely his love of life into the terms of space. Other, and usually predominant values of

visual art, such as rhythm, contrast, stress, movement, arabesque, are common to all the arts however differing their sensation in each. The great poet Botticelli, for instance, to our exploring tactile sense exposes visions, sometimes restless. The transposition lacks the finality, or at any rate the immediacy, of space. Compared with Piero, Botticelli is as sea to land. One might say of all, or nearly all, the pictures in the National Gallery, compared with the Pieros they are as sea to land.

We are bound to attribute to Piero a deep contentment. The loggias and halls are not embellishments of princely life, but enlargements of an italianate street, innocent of *genre*. His architectural backgrounds possess great beauty; but it is less likely we shall recall Piero when looking at St. Paul's, or even San Lorenzo, than at the sight of a black-timbered farm building in the sun, a sublime demonstration of architectural meaning (since he has caused us to see it thus in element), with open doors and windows revealing a greater and more simple darkness. Outside, the sun, inside a generous darkness beyond the edges of neutral-toned apertures. The thought occurs of the square muzzle of a cow.

As well as his sheds, Piero's magnificent buildings are stalls of the greatest contentment. Their shelter is dignified, complacent, like the gesture of the Virgin in the Monterchi fresco, pointing to her pregnant stomach. There is sufficiency and amplitude both within and without the womb. Hills lie with heads, foliage with thorny hair, massive mouths on calm rounded faces. There remains always a strong ligament between light and dark, between what is spread and bark-like folds, between the rounded and the pointed. Each interval constructs an expressive pattern. In the stillness, apprehended at one glance, there is fire. The men and women of bovine lips and bovine eyes are gripped to their

outward showing like trees in broad leaf. Above them stand the self-confident trees, circular, pyramidal, of thick foliage, nut, acorn, chestnut-bearing.

We may attribute a conscious application of such oaken character to the spatial settlement. Indeed, the Arezzo frescoes depict the story of the True Cross, grown from a branch of the tree of Good and Evil planted with Adam in his grave to sprout from him as did his chestnut-haired children. Further on, we observe this stubborn wood in a bridge and in a grained cross against the sky. At the last episode, the return of the cross to Jerusalem, the wood is held between two tousled trees, the link, it has been suggested, between the Old and New Testaments, between the many words that thus unstealthily would fructify. (25)

If clothes are sometimes bark, hair is breathing foliage. Man, measure of the universe, on ceremonial occasions manifests the world's geometry. Hence the towering volumes at Arezzo of the hats. But consideration of pure form, in the case of such lyrical genius as possessed both Piero and Cézanne, men of roots and strong sensuous feeling, leads to no short cut, no summary artifact. Their geometry exhibited the condensation of their far-reaching love. As is so often the case, Piero's theoretical writings mislead in the matter, for he wrote only of values responsive to rule, to scientific rule. These values, however, were in divine conjunction with his sense of the warmth between parent and offspring, between polychrome pavement and shod feet that create the spaces thereon, between grooved entablature and the creases in a band that rounds the head, between arm and peeled tree-trunk, horse and cloud, a small rich pendant and the wide spreading of lake and low hills, between a circular dark-toned hat and a porphyry disc, between hat, hand and battlement. Connection is always architectural in the

sense of a division of an order: the mailed apple of a closed vizor and the rounded face of a trumpeter with his length of thin tube extending from his lips; the ring of a skull-cap and the spring of an arch; the darkness of an aperture circled with stone and the dark centres of eyes flanked with their whites; the consummation expressed in an Emperor's conical hat surrounded by heads of coiled, pleated hair against a background of arches and circular disks; the spiral grooves of ears and the straight grooves of a transparent covering that falls from the head; the winding river with light paths and white belts or curving outer hems; extended fingers and the feathered points of an heraldic eagle; the horses' hooves of opposing armies like wide-bottomed chessmen on the board; the acanthi of a Corinthian capital and the features and fingers of the Virgin, the beads and structure of her vestments; the dark head of a cross-bearer against the sharp walnut-shaped centre of the grain and the ribbed clouds beyond; in a crowd, head growing from head, half a mouth against a neck or a white hem disappearing against the white of an eye; the mounting risen Christ and a dark knoll in the dawn light; the hill-protuberances beyond Battista Sforza's ivory face and the diaphanous hills beyond her husband's warted cheek. . . . The catalogue is mechanical, since the connections are not single but profuse, ramifying in stillness. Piero's colour exploits the affinity to which we have referred in terms of shape and tone. All art exhibits connection, a bringing together. In visual art alone, and then solely in visual art deeply founded upon this colour-cum-architectural sense of form, an aesthetic communication may be explicit and immediate to the point of rebutting after-thought. It is the *réaliser* of Cézanne. Such demonstration of intellect and feeling was the crown of the *Quattro Cento* compulsion to make manifest. Thereafter

the same chromatic sense of form to some degree persisted in post-Renaissance art refurbished, if we consider painting only, by Vermeer, for instance, by Chardin, re-enacted by Cézanne. Yet there has not been, and still there is lacking, a generalized apprehension of this side of visual art, eminent not only in painting but also in drawing, in sculpture and more particularly, in architecture whose steadfast forms and textures (not colours) have so often endowed that sensibilty with archetypes.

Piero reveals the family of things. His art does not suggest a leaning from the house of the mind. He shows, on the contrary, the mind becalmed, exemplified in the guise of the separateness of ordered outer things; he shows man's life as the outward state to which all activity aspires.

The family of things. It is as if the poetry of deep affinities were identical with those objects and with their formulae; as if death's calm separation lent nobility to the pressure of each heart-beat.

There can be no art without something, however minute, of this quality; because Art, mirror of each aim, conspires to win for expression the finality of death.

No artist has been more extreme in poetic gift than Giorgione, none more sane. The rare values exclusive to painting which we have found implanted in Piero, are equally evident, though the distance is great from Piero's mathematical conception. Giorgione and Piero have in common their sanity allied to love, a supreme sense of reciprocal relation, the approach to form by way of chromatic or architectural sensibility. Piero influenced the rise of Venetian art. But turning from Piero to Giorgione, intent as we are on reviewing a similar scene, we shall have the sense of strolling, of throwing away accoutrement, of a lack

of formality, where ease can never cloy since we are well aware that at any other time, under any other command, with any other antecedents, this great force, thus without uniform, without nerveless regulation, would scatter.

Of course, it is not that formal values are imperceptible in Giorgione's art. On the contrary they are very strong. Nor did he lack roots in the art of his predecessors (26). The miracle is of bonds as naturally borne as the one of the air we all must breathe, of the freedom in subject-matter under the poetic aegis of affinities and reciprocal relations; of the just and sanguine fire in an unaccustomed mood.

Without doctrinaire emphasis, without protestation, Giorgione employed new means. To say so remarks the fusion of form and content, a fusion that Pater considered justly to be unique in figurative art, and close to music. Giorgione was the instrument of the largest revolution in the handling of paint. All the characteristic possibilities of oil painting are traceable to him; a waver, a contagion in the canvas. Prior merit may be Leonardo's in chiaroscuro invention. But Giorgione joined chiaroscuro as never again with jewel-like local colour, controlling an equal insistence throughout. From his figures and portraits we sense the movement of the blood, but otherwise there is pause. They illuminate the natural cycles; they are exemplars of life, of change, for whom sleep or the moment of pause renews in terms of unfettered afterglow the everlasting stance of objects.

At one and the same time, Giorgione brought boldness to painting and a lingering sensitiveness whose aims he completed. He demonstrated without stiffness or tension the equal insistence of things in space. Piero discovered the homogeneity of space and enlarged the science of distance. Giorgione, with Leonardo, was the first to value accurately the broad sweep of tone, to release it over draughtsmanship,

attaching to this range the wider reciprocities thus engendered. His art and originality were centred in his close study of Nature, as Vasari said. The co-existence of Giorgione's observation of tonality and his poetic gifts inspired by a certain architectural and cultural ambience, is a worthy parallel, the only worthy parallel, to the co-existence in Piero's art of the new mathematic perspective and his intense love for stone as well as for man. Their chromatic approach to form was behind both appositions, entwining the terms.

Earlier painting, wrote Zanetti (27) in 1760, may have appealed to the intellect or aroused a sense of wonder, but it is not until Giorgione that paintings 'begin with sweet violence to seize on the heart'. We would not expect an appreciation of the value of a more primitive style. The interesting point is that Zanetti was writing, not of oil paintings, but of Giorgione's frescoes, some remnants of which he engraved. Although they have now entirely flaked from the walls (28), Giorgione's frescoes, particularly those on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, must always be regarded as central to his work. Vasari does not appear to have visited many Venetian private collections: the estimate of Giorgione as the father of the Venetian painting of his, Vasari's day, was based very largely on the frescoes and the large picture of the miracle of St. Mark at the Scuola San Marco. Indeed, were it not for the once unavoidable evidence of these frescoes to anyone proceeding along the Grand Canal, Giorgione would have become a great deal more of a myth than he is: perhaps we would have needed to invent him. The pupils and heirs who finished and repainted some of the pictures after his sudden death at the age of thirty-four, who probably carried out projects that had been merely sketched,

who at first in their own separate creations sought largely to reproduce his style, Titian and Sebastiano del Piombo, were Vasari's friends, were likely to have been his principal sources for the life of Giorgione. Vasari, though to a far less extent than some writers who followed him, even closer adherents of Titian's, illustrated in his second edition the tendency to sacrifice Giorgione to Titian's fame. In regard to fame no less than to cash, Titian owned a strenuous anxiety.

'He (Giorgione)', wrote Zanetti eleven years after he had published engravings of fresco figures, 'began to lose somewhat and to soften the contours of his figures so that one is drawn within these contours. Outlines disappear in such a way that in a sense the vanishing planes suggest forms that lie beyond them.' In the same passage he speaks of Giorgione bringing painting out of its ancient timidity. The judgement may sound strange since it is more to the linear definition of a primitive treatment that we are inclined to attribute boldness. But then we have suffered much from the convenient cloak of *sfumatoio*. One glance at Giorgione's Tempesta accuses the thousand of good-taste painters and the often vain vitality in the agitated canvasses of their successors. Giorgione was bold and, from the point of view of Vasari, arbitrary. He pleased himself. (Titian raised artists' social rank by his huge prestige. It is unlikely that he took wider freedom than his much less well known mentor.) Vasari was obviously puzzled by the 'story', the meaning, of the figures of the Fondaco frescoes. He could discover no one to tell him, he says, what they represented. It did not really trouble him, nor Zanetti, who wrote that Giorgione added to his fine grounding in art the arbitrary dictates of fantasy 'to allure and to please'. Zanetti was writing 200 years later, but this would appear to have been the judgement of contemporaries

also. Many were doubtless puzzled by Giorgione's pictures and frescoes, though aware of a meaning conveyed without hindrance or protestation. There are hints that his genius overflowed into generosity and openness with others, typified by the nickname Giorgione, meaning big, and by an easy transference, big-hearted George. Such an estimate—any estimate—of his character can be impugned, of course, through the scarcity of documents or sources.

Vasari probably made his notes between thirty and forty years after Giorgione's death in 1510. He says that Giorgione was born of humble parents at Castelfranco, a little town on the mainland; that personal charm, his singing and his skill with the lute opened Venetian society to him and that he was in much demand at exalted parties; that he delighted in love; that he fell in love with a lady at a musical reception he gave in his own house; that he died of the plague, because unknown to them, his beloved had been infected.

Together with the account above of the nickname, Giorgione, these sentences exhaust the personal detail given by Vasari who was writing at greater length about the extraordinary development of his painting and of his humble and continuous application to Nature.

A host of works were attributed to him for centuries. Modern criticism has cut away, leaving at first no more than about ten extant pictures; nor are all of these from his own hand alone. The Pan-Giorgionists then resumed, this time with care and a reasonable case. Art history required a Giorgione who was not confined to the author of the Tempesta (which has never been seriously disputed) and a few allied works. This course is difficult. Some who admire the Tempesta most—the present author is among them—have had small inclination to extend the oeuvre greatly among known pictures, largely because, no doubt, the Tempesta is the

only certain picture whose original paint is in a fair state. But consideration of the Fondaco frescoes alone causes such a position to collapse. From Zanetti's engravings we become aware of an entirely novel subtlety of posture that demands comparison wider than the one with the Tempesta. And so, kept in good trim by warding off the absurd attacks of the Pan-Titianists, we enter the appalling labyrinth of half-Giorgiones, fragments of originals or of copies, repaints, copies and the huge suburbs of the Giorgionesque (29). In memory rather than before these fragments a conception emerges, compounding, perhaps, a piece of so-called self-portrait, the seated, attentive shepherd of the Pastorale (*Concert Champêtre*) beneath the fire-light of the sun, for all the repaint the youth in the Concert, a figure to the left in the Adulteress, several portraits, a detail in the background of the Apollo and Daphne, the San Rocco picture, the Venus and the Tempesta, the Christ and tree of the Christ and Magdalene, St. George or St. Liberalis at Castelfranco, some of the fresco engravings, the shepherd who moves forward and the landscape in the Allendale Presepio, the Benson Holy Family, the seated, piping old man in the Finding of Paris. . . .

As we return to the aspect of painting which unifies this book, Vasari (the second edition of the *Lives*) offers the ideal text. Of a figure painted by Giorgione he refers to the differing aspects that are revealed to one glance, to *una sola occhiata*. The context gives the phrase a stress. Indeed, Vasari is concerned with a property of painting which he considers to be the property of painting alone among the arts. And he refers to Giorgione in this same connection in his Preface to the whole work.

The phrase occurs in a story Vasari tells about Giorgione

and some sculptors on the subject of the Colleoni statue (at the time of its unveiling?). The sculptors claimed their art to be superior because a statue could show all aspects to anyone walking round it. Giorgione replied that painting was superior in just this very respect because all the positions could be apparent in a painting for one glance, for *una sola occhiata*, instantaneously, without perambulation. And he proved it by a picture he then painted of a nude in a turning position. Clear water before the nude, polished armour to one side and on the other a mirror, reflected more aspects.

In spite of the naive programme it could have been a beautiful picture, a kind of energetic dust-cover to a very powerful thesis. Vasari's story is probably true: for present purposes it is the perfect parable. In expressing emotion by variant shapes that insist uniformly, Piero della Francesca and Giorgione crystallized for *una sola occhiata*, in wider relation, those primarily architectural displays which had appeared on the surface of stone with such tension of outwardness (30). Their inspired emphasis upon simultaneity entailed a lack of emphasis in any particular, but a much heightened accent upon brotherhood, upon a conception of form stemming from the ceaseless inter-communication of textures and surface colours; yet, unlike a decorative treatment, expressing deep emotional content; subsuming, also, in terms of simultaneity or immediacy, the tugging and less immediate sensations of rhythm, balance and opposition that are first objects of a tactile approach. A content of great poetry was inspired by, and inspired, this wider spatial purpose.*

*Whenever, subsequent to Giorgione, this purpose has considerably weakened, while no new strength has been claimed from a different approach to painting, literary fallacies have not only held, but rioted, upon the stage.

Therefore the interpenetration in Giorgione's art of form and content arose from images, from an attitude to subject-matter which itself reflected the formal aim. This is always the case of successful art. What differs so vastly is the strength of each term and the felicity of their apposition. Stimulated by the equal showing and fraternal relationship of *Quattro Cento* architecture, strong without the help of hieratic formula, yet observing closely, discovering, in tune with his poetic aim, the broad sweep of tone, Giorgione sought to contain the passage of time, a man's life, in the forms of simultaneity. A literal example of Giorgionesque subject choice—an exact parallel to the naive little story above of form—is to be found in the (to some extent) Giorgionesque painting at the Uffizi of the Three Ages of Man. What appears to be the same person is represented as a boy, a man and an old man: a history, as it were, made open to the glance, an attempt to translate temporal passage into simultaneous reciprocity. We recognize in Giorgionesque pastoral painting, the aptness of an *old* shepherd, like the ancient who sits cross-legged, piping a continuum in the Finding of Paris. Examples could be multiplied. Such a very literal and rather naive feature so common in Giorgione's lesser followers, serves to illustrate an imaginative bent whose subtleties and intensities elude any but Pater's words. It is, however, no great conceptual jump from the Three Ages to the Tempesta's supreme poetry, or to the psychological pause which was the moment for Giorgione's portraiture, whereby features became caskets of things unsaid.

Venice inspires a sense of affinity, of equality of emphasis in the visual world, of an unchanging emblematic showing that embraces the movement of the waters. Venice, but not the population. They appear matchstick-like, out of place. Giorgione created in his frescoes by subtle conceptions of

posture—too sensitive, charged too accurately with feeling to be described by the term *contraposto* with the suggestion of virtuosity—created figures that grew steadily from the wall. We may think it likely that he had painted many frescoes, at the Cà Soranzo, for example, before he painted the Tempesta; that then, on the same inclusive principle, he brought together a thunder-sky, a calm evening light and the perennial Venetian buildings. He had had hard experience in the accommodation of figures to his wide imaginative grasp. Now he could release the poetry which Venice inspires but which Venice thwarts in the accommodation of figures in her scenes. The *terra firma* of his childhood was different. Men 'go' with trees and brooks.

The next point can be put under the category neither of form nor of content since it concerns both equally. From Giorgione's choice of posture and, more particularly, of the complicated tilt of heads, especially in the frescoes and portraits, there results a grace or elegance often isolated in later art. But it was first a combination of aspects (for the purposes of *una sola occhiata*) which by their subtle interpenetration communicate a meaning beyond the elegant, even if the communicating voice is gracious as well as passionate. In a head tilted backward and seen from below, due to it being turned away, a view is allowed of the summit of the skull also.* Extreme softness and significant drawing of outline in full chiaroscuro, a range of tone that is felt continuously by the artist, not for the values of contrast but for the unanimity in difference, suggest planes beyond the contour lines that burgeon from the matrix of their background. An iden-

*The choice of such posture, the demands of, or interest in, *una sola occhiata*, lead inevitably to a consideration of Giorgione's preferred shapes and to the amalgam of form they express. *See* below.

tity pervades the richly varied landscapes with figures whose heads of hair lie on the picture plane against foliage: a different species of foliage, different treatment of hair and a far different use of tonal range from Piero's; but the quality of the connection is the same.

The step is short to the specific terms of form. There is no more striking instance of Giorgione's form than the remarkable head of the Jew in the San Rocco picture of Christ carrying the Cross (Pl. 24). Though the picture survives as a wreck, the shape made by this head haunts. The view is a profile, but owing to a slight tilt outward from on top, the width of the skull is seen as far as the further edge of the further eyebrow. The nostril-curve echoes the beard-curve, in to the jaw: the top of the nose is almost parallel to the contour line of the forehead: the whole nose-shape is like the front section of the skull with the beard: the ear is not dissimilar nor the shape made by the curling of the hair at the nape of the neck, nor (to instance a still smaller shape) the expressive knuckle and half-finger caught by the light. These pyramidal or pear-like or bell-like shapes—Christ's face and shoulder provide instances of the latter—are a constant unit in Giorgione's and in Giorgionesque paintings.* (It was soon elongated in Venetian art, as if reflected burning over the canals.) Such basic and architectural element of design in Giorgione's art was, however, indistinguishable from the needs of his imagination; so that although we are aware that his colour is unequalled, we may well remain unconscious of the formal reduplication in brotherly equal fashion, a mode,

*Owing to the length of this note it is printed as Appendix II.

There seems no reason for inferring (as does G. Fiocco, *Giorgione*, Bergamo, 1941) that Michiel's near-contemporary reference to the Christ of this picture is itself a statement to the effect that only the figure of Christ is by Giorgione's hand.

unlike a system of balance and stresses, inseparable from his use of colour; a wide contribution from significant colour to the conception of form.

The curvilinear yet pyramidal character of several Giorgione compositions has sometimes been remarked rather than the smaller and similar composite unit (it serves both form, colour and imaginative content). Though it is artificial to isolate it, an attempt must be made to find an origin in terms of form alone. Passing over Giorgione's lute, we may be reminded of the lozenge and ovoid shapes in Agostino di Duccio's reliefs at Rimini and of much other *Quattro Cento* stone efflorescence and incrustation differing widely from the stuck-on appearance of summary decoration. We may see in this arched shape, with its conical developments, an amalgam (suitable to the purposes of *una sola occhiata*) of the circular and rectangular, the two shapes in relation of which we are never so conscious as when we are surrounded by stone building searched by water; and we may then call to mind the extraordinary poignancy of buildings in Giorgione's landscapes, and those prime factors of classical architecture —columns upon a plinth—which are presented nude, as it were, behind the man of the Tempesta (31) (Pl. 17).

The little Benson Holy Family (Pl. 14) has sometimes been accounted an early Giorgione. It is most certainly Giorgionesque, not least because of the unstressed, bell-like, breast-like shape which brings together in love, not only the family group and the tree through the round-arch window, not only the great rock beyond; but also the rectangular brick parapet, the stones, the building and the square tower (32). We observe how unforced, how warm, how unregimented are the affinities. A rule or regimentation is the least likely attribute of Giorgione's painting. The way was open to explore with chiaroscuro a wider world and thereby to initiate relaxed,

informal yet more diverse affinities than were permissible for Piero or even for Bellini.

The jewel-like quality of Giorgione's colour is unequalled: opponents too have admitted it; and by opponents those writers are intended who were either the old Titian's friends, wishing to exalt his youth at Giorgione's expense, or who, as heirs of the *Cinquecento* grand manner which they took to be the summit of painting, could not allow Giorgione, since he worked on a smaller scale, to be as great. Zanetti, whom we have quoted, provides an instance of the second case. Yet he wrote: 'The strength and the relief which Giorgione knew how to give to figures did not prevent his colour, as it does in the case of other painters, from being beautiful and indeed somehow incandescent and almost aflame in his flesh tints. He managed with so much grace and 'rightness' that one cannot say that he has any worthy follower at all in this respect: there has been no one to challenge his supremacy.' Only he could create between figures the telepathic contact which avoids a meeting of eyes.

It is unlikely that Giorgione was a theorist of the culture he represents, of that spirit which allowed him his divine pause by freeing him of the usual attitudes. During the fifteen years or so of his working life, Venice suffered her greatest initial reverses. Her sun began to set at the same time as her rebuilding in white stone; a pall in which she would be laid out to die, it has been said (33). (Dissociated from impermanence, something of what is final, epitomized only by death, belongs to the spiritual outwardness of aesthetic creation.) Venice was clothing herself in white; brilliant colour was multiplying in her painting. War and disaster, as we well know, may increase the warmth of contemplation and a certain loving detach-

ment. Giorgione worked in the most beautiful of cities. The unfurled gravity and magnificence of Venice enlarged the fever of her beauty. But Giorgione, no less than Piero, was rooted in the countryside. Vivid symbols of Venetian building lived for him in walls and farm-houses. He dispenses with the forms of crowding palaces while possessing their height in an uncrowded country air. The fever subsides: he has with him for gentle shaded slopes, for pause, for ease, for relaxation, an intercourse of square and circle, of coloured disk and shallow oblong panel wrought so plainly to the effect of equal insistence by the Venetian architect Mauro Coducci.

Instead of marbles upon the sea, instead of prismatic water and the sable interior of palace and church, instead of tidal waters, it is the earth, light on leaves, shade within the wood. . . . As may be seen in Venetian landscape from the time of Bellini's later period, formality unbends: contours of the ground are for lying on—it is the time of *villeggiatura*, summer and autumn—for rest, for the pasturing of beasts, for the arm of night. In from the sea, aerial perspective causes hilly country to settle. More varied contour than at Venice interrupts the sky with infinite gradation, subsiding into feathery distance. Greenness is loved with an untroubled eye by one for whom marbles have been trees. But although their countryside has turned from restless tides, the great Venetian artists preserve the space of the Adriatic in the running contagion of their colour and by their mariner's sense of the richness and riotous peace of land.

The countryside was also the level tones of music. Giorgione, Sebastiano and Titian were musicians. We know that Giorgione was in great demand for his lute and for his voice.

The word 'music' to-day suggests an ample resonance from many sides. But the early music for voice and lute and

even for the spinet, rises gently from the ground like a tenuous smoke, pervades and hangs over the scene, creating stillness by means of an accord. There is the element of a patterned dreaminess, of enchantment since music is primarily incantation. The musical equivalent nearer our own day is more defiant, more nostalgic, a cry from the heart. It is, of course, no longer by any means secular music *tout court*. But in Giorgione's time the story of Orpheus and the animals was as yet a parable of musical enchantment, of relaxation that does not scorn the tension it resolves. Giorgione's paintings seem to record the moment after the final lute note when the protagonists of his imagination were living slowly in the supervening pause (which but rarely occurs in reality between action and action or thought and thought), when all the contrapuntal tendencies that go to make the individual were fused into an unforced silence. Perhaps only a painter who was a musician could have identified his sense of pause and of silence with the simultaneity of space.

There is again the quality of Giorgione's soft contours. None of the many thousand subsequent painters who employed a similar technique has achieved as evocative an effect, evocative, that is, not only of the form the contour serves, but through form, of a pulse also, found and found again like the harmonic grip of a musical sound.

Music-playing scenes or the piping of a shepherd are common Giorgionesque subjects from which, in any case, as has so often been remarked, the spell of music is rarely absent. We sense the voice divagating upon an instrument. It is strange, therefore, that the Venetian music of Giorgione's day has not been examined in the light of his paintings, more especially since there would appear to be more than a casual connection between their spirit and a novel

and contemporaneous musical vogue by which the melodious declaration of the voice was established anew. Pleasures of the ear were more valued in the Venice than in the Florence of that time: it is a difference reflected even in a variation of Neo-Platonic doctrine (34). Thus Bembo and Betussi preferred the ear to the eye in matters of perfect spiritual beauty. Such was not the orthodox Florentine view though the Pythagorean scale was admitted to provide the canon of visual no less than of musical harmony. Music, the more abstract art, had been both exalted and inhibited by the robes of a 'science'. The fact that the less systematic (when averted from practical affairs) Venetian culture at the beginning of the sixteenth century gave ear to a warmer, more enterprising music than the Florentine, may well be a measure of greater sensuousness.

Fifteenth-century Italian music had been dominated from the North, from France and the Netherlands; but towards the end of the century a great development began of *stramvolti*, *sonetti*, *rispetti*, *frottole*, *canzonetti*, *villanelli*, which kept a popular vein in dance rhythm (35). Bartolommeo Tromboncino and Marchetto Cara in particular composed many *frottole* which Petrucci (1504) and later Antigo, printed. *Frottola* means fable or ballad; many *frottole* were executed in combinations of voice and instrument. The melody was given to the top voice. It cannot be doubted that this was the type of music Giorgione himself performed and for which he was in such request.

Historians of music record the rise of the *frottola*—and it was an immense vogue, dead before 1530 in company with the Giorgionesque—as an event of first importance in musical history; since *frottola* was parent to madrigal, a considerable modification in the structure of musical language. Contrasting with current polyphony, the *frottola* was an

expression of fluidity and ease. 'Leurs harmonies rudimentaires', writes Prunières (36), 'offrent le plus parfait contraste avec les entrelaces en dentelle du contrepoint franco-flamand.' Visiting foreign musicians 'se déclarèrent à écrire eux aussi des *frottole* et des *canzonetti* de diverses sortes, s'appliquant à attraper cette manière aisée, fluide et chantante des Italiens'.

Due to the strength of Byzantine tradition, Venetians were less responsible to the pomposities of Rome. The unparticularized reference to the Antique in the form of Giorgione's Venus is more Hellenic (37) than Roman. Less antiquarian or expatiatory or competing, similarly without the aid of historical perspective, the culture that nurtured him perhaps enjoyed the ancient past with more affluent emotion than did the Florentine. What had been the exotic fairy-land of medieval times, dangerous to the touch, full of dark magic, could now be better approached in the language of permeation, in the love themes of the *frottola* or *canzonetto* rising invisibly upon the air.

There must always exist a pregnant relation between a painter's understanding of music (or his lack of it) and his painting. The emphasis of this book is upon the aspect of visual art to which music offers no parallel. It cannot be proved, it can be only suggested that the distinctiveness of visual art is sometimes best isolated, best loved by those painters who, in understanding and in feeding upon, and in being satisfied by music, have less need to project rhythm, movement, contrast and other non-simultaneous sensations into their art. It could be urged, on the other hand, that just because their ears are trained and attentive, their eyes are therefore the more ready to discover or to reinforce equivalent sensations from the visual world, which they have no desire to sublimate in their painting, but which, on the con-

trary they prefer to accentuate at whatever the cost to the more isolated values of visual art. No rule can be suggested and it is likely that a similar connection between the two sensations often produces an opposing result. But surely Giorgione's pleasure in sound helped him to strive for the form-content perfection of music in his pictures, while eschewing many effects which are more precisely attained in music; while searching for those that are central to painting and founded upon the simultaneity of space. Giorgione's love of music enhanced the pure visual conception of his pictures. He brought to painting the remembrance, not the members, of music, the completion, the interval of silence in which, as being a mood only, he uncovered the simultaneous intervals of space. The Concert at the Pitti (Pl. 20) illustrates this pause (38). In the Pastorale (Pl. 22), does the lutanist cease to play? Supported by the Brunswick self-portrait (Pl. 21), Richter (39) has suggested that the man may be Giorgione, who sits absorbed beside the lutanist.

He was one of the first, if not the first, artist to paint medium-sized 'subject' canvasses, for hanging in studies and other small rooms. We can name the owners of the Tempesta, the Three Philosophers, and the Dresden Venus within fifteen years after Giorgione's death in the case of the last two, within twenty years in the case of the Tempesta. And there is some reason to suppose that these Venetian noblemen, connected by birth or by friendship with leaders of the new culture, were not only the original owners but Giorgione's younger companions. The erratic X-ray of historical research, at no point, it is true, with certainty but with a possible inter-relationship of small facts and wider probabilities, has uncovered in fragments the

ground, or, perhaps more cautiously one should say *a* ground, a preparation of a ground for his art.

Certainly it would be a jump to announce that the young men commissioned their pictures. It is sufficient to summon up small intellectual groups over two generations, of whom Almorò Barbaro, the great humanist, was the first teacher; some poets as well, behind whom is the figure of Pietro Bembo at Asolo. (Vasari says that Giorgione painted his portrait.) The activities of the founders of this cult were expressed very succinctly as a historical fact in a pregnant row that occurred at the University of Padua while Giorgione was a boy (40).

The neo-Platonism of Florence did not overwhelm Venice. Barbaro translated Aristotle entire from the Greek. He cleared Pliny of six thousand corruptions. He was an exacerbated aesthete: not a philosopher but a philologist contemptuous of much of what passed for philosophy: not an arriviste nor a Papal Secretary but one of the ancestral trustees of the Venetian Republic. There was needed a hard, aristocratic distaste to counter the philosopho-magical hubbub. Among the capable Venetian families, Zeno, Foscarini, Morosini, Correr, Trevisan, Giustinian and Barbaro, beauty fostered sense.

Barbaro had no theories. He was against the would-be-magic of disputes. He complained of the Germans and the Jews at Padua, chief adherents of *solvitur in ambulando*. His object was to translate accurately the entire Aristotle. Disparity with Averroist texts would be palpable. His translation appearing in the 1480's provoked division at Padua University, the diehard stronghold of Averroism. There followed the only organized intellectual revolt of the Renaissance. The Venetian Government, with the object of attracting the *stranieri*, had forbidden Venetians the governing of the

University, whereas Germans were given preferential treatment. Barbaro worked from outside. He held morning classes in a palace on the Giudecca, promising a knowledge of Aristotle in a three-year course. No mystery. The situation at Padua grew riotous; for the Averroist professors were entirely ignorant of Greek: any stripling from Barbaro's class could silence the octogenarian, Vernia, most celebrated Averroist of the time. Poor Vernia had to give in, had to put aside the commentary on Aristotle which he had been preparing for thirty years. And finally, the Venetian Government, recognizing this Venetian revolution which the Germans, French and English were already taking home with them, instituted a chair of Greek.

Whether or not the Tempesta (Pl. 17) mirrors the Aristotelian doctrine of the four elements whereby the man would be associated with fire and air principles, the seated woman (who has just bathed (41) and is feeding the baby) with water and earth; whereby the sky and its lightning, the sunlight and the thunder-rain which will soon fall on the earth, would contain these elements naked over the township and the family; whether or not the Three Philosophers at Vienna are to be referred to the types of thinkers who were once engaged in the dispute at Padua—the relaxed and seated young man who seems to measure and observe *inductively* while both his middle-aged and his hoary companions suggest perambulating astrological star-gazers—whether or not any such precise references are admissible, the above slight excursus, altogether based on Ferriguto,* is most certainly not irrelevant to our subject: nor would it be, even though the particular inter-relationship of fact, interpreta-

See Appendix III, note 40. With similar debt to Ferriguto, this subject is somewhat enlarged in Appendix I.

tion and conjecture were discarded.* For Giorgione's art illuminates—it may be known from the constant feeling of many generations—illuminates the ideal face of our culture so often distorted since the Attic birth by Mumbo-Jumbo, beset so largely and continuously that this ideal face recedes for centuries as in a dream.

The first *Fête Champêtre* is dissociated from the melancholy wilfulness which even Watteau could not escape. The ease, the *ozio*, the poetry, turned from the ocean, from the alleys and the tall Venetian light, are symbols of new being after a thousand medieval years of semi-exile. When did 'new life' assume as leniently the uncontorted mind, when was observation as lyrical yet adult? There may be a parallel in Greek, but not in Christian culture.

We will not attempt further to tie Giorgione to definite symbols as have many investigators. Yet he was the last painter whose pictures seem truly to serve as a most insistent emblem for all their freedom, for all their abandonment of hierarchic barricades. He bestowed the outdoors on the past as well as on the future. His evasion of medieval stringencies was also a last heraldic act. . . .

Up to the period of Michael Angelo's dominant influence at any rate, the search for a conception of the outside world to mitigate the transcendental bias of the Middle Ages, is common to the Renaissance as a whole: a prerequisite, it

*Though it might depend upon what were to be put in its place. Nevertheless even though Giorgione were co-opted a member of a secret sodality, interested in occult 'science' (*cf. Giorgiones Geheimnis*, G. F. Hartlaub, Munich, 1925), it would be impossible to disregard the wider cultural tendencies of which he could have acted as transmitter even through so involved a mesh. Such contradiction and, indeed, the aesthetic percipience which may be an outcome, are unlikely to be beyond any reader's experience.

appears, of turning to the Antique for instruction (42). We have envisaged Alberti and Piero in realization of this theme and, with greater difficulty, Giorgione, who excels all other artists in showing man as native to the world. Like Donatello's furore, the Giorgionesque fire, whatever our mood, can never seem reprehensible. From a visionary element we may on occasion deduce northern influences which Piero—in this matter though not in others—rejected. Giorgione was not working 'from on high' to the degree of Alberti or Piero though, of course, the Italianate architectonic presupposition, as well as the more particular connections that this book has sought to establish, were held in common. His earlier pictures convey the Gothic quality of emblem: a few may be parables of the thought of his time; yet we do not fear the pressure of a programme. Indeed, in this relaxed yet revolutionary art which, combining discoveries in the perception of tone, observes with such spontaneity the unhurried affectionate forms of a chromatic approach, we are confronted by a temperance of Rule so hastily summoned to supplant medieval Authority; a temperance that is aflame with poetry. . . .

Beside his dreams there lay unanxious an *inductive* spirit.

APPENDIX I

A Note on Padua University and Averroism

Padua, in the fifteenth century particularly, had been the foremost scientific and medical school of Europe. For two centuries the Averroists had largely controlled the studies. In the fourteenth century they had brought destructive criticism to bear on both the Thomist and Scotist syntheses of science with religion. A development can be traced from the beginning of that century to Paduan Galileo and Galilean physics (43). It is not plain, however, to the present writer how much the latter part of the development towards a true scientific method was directly evolved out of the qualitative Averroist-Aristotelian school with its strong anticlericism, and how much out of a palace revolution or revolutions against Averroism, ending in the break with Aristotle himself and in the establishment of mathematical first principles. (Neo-Platonism had no part at all in the development of quantitative or mathematical physics.) It is clear, none the less, that 'At the beginning of the sixteenth century (at Padua) we find plainly set forth a formulation of the structure of a science of hypothesis and demonstration, with the dependence of its first principles upon empirical investigation. This was the one element in the Aristotelian theory of science that had remained obscure' (44). The temperament of Barbaro and of others in

the preceding generation will have played an important part in the groping for this new formula which Agostino Nilo used in his commentary upon Aristotle's Physics (1506), condemning both the indemonstrable and the self-evident to the scrap-heap. But amid a vast uncouth hubbub Averroism had also created magic: the thread that joins these developing doctrines with Galileo is interminably interwoven with other material to which we must now again refer.

Before Michael Scot and the Jews brought the Saracenic commentaries and translations of Aristotle to Western Europe, the schoolmen had possessed little classical material with which to entangle their acute thought. But with the importation of Aristotelian texts in an extremely mangled form, following a cardinal extension of culture, the stage was later set for the wise doctors, for their pressing the dead against the living by inquest. Aristotle, as received from his commentator Averroes, was the guardian of mysteries as well as the natural philosopher *par excellence*. So, if syllogism were prompt, a clumsy tail of mystery could be attached to every detail of plainest living. Each word could be a mystery, the fogs of which were made to settle on hunks of gloss. These spinners of thought cared nothing for textual research. Averroes' doctrine, identified by his followers with that of Aristotle, grew out of some obscure statements in the third book of the *De Anima*. The schoolmen overlooked much of the spirit of Aristotle, especially his opposition to Plato's transcendentalism, since it was beyond their need. The proof is that Thomas Aquinas, who almost alone in thirteenth-century Western Europe knew some Aristotle from the Greek, whose system was founded in an opposition to Averroism, held Averroes as an Aristotelian commentator in high esteem.

Enlargement upon pagan conjecture, the bruiting of portents, are common to all types of medieval thought and were, for that matter, still common in the fifteenth century. From the later surviving Averroists these activities were objectionable, not as being compulsive outbursts of imagination but for the quality of their cackle. Averroism could be adapted to sterility, scientific truth was thought to issue from the clash of theory, from the physical movement of the thinker, as it were, among obstacles, from the noise of arguing voices. And so professors were appointed with a contradictor to be ever at their sides. There grew in the proceedings a gross uncouthness which scorned poetry. Apocalyptic Aristotle was the natural philosopher and every practice needed to be made obstreperous with theory. Doctors were often Averroists of this kind, especially in north-eastern Italy. As men of the world and scientists they sought gold from corpses; surgery was left to barbers. And from the magnificent red dress of a lesser doctor at that time, as he attends with downright, atheistic elixirs some wretch in convulsion, we obtain an image of a scintillating desert greed and distrust.

In the fourteenth century, as would any poet, Petrarch hated the Averroists. He has left an account how he had to push from his house a jabbering and patronizing philosopher. He was powerless against their effrontery. They liked to be called uncouth, delighted in their jumbled Latin; and Petrarch was driven to put up a feeble religious defence. The Renaissance brought about an intensification of the Italian spirit, partly in reaction from Semito-Teutonic thought. All the same, the humanists were not free of the now decadent scholastic world in so far as some of them employed upon new texts the older medieval virtuosity.

Barbaro, as we have said, had no theories. He was against

scholastic disputes, unlike Pico della Mirandola who defended scholasticism against him. Pico believed utterly in dispute, of which he was an infant prodigy, and he wanted to put Plato in accord with Aristotle, Pythagoras with Mercury Tremegiston, Orpheus with the Cabbala, Hilarion with Origen, the Arabs with the Jews, Chaldean mysteries with natural magic. He contrived seventy new physical and metaphysical dogmas to meet any philosophical difficulty did it arise: *quasunque philosophiae quaestiones*. He announced with gusto to Marsilio Ficino that he had found a new interpretation of Chaldean philosophy, 'short it is true, and a little obscure, but *full of mystery*.' Pico gave a home to the Averroist Jew, Elia dal Medego, since, owing to the disturbances at Padua University he found himself without a job. So he taught Pico Hebrew and spent his spare time searching for the fourth figure of the syllogism.

APPENDIX II

Giorgione's Preferred Shapes

It could be said that the bell-like shape (*cf.* p. 45) is likely to be common, particularly in figures, the more so if further shapes, the cone for instance and, as one outcome, the towel behind the woman in the Tempesta, are brought under the same nomenclature. Nevertheless, with the indications given below, did he have the photographs before him, the reader would quickly grasp that there is here a constant formal theme with which all other factors are united. And he would observe, not only the prevalence of an arching shape varied in accordance with the key of a picture, but the evocative relationship with rectangular shape, particularly buildings or their parts. It is this formal, indeed architectural theme, lent to an extraordinary lyrical purpose, that as much as anything else of which they are more aware has caused experts to attribute pictures of the period to Giorgione or to Giorgione's influence. Perhaps the attributors have had little need to analyse it, since, in a last analysis, the form and the mood are ill-separated. Thus, the rounded tip of the flute (with an almost rectangular slot) held by the Hampton Court Apollo (Pl. 23), is the obvious key not only to all the other shapes of this much-ruined yet still magical picture, but to the mood or feeling.

The woman of the Tempesta (Pl. 17) is composed of bell-tent shapes and ovals. The wider unit occurs prominently in

the fall of her robe from the near shoulder. (As the expansion of this form, her breast and the contiguous head of the child she feeds, are particularly poignant.) Similar shapes belong to the jacket of the man and, in a more triangular form, to the shapes made beneath the woman's bent knees (shapes vastly elongated by his posture, beyond the knees of the man) and, in a more circular form, to the bank-face of the foreground, particularly the flattened and arched rock-surface between two shrubs. The stream, where it is in shadow, constructs corresponding patterns and so do the shadowed part of the man's left leg above the knee, his hair close to the staff, his whole head, the bush behind the woman, the shrub in front of her, the light part of the stream beyond the plinth. Some of the shapes are inverted. It will be easy to see what place the blind arcade and the buildings take in the formal scheme, the irregular ovolos of the clouds and even the curve of the lightning, the bridge, the foliage and the man's staff. One further detail, out of many, may be remarked: the slight tilts of the edges of the blank arcade and of the contiguous tree, away from each other, thereby forming, with the three dimensional space between them, an elongated tent-shape. That shape reviews the narrow near-oblongs between the buildings of the background of which the blind arcade, in formal amalgam with living things, is the representative.

On the further side of the lake in the Hermitage Judith (Pl. 15), we see the bell-tent shape, an island, which is related similarly as in the Tempesta with Judith's and Holophernes' heads and with the form of Judith's leg, from the knee to the edge of the robe. We should examine also the shoulder of her dress and the dents in the drapery of the lower part of her robe, the foliage coming out of the tree just above her head on the picture plane, and the bee-hive ornaments at the top

of the sword hilt. With regard to these shapes and to the tent of the robe Judith inhabits, we should contemplate the rectangular parapet, the rectangular divisions of the picture plane, the pillar of the tree-trunk, the semi-circular arch of the neck of the dress, of eyelashes, of hair encircling the forehead, of sleeve upon the wrist and below it: finally, shapes of the further ground and between branches of the tree which re-appear in more triangular strictness in parts of the parapet and of the lower sections of the dress.

Such description and directions, though by no means exhaustive, are tiresome and repetitive. We must hurry on. A few indications will suffice. Oval and tent-shapes are well to the fore in the construction of the figures of the Three Philosophers. In the Castelfranco Madonna, oval is wedded to rectangular with a large and simple ceremony, causing the picture, for all the emendation and repaint, to survive in stillness.

We see a thigh shape markedly and rather prosaically insisted upon in the construction of the Kingston Lacy Judgement of Solomon personages, against the parent shape of pillars and upon the other parent shape of rectangles. This is the most deliberate of the tented or pyramidal Giorgionesque compositions. The bell-shape is immediately noticeable both in figures and landscape of the Hermitage Madonna. It is, of course, in one important aspect, a cave-entrance form, one might say a female shape beautifully and gently extended and sublimated, across which there sometimes passes the line of a guardian columnar staff. The buildings, reminiscent of some buildings in the Tempesta, possess the rectangular *empressement*. In the Finding of Paris copy, in the Paris Exposed and throughout the San Giustina at Amsterdam, there is the obvious elaboration of a similar form. In the first named we can take the head of the old man as the key.

In both the Paris pictures we have the buildings. The long horn of San Giustina's unicorn crosses her body. The more subtle St. Jerome at Stockholm must also be mentioned.

The dominant Tempesta shape is most marked in the pyramidal Orpheus and Euridice at Bergamo. It is apparent, with far less meaning, in the National Gallery Homage to a Poet, a picture that is thought to be close to Giorgione's earliest manner. The later Bellini and his many pupils were all, to some extent, under the spell of the same architectural-chromatic theme by which man was subsumed, instinctively, one feels, rather than theoretically. The Christ, his robe, the tree behind and the Magdalene's robe of the National Gallery Noli Me Tangere possess the sharper, more triangular, as well as the more rounded, variations of this shape in a manner so moving that the superb picture is now referred to Giorgione (as one of the last unfinished works) as well as to Titian, although the latter also made good use of this wide theme particularly in his Giorgionesque period.

We see the Tempesta shape in the segments of the body of the Dresden Venus (Pl. 19), in segments of the cushion, of the crag, of the far mountains. The spinet player's robe of the Pitti Concert (Pl. 20) is a steep rounded tent. Of this form the face, hat, hair, plume and shirt of the young man are composed. It is notable that the small rectangular and triangular pieces of the spinet (probably one of the first made), all that is visible, pick up the shapes and, as it were, complete them in the form of something more impersonal. It is the same on the other side of the picture where the shaft-column of the instrument of the older man lies tilted on the picture plane, like the staff of the Tempesta or St. Liberalis' lance.

It would be superfluous to point to segments of the recurring shapes, now ovular or rounded, now triangular, in the

Prado altar-piece, in the Berlin young man, in the small Melchett young woman (Pl. 18), in the extreme left-hand figure of the Adulteress, in the self-portrait fragment (Pl. 21), in the Fondaco engravings, in the Sabin Salome with the background brick and the rounded arch.

Of the Pastorale (Pl. 22) one might say that the lute player has the Tempesta towel on his head and that the segments of his clothes and the head of the listening shepherd derive from segments of the Tempesta bank-face already described; that the other heads and many other shapes in the picture, including the lute and the clump of huge trees, are more rounded, more expansive versions. The woman on the left dips a bulbous glass ewer into the rectangular tank.

As has been said, the subtle identifications and enhancement that proceed from chromatic yet architectural sensibility underlie and distinguish Giorgione's, no less than Piero's, manner of formal segmentation. (In the work of Vermeer—and nowhere else—features of both these modes of segmentation are perfectly combined). Vastly dissimilar in poetry, with a warmth and a deepening sense unparalleled by others, each has returned the abstracted members of classical architecture to human form and circumstance.

APPENDIX III

1. *Leon Battista Alberti on Painting.* By Sir Kenneth Clark. (British Academy, Vol. XXX. Humphrey Milford, 4s. 6d.)

2. H. Janitschek. *Leone Battista Alberti's kleinere kunsttheoretischen Schriften.* (Vienna, 1877), p. 163.

3. Janitschek, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

4. Janitschek, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

5. Janitschek, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

6. Bonucci. *Opere Volgari di Leon Batt Alberti.* (Florence, 1847), Vol. 4, p. 309.

7. Bonucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 92.

8. Bonucci, *op. cit.*, Vol. 4, p. 362. This is the incomplete contemporary Italian text of the *De Re Aedificatoria.*

9. Janitschek, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

10. Janitschek, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

11. Clark, *op. cit.*

12. *Piero della Francesca:* Pietro Longhi. English translation by Leonard Penlock. (Frederick Warne, 1930.) Enlarged Italian edition. (Milan 1947.) An aspect of the same trend is strongly reflected by some fifteenth-century sculptors of whom Francesco Laurana was chief. It is notable that he, too, may have often met both Alberti and Piero at Urbino. *cf. The Quattro Cento.* (Faber, 1932.)

13. The Maso of the dedication is generally taken to be the painter Massaccio, though he had been dead some seven years. On the other hand the little known sculptor Maso di Bartolommeo whom Janitschek suggests, an associate of Luca della Robbia (another dedicatee) and of Michelozzo, was working in the Tempio Malatestiano in 1452 (two years after Alberti had made his plan). In the same year he designed

the beautiful doorway to San Domenico, the first piece of Renaissance architecture in Urbino. It is by no means impossible that Alberti recommended him.

This reference to the unequalled Masaccio—if such it be—is most painfully inadequate. Or, is one to think that he was the unspoken inspiration of Alberti's treatise, especially since he was at first almost the only painter to be deeply influenced by Brunellesco's architecture and sculpture? Masaccio attained a more flowing naturalism (in the Brancacci chapel) and a greater relief, a greater realization of mass, than did the Florentine school which eventually proceeded from him as well as from contemporaneous sculpture. And this he accomplished with the simplest means and without denying the rootedness and steadfastness that issue from the chromatic approach to form. As well as for the chief of the Florentines, Masaccio is a source for Piero. There is a certain (sometimes allied) rootedness or, at any rate, slowness, in a more primitive style to which, as well as to the newly rediscovered aims of classical architecture, both Masaccio and Piero were heirs. It is true also of Alberti as artist, of course, little less than, say, of Donatello.

14. Clark, *op. cit.*

15. For instance, the Dance of Salome at Lille, usually dated about 1433.

16. *Alberti's Approach to Antiquity in Architecture*, Warburg Institute Journal, Vol. IV; *Principles of Palladio's Architecture*, II. W. I. J., Vol. VIII.

17. Prof. Wittkower's succinct conclusion to a most brilliant and unique analysis from the technical side, is perhaps a little enclosing from the side of a deliberate aesthetic choice in control of all the trends that go to make it. For the present author, at any rate, it is not the façades at Mantua of Sant' Andrea and of San Sebastiano (second

scheme) but the Tempio façade, symbolic encasement to a Gothic church, the first fresh essay, unfinished, altered in plan by constructional difficulties, that transcends all other walls in emotional power, unless it be Luciano's courtyard. Moreover it would be misleading to isolate Roman architecture from an emphasis upon the wall. An intense wall consciousness is indisputably demonstrated as well as a love of stone. For instance, the giant travertine attic storey to the Colosseum is a robust yet precious wall, rich medium of aperture, in just the fifteenth-century sense. It was inevitable, for empirical reasons alone, that this aspect of Roman architecture should have influenced the early Renaissance artists and their successors so profoundly. Even today, after the Roman and Trajan fora have been excavated, when throughout ancient Rome hundreds of pillars have been raised that were invisible in the fifteenth century, the dominant impression is still of close brick-work in vast masonry between the heavy, pregnant apertures; of the baths, of Maxentius' basilica, of the cupola and awe-inspiring walls of the Pantheon.

18. Wittkower, *op. cit.*

19. Longhi, *op. cit.*

20. Nor can the single-storied church with its three equal vertical divisions, represented at the back of the Proving of the True Cross at Arezzo, be related even indirectly with any plan Alberti might have sketched when engaged on the reconstruction of Santa Maria Novella's façade. Though a few features approximate, every element of the Santa Maria Novella problem and of its solution are absent. A more Albertian reminiscence in the Arezzo frescoes would seem to be the centring of the beautiful column at the Annunciation (Pl. 7). Alberti, it will be remembered, pronounced columns to be the most sublime of ornaments.

21. In 1549 (*Ricordi overo* 3 *Ammaestamenti*. Fra Sabba da Castiglione) Bramante was described as 'a great perspective genius and the intimate disciple of Piero del Borgo'. (Piero della Francesca), *cf.* Longhi, *op. cit.*

22. As do the balconies behind the Poldi-Pezzoli St. Thomas Aquinas and the National Gallery St. Michael (also late works).

23. Though doubtless Tuscan Romanesque or Proto-Renaissance façades in dark and white marble influenced Piero's architectural smoothness, yet his representation of precious stones, even in strips, and more particularly his favourite self-communing yet concerted architectural members, are more suggestive of Venice and of the Byzantine than of the striped Tuscan. And it may well be that Piero, no less than Alberti, influenced, or at least gave courage to the early Renaissance Venetian architects; just as earlier he had considerably influenced the rise of Venetian painting (for this last point *cf.* Longhi, *L'Arte*, 1913).

As for Alberti in this connection of coloured marble, it is true enough that the tabernacle of San Pancrazio recalls Tuscan marble inlay, but the inlay of porphyry and serpentine over the door of the Tempio, and the disks, look more to the Adriatic. Alberti did not grow up 'surrounded by such monuments as San Miniato in Florence' (Wittkower, *op. cit.*); in fact he could not have seen them before he was twenty-five. He was brought up in Venice, or the neighbourhood.

Dadoes to the columns on the Tempio façade are very like those to the columns in San Apollinare in Classe. The sarcophagi beneath the arches of the flank are of a Byzantine type. *Cf.* the sarcophagi placed in medieval times in the exterior arcade of Theodoric's tomb, Corrado Ricci, *Tempio Malatestiano* (Bestetti e Tumminelli, Milan, 1925).

24. It is notable that in the other surviving treatise that

may in part be attributed to Piero's authorship, the *De Divina Proportione*, he is concerned with the geometrical shapes 'behind' all visual phenomena. These shapes are the cube, pyramid, octohedron, dodecahedron and icosahedron. *Cf.* Fasola, *op. cit.*

25. *P. della Francesca. Gli affreschi di San Francesco in Arezzo.* Mario Salmi (Bergamo).

26. More particularly Mantegna (subsuming Donatello) and Antonello da Messina who were vital influences upon Giovanni Bellini, Giorgione's master according to Vasari. There is also the Piero thread as in the case of Cossa and Ercole Roberti of Ferrara (where Piero had painted frescoes), a town that Giorgione may have visited. *Cf.* G. M. Richter in work cited below.

27. Passages quoted or referred to from Zanetti and from Vasari may be found in the documents section of G. M. Richter's monumental *Giorgio da Castelfranco.* All the known sources and documents relating to Giorgione are printed here in full. (University of Chicago Press, 1937.)

28. All except a shattered fragment of a figure that has now been removed from the Fondaco's wall to the Accademia. In this connection it is not necessary to take account of alleged juvenilia, a fresco frieze in the Casa Pellizari, Castelfranco. *Cf.* Richter, *op. cit.*

29. Richter, *op. cit.*, prints a very extensive bibliography, up to 1936, and a chart of attributions.

30. *Cf. The Quattro Cento* (Faber, 1932) and *Stones of Rimini* (Faber, 1934).

31. It has already been suggested (*Venice: an aspect of Art*, Faber, 1945) that the Venetian early Renaissance architecture, particularly Coducci's, contained a similar chromatic approach to form, and that this architecture deeply influenced Giorgione.

32. Rock and tower are sometimes judged to be by another hand.

33. *Giovanni Bellini*, Philip Hendy (Phaidon Press, 1947).

34. Panofsky, *op. cit.* He contrasts Ficino's metaphysical presentation of neo-Platonic doctrine with Bembo's aesthetic approach, typically Venetian, in the delightful *Gli Asolani* (1505).

35. *Les débuts de la Musique à Venice*, Charles Van den Buren (Brussels, 1914); *Nouvelle Histoire de la Musique*, Vol. I, Henri Prunières (Paris, 1934).

36. *op. cit.*

37. The Venetians, of course, had access to the Greek islands. Their principal contribution to antique studies was from the side of the Greek language. Aldo Manuzio, who owed a great deal to the help and encouragement of Bembo particularly, produced his first book in 1494. The Aldine Press soon won fame, especially for the collation and first printing of Greek texts. The Aldine Aristotle, in five volumes, appeared in 1495–8. (*Aldo Manuzio*, Mario Ferrigni, Milan, 1925), *cf.* also references below to Almorò Barbaro who belonged to the previous generation.

38. According to Schubring (*cf.* Richter, *op. cit.*, p. 420) the spinet of this picture is the earliest known example and the player possibly Joh. Spinetus. The subject is the victory of the spinet over the old-fashioned lute.

39. *op. cit.*

40. *Almorò Barbaro*, Arnaldo Ferriguto. (R. Deputazione Veneta di Storia Patria. Venice, 1922). Also Ferriguto's *I committenti di Giorgione.* (Atti Reale Istituto Veneto, 1925–6) and *Attraverso i misteri di Giorgione* (Castelfranco, 1933).

41. X-ray has recently shown that underneath the man's figure there exists, incompletely sketched, a woman's figure

resembling closely the one we have, though larger, with her legs in the stream. A seated figure spread thus in the foreground was not harmonious even with the rectilinear relationships of the background. She was moved (before the baby had been sketched in) higher up and to the other side. The woman, therefore, the more complicated pictorial conception, was attempted before the man, as one might expect. Some commentators, however, suppose from the X-ray evidence that an earlier conception of the picture (which Giorgione scrapped) may have been of two women, two sisters, twins. In favour of such an hypothesis it has been urged that the sketched woman and the existing woman are on the same level of paint, i.e. that the existing woman was not painted over a sketched man in harmony with what happened on the other side of the picture. The X-ray photographs do suggest, however, that the picture is well-named and that tempest, background and buildings were elaborated first as part of a landscape with figures who were to be the creatures (if also the lords) of the landscape. *Cf.* an article by Ferriguto in *Misura, Rivista Internazionale*, November, 1946.

42. *The architecture of Brunelleschi and the origins of perspective Theory in the 15th Century*; G. A. Argan. (Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, Vol. IX, 1946.)

43. *The development of scientific method in the school of Padua*, J. H. Randall. (Journal of the History of Ideas, College of the City of New York, 1940.)

44. Randall, *op. cit.*

INDEX

Piero della Francesca

1. The Baptism of Christ. Detail.

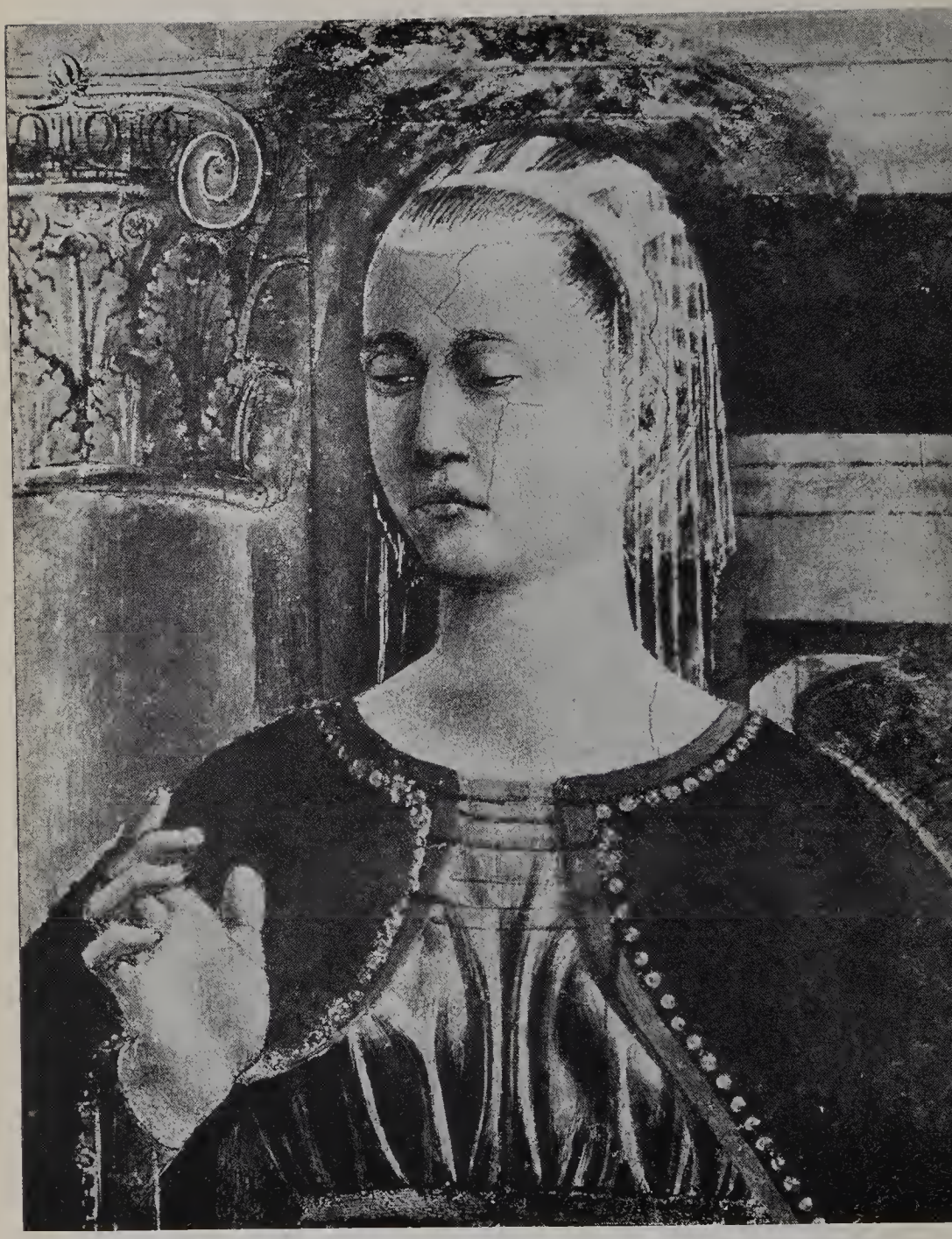
3. The Scourging of Christ. Detail.

4. The Scourging of Christ. Detail.

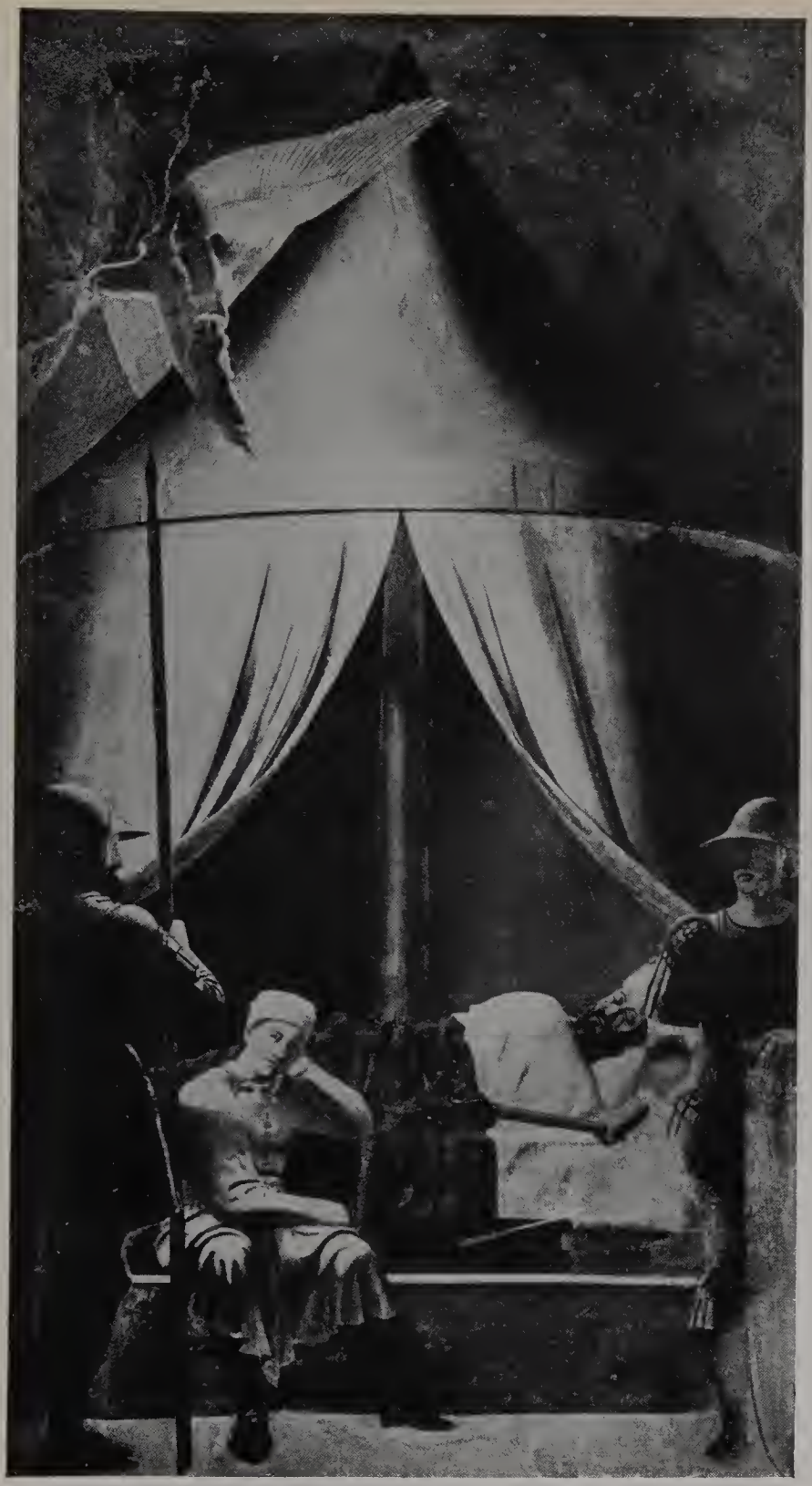
5. Legend of the Cross. Death of Adam. Detail.

6. Legend of the Cross. Meeting of Solomon and Queen of Sheba. Detail.

7. Legend of the Cross. The Annunciation.



8. Legend of the Cross. The Annunciation. Detail.



9. Legend of the Cross. Constantine's Dream.

10. Legend of the Cross. The Victory of Heraclius. Detail.

11. Legend of the Cross. Return of the Cross to Jerusalem. Detail.

12. The Resurrection of Christ.

Giorgione and Giorgionesque

13. Background landscape of The Adoration of the Shepherds.

14. The Holy Family, known as the Benson Holy Family.

15. Judith.

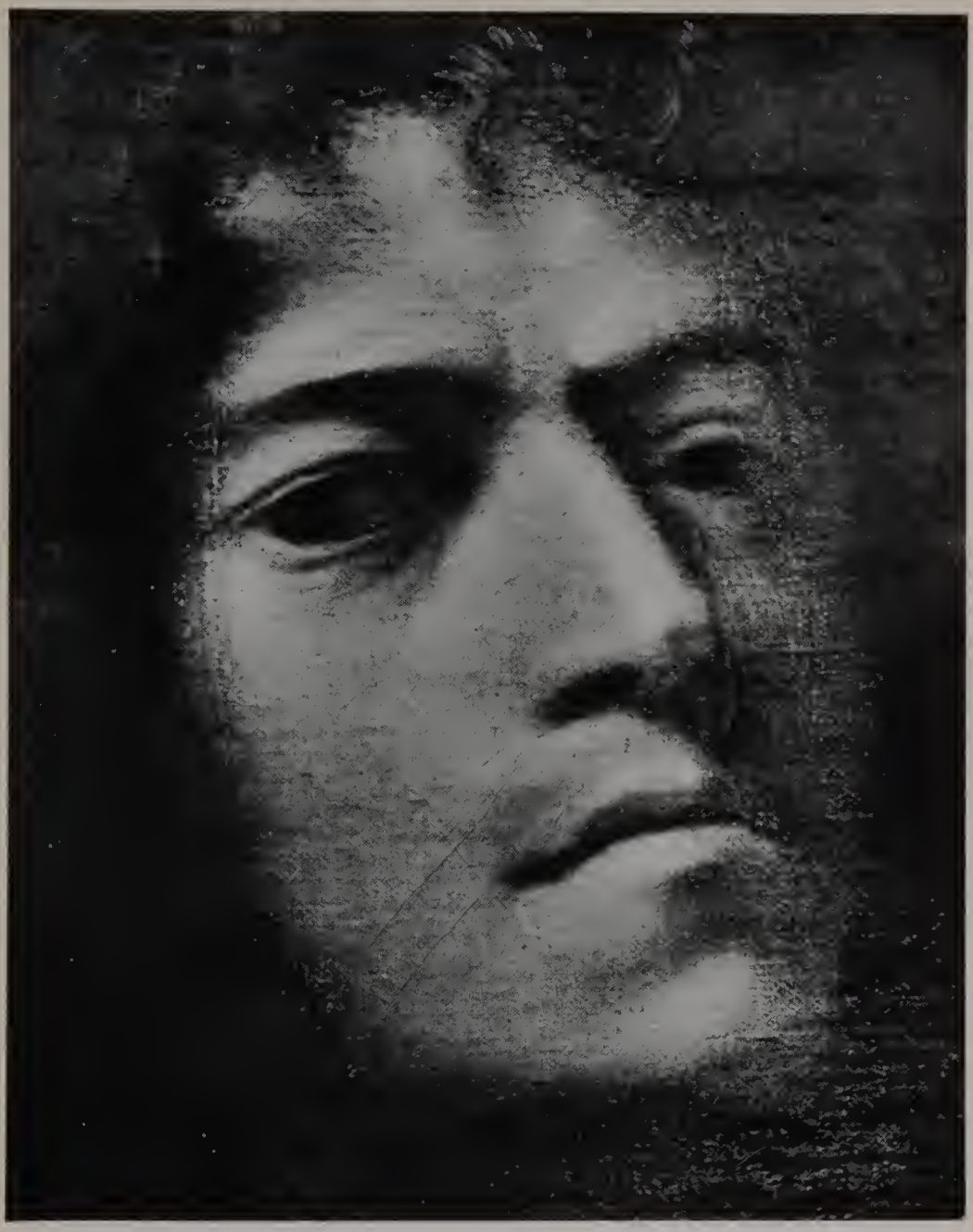
16. Detail of Apollo and Daphne.

17. The Tempesta.

18. Portrait of a Young Woman.

19. Venus.

20. The Concert.



21. Self-portrait as David. Detail.

22. The Pastorale (or Concert Champêtre).

23. Apollo (?).

24. Christ carrying the Cross.

701.1
St6
cop. 2