1000

Erotic Works of Genius

The Book

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Different eras and civilisations have treated erotic images with varying acceptance and different concepts of erotica and these tendencies are reflected within the works themselves. From ancient statues devoted to fertility to Renaissance engravings designed to encourage procreation within marriage, erotic art has always held an important place in society. Here, for the first time, 1,000 authentic images of erotic art have been brought together, spanning the centuries and civilisations to demonstrate the evolution of the genre. In an era such as ours when eroticism is abundant in advertising and the media, this book gives a refreshing insight into the background of erotic imagery, highlighting the artistic value of beautiful works of eroticism executed with skill.

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1000 Erotic Works of Genius

Authors: Hans-Jürgen Döpp (general introduction), Joe A. Thomas (chapter introductions) and Victoria Charles

Introduction

Erotic art or pornography?

"That which is pornography to one person is the laughter of genius for the other."
– D. H. Lawrence

The term 'Erotic Art' is muddied by a miasma of ambiguous terms. Art and pornography, sexuality and sensuality, obscenity and morality are all involved to such an extent that it seems almost impossible to reach an objective definition, which is not unusual in the history of art. How is it possible to speak of erotic art?

This much is certain: the depiction of a sexual activity alone does not raise a work to the nobility that is erotic art. To identify erotic art only with its content would reduce it to one dimension, just as it is not possible to distinguish artistic and pornographic depictions only by describing their immoral contents. The view that erotic works are created solely for sexual arousal and so cannot be art is erroneous as well. Does the creative imagination brought to erotic art distinguish it from pornography? Yet pornography is also a product of imagination. It has to be more than just a depiction of sexual reality, however, or who would buy it? Günter Schmidt states that pornography is "constructed like sexual fantasy and daydreams, just as unreal, megalomaniacal, magical, illogical, and just as stereotypical." Erotic daydreams – they are the subject of erotic art as well. Those making a choice between art and pornography may have already decided against the first one. Pornography is a moralising defamatory term. What is art to one person is the Devil's handiwork to another. The mixing of aesthetic with ethical-moralistic questions dooms every clarification process right from the start.

In the original Greek, *pornography* means 'prostitute writings' – that is, text with sexual content – in which case it would be possible to approach pornography in a free-thinking manner and equate the content of erotic art with that of pornography. This re-evaluation would amount to a rehabilitation of the term.

The extent to which the distinction between art and pornography depends on contemporary attitudes is illustrated, for example, by the painting over of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel. Nudity was not considered obscene during the Renaissance. The patron of this work of art, Pope Clement VII, saw nothing immoral in its execution. His successor, Paul IV, however, ordered an artist to provide the *Last Judgment* with pants!

Another example of the difficult relationship between society and erotic art is the handling of the excavated frescos of Pompeii which were inaccessible to the public until recently. In 1819, the Gallery of Obscenities was established in the Palazzo degli Studi, the future National Museum where only people of mature age and known high moral standards had access to the locked room. The collection changed its name to Gallery of Locked Objects in 1823. Again, only those with a royal permit were able to view the exhibited works. The reactionary wave after the unrest in 1848 also affected the erotic collection of the museum. In 1849, the doors of the Gallery of Locked Objects were closed forever. The collection was transferred to a still further removed section of the museum three years later, with even the doors leading to that area being bricked up.

Not until 1860, when Guiseppe Garibaldi marched into Naples, was reopening of the erotic collection even considered. The name of the collection was then changed to the Pornographic Collection. Over time, many objects were removed from this collection and returned to the normal exhibits. The history of the Gallery thus provides an overview of the mores of the last three

centuries. Not every age is equally propitious for the creation of eroticism and its associated matters. It can even become its confessed enemy. For example, the libertine environment of the Rococo period created a very favourable atmosphere for eroticism and erotic art. Erotic art, however, is not only a reflection of achieved sexual freedom; it can also be a by-product of the suppression and repression with which eroticism is burdened. It is even conceivable that the most passionate erotic works were created not in spite of, but rather because of, the cultural pressures on sexuality. In nature, the instinct-controlled sexuality of animals is not erotic. In eroticism, however, culture uses nature. Whereas sexuality as an imperative of nature – even in humans – is timeless, eroticism is changeable: as culturally conditioned sexuality, it has a history.

Eroticism thus would have to be understood as a socially and culturally formed phenomenon. In which case, it is the creature of moral, legal, and magical prohibitions, prohibitions which arise to prevent sexuality harming the social structure. The bridled urge expresses itself; but it also encourages fantasy without exposing society to the destructive dangers of excess. This distance distinguishes eroticism from sexuality. Eroticism is a successful balancing act that finds a precarious equilibrium between the cold flow of a rationally organised society – which in its extremes can also cause the collapse of the community – and the warm flow of a licentious, destructive sexuality.

Yet, even in its tamed versions, eroticism remains a demonic power in human consciousness because it echoes the dangerous song of the sirens – trying to approach them is fatal. Devotion and surrender, regression and aggression: these are the powers that still tempt us. The convergence of desire and longing for death has always played a big part in literature.

Insofar as eroticism consists of distance and detours, the fetishist constitutes the picture-perfect eroticist. The fetishised object, in its fixed, tense relationship with what is immediate, is more significant to the fetishist than the promise of fulfilled desires represented by the object. The imagined body is more meaningful than any real body.

Collectors are eroticists as well. While the lecher or debaucher is active in real life, the collector lives with a chaste heart in a realm of fantasy. And is it not true that the chaste heart can relish the delights of vice even more deeply and thoroughly than the unbridled debaucher?

Distance permits freedom. Art, too – which can also represent a fetishistic production for the artist – affords freedom. It affords the freedom to play with fire without being burned. It appeals to the eye; it allows toying with sin without having actually sinned. This freedom through distance can be noted when observing the different reactions of viewers when looking at sex magazines and works of art: have you ever seen the viewer of a porn magazine smile? A quiet cheerfulness, however, can be observed frequently in viewers of works of art, as if art brings forth an easing of the compellingly sensual. Those, however, who in a derogatory manner pronounce a work of art pornographic prove nothing more than that they do not have any appreciation of what is artistic in the object depicted. Turning away in disgust does not necessarily have to be a characteristic of a special morality. Such people have a non-erotic culture. Eduard Fuchs, the past master of erotic art, whose books were accused of being pornographic during his lifetime, considered eroticism the fundamental subject of all art: sensuality is said to be present in any art, even if its objective is not always of a sexual nature. Accordingly, it would almost be a tautology to speak of ‘erotic art’.

Long before Fuchs, Lou Andreas-Salomé had already pointed out the true relationship between eroticism and aesthetics: “It seems to be a sibling growth from the same root that artistic drive and sexual drive yield such extensive analogies that aesthetic delight changes into erotic delight so imperceptibly, erotic desire so instinctively reaches for the aesthetic, the ornamental (possibly giving the animal kingdom its ornament directly as a bodily creation).” Once, when Picasso, in the evening of his life, was asked about the difference between art and eroticism, his pensive answer was: “But – there is no difference.” Instead, as others warned about eroticism, Picasso warned about the experience of art: “Art is never chaste; one should keep it away from all

innocent ignoramuses. People insufficiently prepared for art should never be allowed close to art. Yes, art is dangerous. If it is chaste, it is not art."

Viewed with the eyes of a moral watchdog, every type of art and literature would have to be abolished. If spirit and mind are the essence of humanity, then all those placing the mind and spirit in a position opposed to sensuality are hypocrites. On the contrary, sexuality experiences its true human form only after developing into eroticism and art – some translate eroticism as the art of love. Matters excluded from the civilising process assert themselves by demanding a medium that is spiritually determined, and that is art. It is in art that sexuality reaches its fullest bloom, which seems to negate all that is sensual in the shape of erotic art.

Pornography is a judgmental term used by those who remain closed to eroticism. It is assumed that their sensuality never had the opportunity to be cultivated. These culturally underprivileged people – among them possibly so-called art experts and prosecuting attorneys – perceive sexuality as a threat even when it occurs in an aesthetically-tempered format. Even the observation that a work has offended or violated the viewpoints of many still does not make it pornographic. Art is dangerous! Works of art can offend and injure the feelings of others; they do not always make viewers happy. After all, is it not the duty of art to annoy and to stir things up? The bottom line: the term pornography is no longer in keeping with the times. Artistic depictions of sexual activities, whether they annoy or please, are part of erotic art. If not, they are insipid, dumb works, even if harmless.

Eastern societies in particular have known how to integrate the sexual and erotic into their art and culture. Chinese religion, for example, entirely free of western notions of sin, considers lust and love as pure things. The union of man and woman under the sign of Tao expresses the same harmony as the alternation of day and night, winter and summer. One can say – and rightly so – that the ancient forms of Chinese thought have their origins in sexual conceptions. *Yin* and *yang*, two complementary ideas, determine the universe. In this way, the erotic philosophy of the ancient Chinese also encompasses a cosmology. Sexuality is an integrated component of a philosophy of life and cannot be separated from it. One of the oldest and most stimulating civilisations on earth thus assures us through its religion that sex is good and instructs us, for religious reasons, to carry out the act of love creatively and passionately. This lack of inhibition in sexual matters is mirrored in art from China.

The great masters of Japan also created a wealth of erotic pictures, which rank equal with Japan's other works of art. No measure of state censorship was ever able to completely suppress the production of these images. Shungas (Images of Spring) depict the pleasures and entertainment of a rather earthly world. It was considered natural to seek out the pleasures of the flesh, whichever form they took. The word 'vice' was unspoken in ancient Japan, and sodomy was a sexual pleasure like any other.

In India, eroticism is sanctified in Hindu temples. In Greece, it culminates in the cult of beauty, joining the pleasures of the body with those of the mind. Greek philosophy understood the world as interplay between Apollo and Dionysus, between reason and ecstasy.

Only Christianity began to view eroticism in a context of sin and the world of darkness, so creating irreconcilable differences. "The Devil Eros has become more interesting to man than all the angels and all the saints," a tenet held by Nietzsche, which would probably find no sympathy in Far Eastern Japan: Eros was never demonised there. In fact, that which Nietzsche lamented in the West never did occur in Japan, nor in many other Eastern cultures. "Christianity," in Nietzschean words, "forced Eros to drink poison."

In Western Europe, erotic depictions were banished to secret galleries. The floating, transitory world was held in chains, and only with great difficulty was science able to free sexuality from prejudices and association with sin. It is therefore no wonder that sexology developed wherever the relationship between sexuality and eroticism was especially ambivalent or troubled. Our

cornucopia of a colourful, erotic world of images and objects shows that Eros can be an all-encompassing and unifying energy. These items provide an opportunity to steal a glimpse of an essential, human sphere – usually taboo – through the eyes of many artists with a continuously changing point of view.

Unlike pornography, which often lacks imagination, erotic art allows us to partake in creative joy. Even if some of the pictures seem strange to us, or even annoy and force us to confront taboos, we still should open ourselves to that experience. Real art has always caused offence. Only through a willingness to be affronted can this journey through the geography of pleasure also be profitable, namely in the sense that this fantasy journey enriches our innermost selves. The humour evident in many works of erotic art is only accessible to those who can feel positive about claiming the erotic experience.

This book invites you to take a special journey, one that will open up a vista of pleasures and desires. An abundance of images and objects from art as well as cult present eroticism and sexuality as the universal, fundamental subject. By opening ourselves to the origins in a variety of cultures, some of them strange, we may enrich our own culture as well… The many and varied points of view encountered in this work demonstrate the multifarious aspects of sexuality. It reveals that nothing is more natural than sexual desire; and, paradoxically, nothing is less natural than the forms in which this desire expresses itself or finds satisfaction.

Items long hidden in the vaults of public museums and galleries of private collectors can be seen in this book. Many of these pictures and objects were forbidden in a western society which was less open to sexuality and anything associated with it. So they grant us a rare and therefore more fascinating glimpse of what is part and parcel of human nature.

Pictures of the pleasures of the flesh, in this book, promise a feast for the eyes, albeit a distanced pleasure. Yet, is not the essence of eroticism that it should be just beyond reach?

Aspects of the cultural history of humankind can help to extend the limits of tolerance by helping to expand the viewer's opinion. They can liberate minds from clichés, which may occupy our fantasies and imagination today, but hopefully not after this book has been read.

– Hans-Jürgen Döpp

From Prehistory and Primitive Forms to Antiquity and the Perfection of the Body

1. Anonymous, *The Venus of Willendorf*, 30,000–25,000 B. C. E. Limestone with red polychromy, h: 11.1 cm. Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna (Austria).

Art has dealt with sexuality since its prehistoric beginnings. Though their purpose remains obscure, small Palaeolithic sculptures of women make up some of the earliest evidence of human existence, such as the so-called *Venus of Laussel*, whose stylised body with exaggerated hips and breasts have led to interpretations as a fertility figure and to her being named after the goddess of love. Much later on, the Minoan civilisation of ancient Crete created similar figures including tantalising statuettes such as the *Snake Goddess*. While more naturalistic than her prehistoric counterpart, the figure's feminine attributes were still emphasised. Like her predecessors, the Snake Goddess's function is unknown – even her identity as a goddess is uncertain.

Succeeding the Minoans in the Mediterranean, the Ancient Greeks developed a virtual cult of the body, particularly the male body. Their admiration of athletic prowess was reflected in their many idealised representations of nude young men. In the Archaic period life-size nude marble statues called *kouroi* marked the graves of youthful warriors. Polykleitos' later sculpture, *Doryphoros*, based on his mathematical set of ideal proportions rather than actual bodies, showed the evolution of such figures into purely aesthetic expressions.

Although Ancient writers discussed many famous Greek paintings, no actual works have survived. Decorated ceramics, offering a wealth of erotic subjects and information on the culture that created them, are the primary surviving form of two-dimensional art from the time. The Greek practice of pederasty, in which an older man attached himself to a beautiful youth as a form of mentorship, was often depicted on vases, such as those by the Triptolemus Painter and the Brygos Painter. Patriarchal Greek society had little room for female sexual agency; females in Greek erotic scenes were usually prostitutes or deities. The beauty of Praxiteles' fourth century B. C. *Aphrodite of Knidos*, the most famous sculpture of classical Antiquity, became a tourist attraction for the island and, according to Pliny, won the love of a man who attempted intercourse with it.

Drama and emotion characterised the Hellenistic phase of Greek art, as in the highly sensuous *Barberini Faun*. Part goat, his unfiltered sexuality and drunken allegiance to Dionysos highlight his animal nature. The famous *Vénus de Milo* was a graceful representation of Aphrodite showing the Hellenistic ideal of female beauty. As with nearly all free-standing Greek sculpture after the Archaic period, what survives today are largely Roman copies of the Greek originals.

In Italy, the Etruscans adapted many Greek ideas into their own culture, which offered considerably more status to women. Etruscan sarcophagi often depicted a man and woman together as a couple, and decorations in Etruscan tombs sometimes featured paintings of explicit or suggested sexual activity.

Their successors, the Romans, also respected and imitated many aspects of Greek culture. As more Roman art survived than Greek, we thus have more erotic scenes, particularly in painting. Excavations in Pompeii and Herculaneum have revealed the rich sexual culture of the Romans, often humorous in nature as in the depictions of Priapus, cursed with an eternal erection. Brothels often had erotic advertisements and interior decorations. Homosexual themes were not uncommon; the Warren cup depicted two male couples in coitus, and sculptures of Antinous, Emperor Hadrian's young lover, abounded. Despite a tradition of realism, Roman depictions of bodies followed the Greek methods of idealisation. The classical model of Greece and Rome became the ideal of art and culture for centuries to come.

2. Anonymous, *Venus of Laussel*, c. 20,000–18,000 B. C. E. Limestone, 54 × 36 × 15.5 cm. Musée d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux (France).

3. Anonymous, *Reclining Female Figure,* Naxos (?) (Greece), 2,400–2,300 B. C. E. White marble, 36.8 × 11.3 × 3.2 cm. The Menil Collection, Houston (United States).

4. Anonymous, *Statuette of a Snake Goddess*, c. 1,600–1,500 B. C. E. Gold and ivory, h: 16.1 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (United States).

5. Anonymous, *The Cosmic Union of Geb and Nut* (detail from an Egyptian papyrus), c. 1,025 B. C. E. Vignette, 53 × 93 cm. The British Museum, London (United Kingdom).

6. Anonymous, *Skyphos with an Erotic Group* (detail), c. 1 C. E.

7. Anonymous, *Sarcophagus of a Couple from Cerveteri*, c. 520–510 B. C. E. Painted terracotta, 111 × 194 × 69 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

Though their civilisation flourished alongside that of the Greeks, our limited understanding of Etruscan language and culture has left a veil of mystery over the people who lived in Italy before the Roman Republic. Their art was strongly influenced by that of the Greeks, as evidenced by this terracotta sarcophagus with its echoes of the style of the Greek Archaic period. In Etruscan sculpture, however, we find more lively subjects, like this couple, animated in their easy affection for each other. Like so much of Etruscan art, this is a funerary piece, designed for placement in one of the elaborate tombs the Etruscans carved out of the soft volcanic bedrock of central Italy. It reveals the Etruscan view of the afterlife: an eternal party, where men and women would lounge at a banquet, enjoying good food, drink, and the company of their loved ones.

8. Anonymous, *The Sounion Kouros*, c. 600 B. C. E. Marble, h: 305 cm. National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Athens (Greece).

9. Anonymous, *Kleobis and Biton*, Apollo Sanctuary, Delphi, c. 610–580 B. C. E. Marble, h: 218 cm. Archaeological Museum of Delphi, Delphi (Greece).

Kleobis and Biton are life-size statues that were found in the sanctuary at Delphi. An inscription identifies the artist as coming from Argos, on the Peloponnesus. The sculptures' origin in Argos links them to the mythical twins Kleobis and Biton. These young men from Argos were said to pull a cart a full five miles in order to bring their mother to a festival dedicated to the goddess Hera. In return, Hera granted the men what was seen as a great gift: a gentle death while sleeping. The brothers fell asleep after the festival and never woke up. Their great strength, devotion to their mother, and their early deaths were memorialised in dedicatory statues offered at the great sanctuary at Delphi, according to the historian Herodotus. These statues, which may be those described by Herodotus, are close in date to the Dipylon Head and share the same Egyptian style and decorative, incised details.

10. Anonymous, *The Kritios Boy*, Acropolis, Athens, c. 480–470 B. C. E. Marble, h: 116 cm. Acropolis Museum, Athens (Greece).

11. Anonymous, *Kouros*, known as *Apollo from Tenea*, c. 560–550 B. C. E. Marble, h: 153 cm. Glyptothek, Munich (Germany).

12. Anonymous, *Kroisos*, Anavyssos, c. 525 B. C. E. Marble, h: 193 cm. National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Athens (Greece).

13. Euaichme Painter, *Man Offering a Gift to a Youth,* c. 530–430 B. C. E. Athenian red-figure vase. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (United Kingdom).

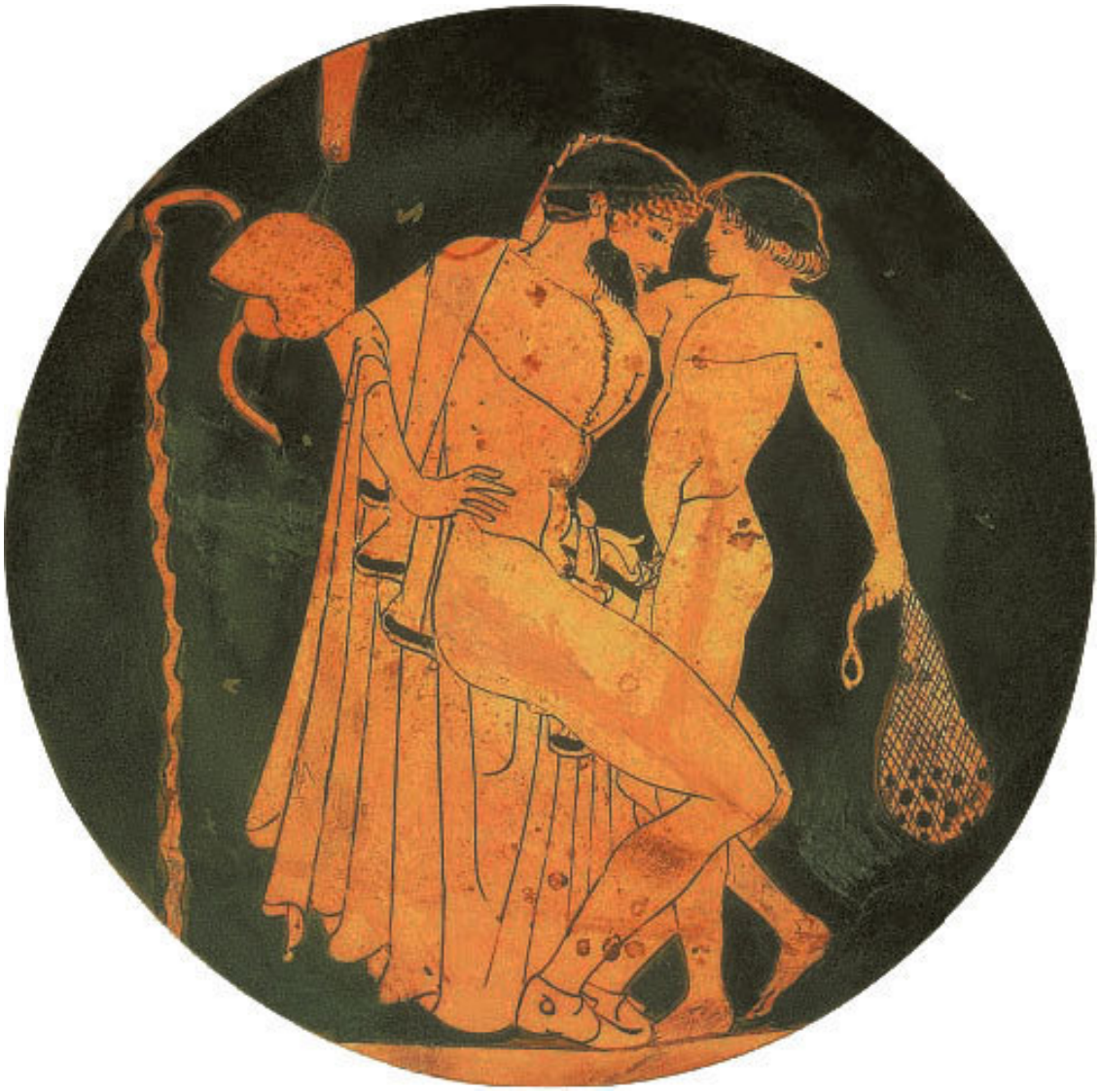
14. Anonymous, *Man and Ephebe Having a Conversation*, c. 420 B. C. E. Red-figure dish (detail). Musée Municipal, Laon (France).

15. Euphronios, *Ephebes at the Bath*, c. 1500–505 B. C. E. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin (Germany).

16. Anonymous, *Satyr Playing the Flute,* beginning of the Common Era. Attican Plate.

17. Triptolemus Painter, *Attican cup*. Museo Nazionale Tarquiniese, Tarquinia (Italy).

18. Anonymous, *Scene of Debauchery,* 510–500 B. C. E. Red-figure cup.



19. Brygos Painter, *Erastes Soliciting an Eromenos.* Attican cup. The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (United Kingdom).

20. Anonymous, *The Battle Between the Lapiths and the Centaurs*, West Pediment, Temple of Zeus, Olympia, c. 470–456 B. C. E. Marble, h: 330 cm. Archaeological Museum, Olympia (Greece).

21. Anonymous, 470 B. C. E. Bronze. Athen.

22. After **Myron**, *Discobolus*, c. 450 B. C. E. Marble, h: 148 cm. Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome (Italy).

In Myron's Discobolus, *we see the human form freed from the standing, frontal pose of earlier statues. Here, the artist is clearly interested not only in the body of the athlete, but in the movement of the discus thrower. His muscles tense and strain in preparation for his throw, his face focused*

on his activity. While the pose, with the arms forming a wide arc, is revolutionary, the piece is still meant to be viewed from the front. It would not be until the following century that artists began to conceive of sculpture that could be viewed from all sides.

MYRON
(Active during the first half of the 5th century B. C. E.)

Mid-fifth century B. C. E. Greek sculptor, Myron worked almost exclusively in bronze. Though he made some statues of gods and heroes, his fame rested primarily upon his representations of athletes, for which he proved revolutionary by introducing greater boldness of pose and a more ideal rhythm. His most famous works, according to Pliny, were a cow, Ladas the runner, who fell dead at the moment of victory, and a discus-thrower, *Discobolus*. The cow seems to have earned its fame largely by serving as a peg on which to hang epigrams, which tells us nothing of the animal's pose. Of the Ladas, there is no known copy; we are fortunate, however, in possessing several copies of the *Discobolus*. The athlete is represented at the moment he has swung back the discus with the full stretch of his arm, ready to hurl it with all the weight of his body. His face is calm and untroubled, but every muscle in his body is focused in effort.

Another marble figure, almost certainly a copy of a work of Myron's, is a Marsyas eager to pick up the flutes Athena had thrown away. The full group is copied on coins of Athens, on a vase and in a relief representing Marsyas as oscillating between curiosity and fear of Athena's displeasure. His face of the Marsyas is almost a mask; but from the attitude we gain a vivid impression of the passions affecting him.

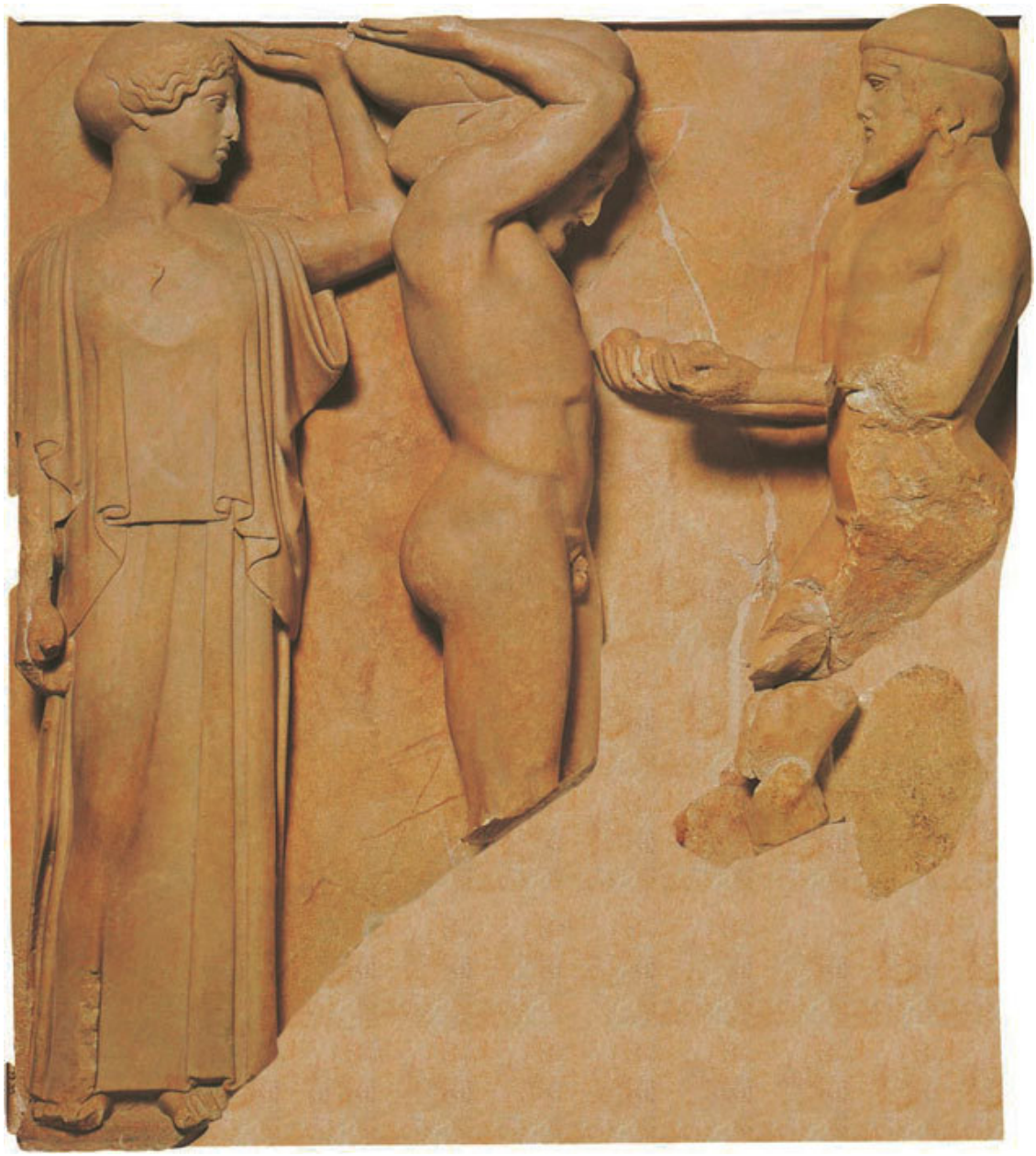
The ancient critics say of Myron that, while he succeeded admirably in giving life and motion to his figures, he failed in rendering the mind's emotions. To a certain degree this agrees with the existing evidence, although not perfectly. The bodies of his men are of far greater excellence than the heads.

He was a somewhat older contemporary of Phidias and Polykleitos.

23. Anonymous, *Dying Warrior*, Corner Figure, East Pediment, Temple of Aphaia, Aegina, c. 500–480 B. C. E. Marble, h: 185 cm. Glyptothek, Munich (Germany).

Greek temples often featured large sculpture decorating the pediment, the triangular space under the eave of the roof. The first examples of pedimental sculpture show that the early artists

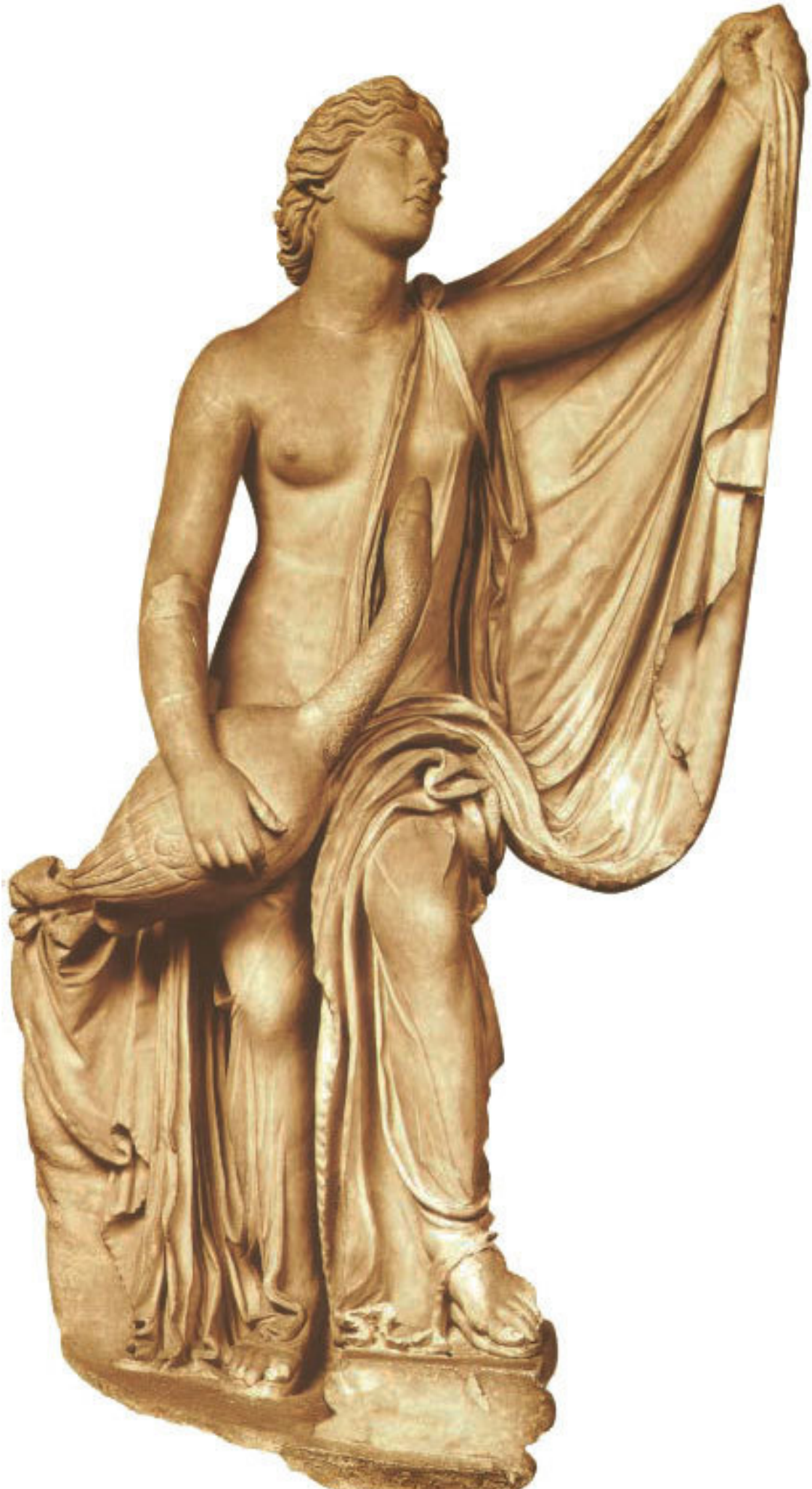
were not adept at filling the awkward triangular space with a cohesive composition; the figures in the corners were shrunk to a diminutive scale in comparison to the central figures. However, in this pediment group from the end of the Archaic period, the sculptors showed new skill in conceiving the composition. The central figures, not shown, engage in lively battle, lunging and parrying with swords and shields. One archer crouches to take aim, his low position allowing him to fit into the smaller space toward the corner of the pediment. The Dying Warrior next to him fills that corner, the angle of his falling body perfectly fitting into the smallest part of the pediment. A single, cohesive narrative is thereby created across the triangular space, telling the story of a battle fought by local heroes.



24. Anonymous, *Heracles Receiving the Golden Apples of the Hesperides from the Hand of Atlas while Minerva Rests a Cushion on his Head*, East Metope, Temple of Zeus, Olympia, c. 470–456 B. C. E. Marble, h: 160 cm. Archaeological Museum, Olympia (Greece).

This metope, or square component of the frieze of the temple, is from the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, the largest and most important structure of the first half of the fifth century. Together, the metopes of the Temple of Zeus told the story of the twelve labours of Heracles. Each metope showed

one of his labours, or tasks. This metope shows the eleventh labour, the apples of the Hesperides. Heracles was told he had to steal apples belonging to Zeus. He met up with Atlas, who had to hold up the world for all of time. Atlas said he would get the apples for Heracles if Heracles would hold the earth for him. In the scene shown, Atlas has returned with the apples, and Heracles must figure out how to get Atlas to take back the weight of the world. Athena stands behind Heracles, gently helping him hold his burden.



25. Anonymous, *Leda and the Swan*, copy after a Greek original created by **Timotheus**, first half of the 5th century B. C. E. Marble, h: 132 cm. Musei Capitolini, Rome (Italy).

26. Anonymous, *Aphrodite, type Venus Genitrix,* Roman copy after a Greek original created by **Callimachus**, end of 5th century B. C. E. Marble, h: 164 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

CALLIMACHUS
(Active between c. 432 – c. 408 B. C. E.)

An ancient sculptor and engraver, Callimachus was nicknamed "*katatxitechnos*" – "the perfectionist." He left behind no writings, but we know his life through the works of Pausanias and Vitruvius, although today certain of their accounts seem doubtful. It is known that he contributed to the decoration of the Erechtheion. For this temple he created, among other things, a magnificent golden lamp, above which was mounted a bronze palm branch, which trapped the smoke. Several beautiful sculptures were also ascribed to him: a group of Lacedemonian dancers and a statue of the seated Hera made for the Heraion of Plataea. What characterises Callimachus more than anything else is his painstaking attention to detail; hence the nickname. Purportedly, he was the first to use a drill for shaping marble. He modelled his work on the tradition of the old masters and pioneered the Archaic style.

Callimachus also has a place in the history of architecture. He is considered the inventor of the Corinthian capital. According to the legend told by Vitruvius, he got the idea while looking at the acanthus blossom wrapped around a basket which had been placed on a child's tomb.

27. Anonymous, *Doryphoros*, Roman copy after a Greek original created by **Polykleitos**, c. 440 B. C. E. Marble, h: 196 cm. The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis (United States).

POLYKLEITOS
(Active during the 5th century B. C. E.)

Polykleitos was a contemporary of Phidias, and in the opinion of the Greeks his equal. He made a figure of an Amazon for Ephesus regarded as superior to the Amazon of Phidias made at the same time; and his colossal Hera of gold and ivory, which stood in the temple near Argos, was considered worthy to rank with the Zeus of Phidias.

It would be hard for a modern critic to rate Polykleitos so high, for reasons of balance, rhythm, and minute perfection of bodily form, the great merits of this sculptor, which appeal less to us than they did to the fifth century Greeks. He worked mainly in bronze.

His artistic activity must thus have been long and prolific.

Copies of his spearman (*Doryphoros*) and his victor winding a ribbon round his head (*Diadoumenos* (see nos. 29 & 32)) have long been recognised in galleries. While we understand their excellence, they inspire no enthusiasm; they are fleshier than modern athletic figures and lack charm. They are chiefly valuable for showing us the square forms of body affected by Polykleitos, and the scheme he adopted, for throwing the body's weight (as Pliny says of him) onto one leg.

The Amazon of Polykleitos survives in several copies. Here again we find a certain heaviness, and the Amazon's womanly character scarcely appears through her robust limbs.

The masterpiece of Polykleitos, his Hera of gold and ivory, has of course totally disappeared. The Argos coins give us only the general type. Ancient critics reproached Polykleitos for the lack of variety in his works. We have already observed the slight variety in their attitudes. Except for the statue of Hera, which was the work of his old age, he produced hardly any notable statue of a deity. His field was narrowly limited; but in that field he was unsurpassed.

28. Anonymous, *The Tyrannicides Harmodius and Aristogeiton*, Roman copy after a Greek original created by **Critios**, c. 477 B. C. E. Marble, h: 195 cm. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples (Italy).

Harmodius and Aristogeiton Metal was a valuable commodity in the ancient world, so sculptures made of bronze or other metals were often eventually melted down by a conquering nation or a successive ruler who did not care for the art of his predecessor. For that reason, few large-scale bronze sculptures survive from Antiquity. Romans, however, had a taste for Greek art, and copied many of their bronze sculptures in stone, the material preferred by Romans. Often, the bronze original has since been lost, and the Roman copies are all that survive. Such is the case with this group, Roman copies in marble of two Greek sculptures in bronze. The subjects are Harmodius and Aristogeiton, lovers who together conspired to murder the political tyrant, Hippias. They lost their nerve and killed his brother instead, but were revered as heroes by Athenians who believed them to have murdered the tyrant. Statues of the two were erected in their honour in the Athenian Agora.

29. Anonymous, *Diadoumenos, the Young Athlete*, copy after a bronze original created by **Polykleitos**, c. 430 B. C. E. Marble, h: 186 cm. National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Athens (Greece).

Polykleitos is one of the best-known sculptors of the fifth century B. C. E., known especially for his athletic dedications, such as this one. The figure binds his hair with a tie in preparation for sport. His clothes rest next to him on a low branch, since Greek athletes exercised in the nude. Polykleitos' Doryphoros, or Canon, sought to illustrate the ideal male figure. In the piece shown, we see the same proportions the sculptor established with his Canon, and the same attention to anatomical realism. The Polykleitan ideal is a heavy, muscled, somewhat stocky body, especially in comparison to the more gracile figures of the next century.

30. Anonymous, *Apollo*, known as *Apollo Parnopios*, copy after a Greek original created by **Phidias**, c. 450 B. C. E. Marble, h: 197 cm. Staatliche Museen, Kassel (Germany).

Apollo was the god of music, poetry, medicine, archery, and prophecy, and was always shown as young and beautiful. Here, he has the idealised body of a young male athlete. The naturalism of his anatomy, with its sculpted muscles and graceful movement, is expressed through the relaxed, contrapposto stance. His expression is thoughtful but emotionless. This classic fifth-century B. C. E. statue type is transformed into Apollo by the addition of the elaborately curled long hair, and his attributes, the bow and laurel wreath, which he would have held in each hand.

PHIDIAS
(Athens, c. 488 B. C. E. – c. 431 B. C. E.)

Son of Charmides, universally regarded as the greatest of Greek sculptors, Phidias was born in Athens. We have varying accounts of his training. Hegias of Athens, Ageladas of Argos, and the Thasian painter Polygnotus, have all been regarded as his teachers.

The earliest of his great works were dedications in memory of Marathon, from the spoils of the victory. On the Acropolis of Athens he erected a colossal bronze image of Athena, visible far out at sea. Other works at Delphi, at Pellene in Achaea, and at Plataea were appreciated; among the Greeks themselves, however, the two works of Phidias which far outstripped all others – providing the basis of his fame – were the colossal figures in gold and ivory of Zeus at Olympia and of Athena Parthenos at Athens, both of which belong to about the middle of the fifth century.

Plutarch gives in his life of Perikles a charming account of the vast artistic activity that went on at Athens while that statesman was in power. For the decoration of his own city he used the money furnished by the Athenian allies for defence against Persia. “In all these works,” says Plutarch, “Phidias was the adviser and overseer of Perikles.” Phidias introduced his own portrait and that of Perikles on the shield of his Parthenos statue. And it was through Phidias that the political enemies of Perikles struck at him.

It is important to observe that in resting the fame of Phidias upon the sculptures of the Parthenon we proceed with little evidence. What he was celebrated for in Antiquity was his statues in bronze or gold and ivory. If Plutarch tells us that he superintended the great works of Perikles on the Acropolis, this phrase is very vague.

Of his death we have two discrepant accounts. According to Plutarch he was made an object of attack by the political enemies of Perikles, and died in prison at Athens. According to Philochorus, he fled to Elis, where he made the great statue of Zeus for the Eleans, and was afterwards put to death by them. For several reasons the first of these tales is preferable.

Ancient critics take a high view of the merits of Phidias. What they especially praise is the ethos or permanent moral level of his works as compared with those of the later “pathetic” school. Demetrius calls his statues sublime and at the same time precise.

31. Anonymous, *Riace Bronze B*, Roman copy after a Greek original created by **Phidias**, c. 450 B. C. E. Bronze, h: 197 cm. Museo Nazionale, Reggio Calabria (Italy).

A sunken treasure, this bronze statue was pulled from the sea, having been lost in a shipwreck in Antiquity. Ironically, its loss in the sea resulted in it being one of the few bronze statues to survive from Antiquity, since it was never melted down for its valuable metal. The warrior is one of a pair that has been attributed to the fifth century B. C. E., or High Classical Period. In this piece we can see the ideals of High Classical period sculpture fully realised. At the same time realistic and idealistic, the sculpture shows a lifelike, but perfect, body, each muscle articulated, the figure frozen in a relaxed, life-like pose. The solid, athletic body reflects the ideal of a young athlete, although this figure represents an older warrior, who once would have held a spear and a shield. The nudity of the figure also alludes to the athlete, who in Greece would have practised or competed in the nude, and also to the mythical hero, a reminder that the man represented here was no ordinary warrior, but a semi-divine hero, an appropriate offering for one of the great sanctuaries of the Greek world.

32. Anonymous, *Male Torso*, in the style of the *Diadoumenos*, copy after a bronze original created by **Polykleitos**, c. 430 B. C. E. Marble, h: 85 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

33. Anonymous, *Apollo Sauroktonos,* Hellenistic copy after a Greek original created by **Praxiteles**, 4th century B. C. E. Marble, h: 149 cm. Museo Pio Clementino, Vatican (Vatican).

PRAXITELES
(Active between c. 375 – c. 335 B. C. E.)

Greek sculptor, Praxiteles of Athens, the son of Cephissodotus, is considered the greatest of the fourth century B. C. E. Attic sculptors. He left an imperishable mark on the history of art.

Our knowledge of Praxiteles received a significant contribution, and was placed on a satisfactory basis with the discovery at Olympia in 1877 of his statue of *Hermes with the Infant Dionysos*, a statue that has become world famous, but which is now regarded as a copy. Full and solid without being fleshy, at once strong and active, the Hermes is a masterpiece and the surface play astonishing. In the head we have a remarkably rounded and intelligent shape, and the face expresses the perfection of health and enjoyment.

Among the numerous copies that came to us, perhaps the most notable is the *Apollo Sauroktonos*, or the lizard-slayer, a youth leaning against a tree and idly striking with an arrow at a lizard, and the *Aphrodite of Knidos* of the Vatican, which is a copy of the statue made by Praxiteles for the people of Knidos; they valued it so highly they refused to sell it to King Nicomedes, who was willing in return to discharge the city's entire debt, which, according to Pliny, was enormous.

The subjects chosen by Praxiteles were either human or the less elderly and dignified deities. Apollo, *Hermes* and Aphrodite rather than Zeus, Poseidon or Athena attracted him. Under his hands the deities descend to human level; indeed, sometimes almost below it. They possess grace and charm to a supreme degree, though the element of awe and reverence is wanting.

Praxiteles and his school worked almost entirely in marble. At the time the marble quarries of Paros were at their best; for the sculptor's purpose no marble could be finer than that of which the Hermes is made.

34. Anonymous, *Diomedes*, c. 430 B. C. E. Marble, h: 102 cm. Glyptothek, Munich (Germany).

35. Anonymous, *Hermes Tying his Sandal,* Roman copy after a Greek original created by **Lysippos**, 4th century B. C. E. Marble, h: 161 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

LYSIPPOS
(c. 395 – c. 305 B. C. E.)

The Greek sculptor, Lysippos, was head of the school of Argos and Sicyon in the time of Philip and Alexander of Macedon. His works, some colossal, are said to have numbered 1500. Certain accounts have him continuing the school of Polykleitos; others represent him as self-taught. He was especially innovative regarding the proportions of the human male body; in contrast to his predecessors, he reduced the head size and made the body harder and more slender, producing the impression of greater height. He also took great pains with hair and other details. Pliny and other writers mention many of his statues. Among the gods he seems to have produced new and striking types of Zeus, the Sun-god and others; many of these were colossal figures in bronze. Among heroes he was particularly attracted by the mighty physique of Heracles. The *Heracles Farnese* of Naples, though signed by Glycon of Athens, and a later and exaggerated transcript, owes something, including the motive of rest after labour, to Lysippos. Lysippos made many statues of Alexander the Great, and so satisfied his patron, no doubt by idealising him, that he became the king's court sculptor; the king and his generals provided numerous commissions. Portraits of Alexander vary greatly, and it is impossible to determine which among them go back to Lysippos.

As head of the great athletic school of Peloponnese, Lysippos naturally sculptured many athletes; a figure by him of a man scraping himself with a strigil was a great favourite of the Romans in the time of Tiberius; it has usually been regarded as the original copied in the *Apoxyomenos* of the Vatican.

36. Anonymous, *Meleager*, copy after a Greek original created by **Skopas**, c. 340 B. C. E. Marble, h: 123 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge (United States).

SKOPAS
(Active during first half of the 4th century B. C. E.)

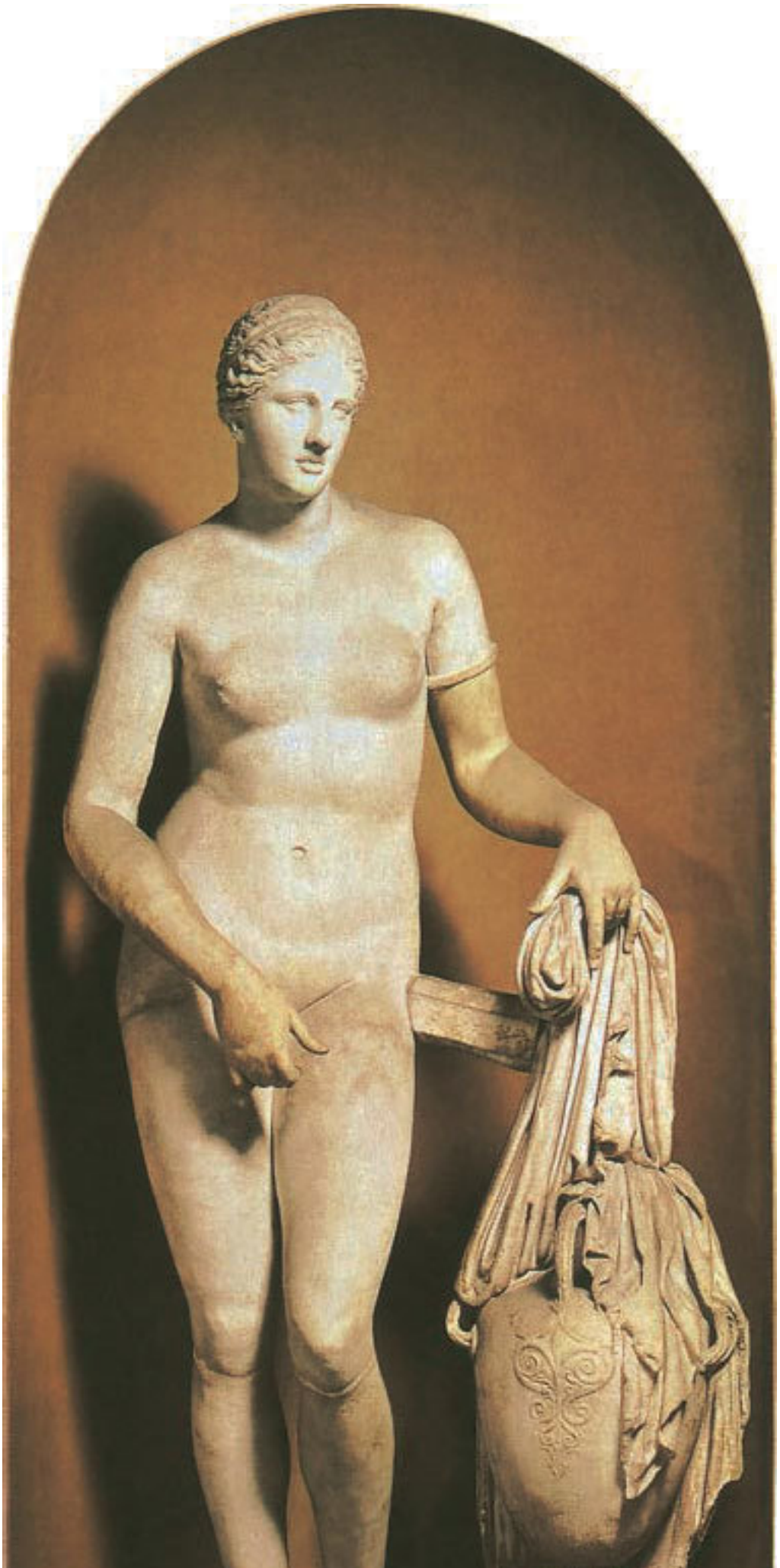
Probably of Parian origin, Skopas was the son of Aristander, a great Greek sculptor of the fourth century B. C. E. Although classed as an Athenian, and similar in tendency to Praxiteles, he was really a cosmopolitan artist, working largely in Asia and Peloponnesos. The existing works with which he is associated are the Mausoleum of Halicarnassos, and the temple of Athena Alea at Tegea. In the case of the Mausoleum, though no doubt the sculpture generally belongs to his school, it remains impossible to single out any specific part of it as his own. There is, however, good reason to think that the pedimental figures from Tegea are Skopas' own work. They are, unfortunately, all in extremely poor condition, but appear to be the best evidence of his style.

While in general style Skopas approached Praxiteles, he differed from him in preferring strong expression and vigorous action to repose and sentiment.

Early writers give a good deal of information on the works of Skopas. For the people of Elis he made a bronze Aphrodite riding on a goat (copied on the coins of Elis); a *Maenad* at Athens, running with head thrown back and a torn kid in her hands, was ascribed to him. Another type of his was Apollo as leader of the Muses, singing to the lyre. The most elaborate of his works was a great group representing Achilles being conveyed over the sea to the island of Leuce by his mother Thetis, accompanied by Nereids.

Jointly with his contemporaries Praxiteles and Lysippos, Skopas may be considered to have completely changed the character of Greek sculpture; they initiated the lines of development that culminated in the schools of Pergamum, Rhodes and other great cities of later Greece. In most modern museums of ancient art their influence may be seen in three-fourths of the works exhibited. At the Renaissance it was especially their influence which dominated Italian painting, and through it, modern art.

37. Anonymous, *Athenian Tombstone*, c. 340 B. C. E. Marble, h: 168 cm. National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Athens (Greece).



38. Anonymous, *Aphrodite of Knidos,* copy after a Greek original created by **Praxiteles,** c. 350 B. C. E. Marble. Museo Pio Clementino, Vatican (Italy).

39. Anonymous, *Aphrodite of Knidos,* Roman copy after a Greek original created by **Praxiteles**, c. 350 B. C. E. Marble, h: 122 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

40. Anonymous, *Crouching Venus*, Roman copy after a Greek original created in the 3rd century B. C. E. Marble, h: 96 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

41. Anonymous, *Dionysos and Ariadne* (detail from the *Derveni Krater)*, c. 340–330 B. C. E. Copper, h: 91 cm. Archeological Museum, Thessaloniki (Greece).

42. Anonymous, *Venus and Cupid*, Roman copy after a Greek original, 4th century B. C. E. Restored at the end of the 17th century C. E. by **Alessandro Algardi**. Marble, h: 174 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

Aphrodite became a common subject for Greek sculptors in the fourth century B. C. E. and later, because her renowned beauty provided an acceptable excuse for an erotic representation of the female body. She is sometimes shown, as here, with her son Eros, known to the Romans as Cupid, and in later art as "putti," the winged babies symbolising earthly and divine love. In Roman art and mythology, Aphrodite became Venus, goddess of love. To the Romans she had a more elevated status, seen as the progenitor of the line of Caesar, Augustus, and the Julio-Claudian emperors, and by extension as an embodiment of the Roman people. This playful depiction of Aphrodite and Eros, or Venus and Cupid, is more suggestive of the Greek view of Aphrodite, who saw her not only as the symbol of sensual beauty, but also as occasionally silly and humorous.

43. Anonymous, *Capitoline Venus*, Roman copy after a Greek original created by **Praxiteles**, 3rd century B. C. E. Marble, h: 193 cm. Musei Capitolini, Rome (Italy).

44. Anonymous, *Wounded Amazon*, Roman copy after a Greek original created by **Polykleitos**, c. 440–430 B. C. E. Marble, h: 202 cm. Musei Capitolini, Rome (Italy).

45. Anonymous, *Belvedere Apollo*, Roman copy after a Greek original created by **Leochares**, c. 330 B. C. E. Marble, h: 224 cm. Museo Pio Clementino, Vatican (Italy).

The Belvedere Apollo *has long enjoyed fame, known as the prototypical work of Greek art. This fame springs from its rediscovery during the Renaissance of the fifteenth century. At that time, wealthy Italian nobles began to collect ancient sculpture that was being discovered in the ruins of Roman Italy.* The Belvedere Apollo *went to the collection of the Pope, and was displayed in the courtyard of the Belvedere villa in the Vatican. There, it was seen by countless visitors and visiting artists, who sketched the piece. Copies were made for various courts of Europe. The proud, princely bearing of the figure, along with the delicate beauty of Apollo's face, had great appeal among the aristocratic classes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and to the Romantics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.*

LEOCHARES
(Active between 340–320 B. C. E.)

A Greek sculptor who worked with Skopas on the Mausoleum around 350 B. C. E. Leochares executed statues in gold and ivory of Philip of Macedon's family; the king placed them in the Philippeum at Olympia. Along with Lysippos, he made a group in bronze at Delphi representing a lion-hunt of Alexander. We hear of other statues by Leochares of Zeus, Apollo and Ares. The statuette in the Vatican, representing Ganymede being carried away by an eagle, originally poorly executed, though considerably restored, corresponds closely with Pliny's description of a group by Leochares.

46. Anonymous, *Apoxyomenos*, copy after a bronze original created by **Lysippos**, c. 330 B. C. E. Marble, h: 205 cm. Museo Pio Clementino, Vatican (Italy).

In the fourth century, standing male statues of idealised athletes remained a popular subject for sculpture. The poses became more varied, however, as sculptors experimented with forms that could be viewed from multiple angles. The Apoxyomenos, *or* Man scraping Himself, *is an example of innovation of pose. His right arm extends forward, reaching out of the plane in which the rest of his body lies. Before exercising, a Greek athlete would apply oil to his body. He would then return to the bath house, after engaging in sport, and scrape the oil off himself. The subject of the Apoxyomenos is in the process of scraping himself clean.*

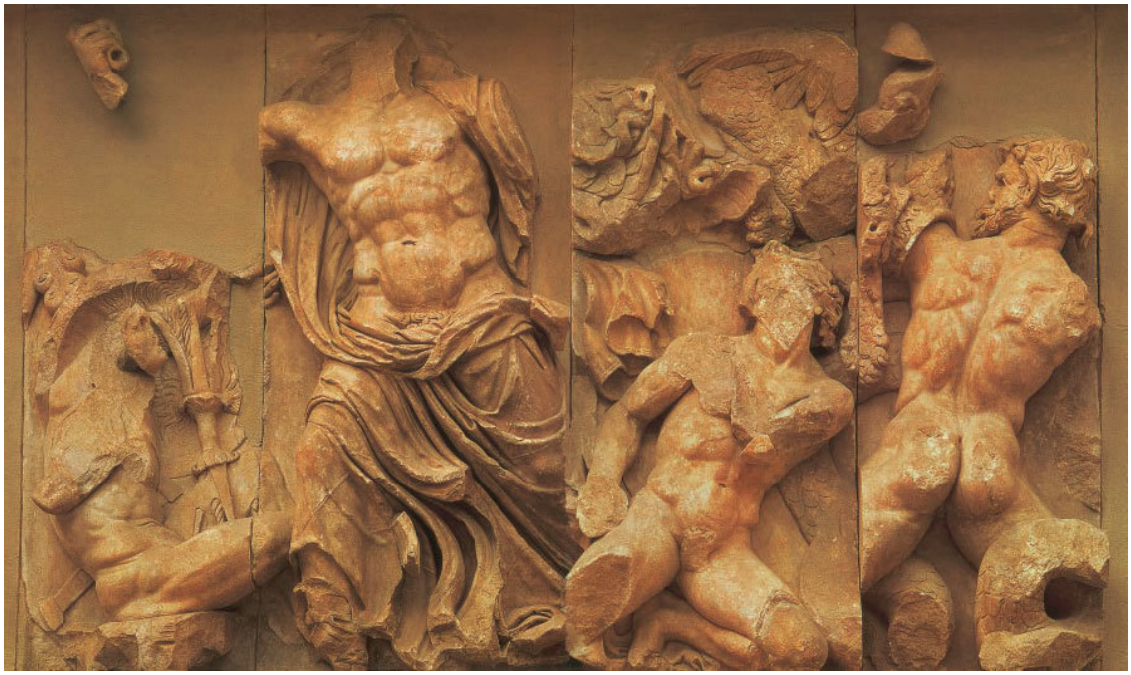
47. Anonymous, *Ludovisi Group*, Roman copy after a bronze original erected by the Kings of Pergamon Attalus I and Eumenes II, c. 240 B. C. E. Marble, h: 211 cm. Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome (Italy).

48. Anonymous, *The Three Graces*, Roman copy of a Greek original created during the 2nd century B. C. E., restored in 1609. Marble, 119 × 85 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

The Graces, or Charities, were three goddesses named Beauty, Mirth, and Cheer. They oversaw happy events such as dances and banquets. They were companions to Aphrodite, providing the happiness that accompanies love. Like Aphrodite, they were often depicted in the nude, and often, as in this example, dancing in a circle. In each, we see the familiar shift in weight, or

contrapposto, developed in the fifth century. However, the composition of this piece is far more elaborate than any High Classical sculpture. It was not until the Hellenistic period that complex groups of multiple figures were depicted in free-standing sculpture. The figures are tied together by their embrace, unifying the piece, yet they face different directions, so that the sculpture would be interesting from any angle from which it was viewed.

49. Anonymous, *Dying Gaul*, Roman copy after a bronze original erected by the Kings of Pergamon Attalus I and Eumenes II, c. 240 B. C. E. Marble, h: 93 cm. Musei Capitolini, Rome (Italy).



50. Anonymous, *Zeus and Porphyrion during the Battle with the Giants*, Pedestal Frieze, Great Altar of Zeus, Pergamon, c. 180 B. C. E. Marble, h: 230 cm. Pergamonmuseum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin (Germany).

51. Anonymous, *Erotic Scene from the Back of a Stele Depicting Dionysos*, Hellenistic period. Archeological Museum, Nicosia (Cyprus).

52. Anonymous, *Zeus and Leda*. Oil lamp. National Archeological Museum, Athens (Greece).

53. Anonymous, *Laocoön*, Roman copy after a bronze original made in Pergamon, c. 150 B. C. E. Marble, h: 242 cm. Museo Pio Clementino, Vatican (Italy).

Laocoön was a Trojan priest. When the Achaeans, who were holding Troy under siege, left the famous Trojan horse on the beach, Laocoön tried to warn the Trojan leaders against bringing it into the city, fearing it was a trap. Athena, acting as helper and protector of the Greeks, punished Laocoön for his interference. She had him and his two sons attacked by giant snakes. In this famous sculpture group, probably a Roman copy of the Hellenistic original, one son breaks free of the snakes, looking back to see his father and brother being killed. The Baroque style of the piece ties it to the Pergamon school. It exhibits the same drama, seen in the straining muscles and the faces contorted in pain. In fact, the pose of Laocoön seems to echo that of the giants battling the Olympic gods on the Pergamon Altar.

54. Agasias of Ephesus, *The Fighting Warrior*, known as the *Borghese Gladiator*, c. 100 B. C. E. Marble, h: 199 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

This Roman copy of a Greek original dating, perhaps, to the fourth century B. C. E., was rediscovered in the early seventeenth century and acquired by Cardinal Borghese. A wealthy relative of Pope Paul V, he collected hundreds of statues, many of which were ancient, some of which were contemporary pieces in the style of Antiquity. Pieces in the Borghese collection often suffered from unfortunate restorations, though this piece seems to have escaped unmarred. It was later purchased by Napoléon Bonaparte, a relative by marriage of the Borghese family. In that way it made its way to Paris. It was long thought to represent a gladiator, but more recently it has been acknowledged that it could as easily be an athlete or warrior. Much has been made of the ideal musculature and anatomy of the subject. The artist clearly sought to emulate as realistically as possible the form, stance, and sinews of the lunging figure.

55. Anonymous, *Sleeping Hermaphrodite,* Roman copy of a Greek original from the 2nd century B. C. E. (?), mattress carved in 1619 by **Gian Lorenzo Bernini**. Marble, 169 × 89 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

56. Anonymous, *Barberini Faun*, copy after a Hellenistic original, c. 200 B. C. E. Marble, h: 215 cm. Glyptothek, Munich (Germany).

The wealth of the Hellenistic period meant that many people could afford sculpture for their private houses and gardens. Consequently, more profane, even erotic, subjects were introduced to the repertoire of Greek art. Here, a sleeping, and probably drunk, satyr lounges sprawled out on an animal skin. The pose is unabashedly erotic, the figure's nudity no longer signalling simply that he is a hero, athlete, or god, but rather suggesting his sexual availability. The naturalistic and idealised manner of depiction of the body of the satyr is a legacy of High Classical sculpture.

57. Anonymous, *Winner Athlete*, 1st century C. E. Marble, h: 148 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

58. Anonymous, *Statuette of a Standing Goddess,* Babylonia, 2nd century B. C. E. Alabaster, gold and ruby, h: 24.8 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

59. Anonymous, *Fragment of a Rhyton Showing an Amorous Embrace*, 2nd century B. C. E.

60. Anonymous, *Aphrodite of Melos,* known as *Vénus de Milo*, c. 100 B. C. E. Marble, h: 202 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

The Aphrodite of Melos*, or* Vénus de Milo*, is an original Greek sculpture dating to the Hellenistic period. It was discovered in a field along with other sculptural fragments, including a separate arm holding an apple, which belongs with this figure. The apple is probably a reference to the mythical "Judgment of Paris". In that tale, the goddess of Discord tossed a golden apple inscribed "for the loveliest" towards the goddesses Aphrodite, Athena, and Hera. The young Trojan prince, Paris, was asked to decide which goddess should be awarded the apple. Each tried to bribe Paris but he chose Aphrodite, who offered him the love of the most beautiful mortal woman in the world. That woman, of course, was Helen of Sparta, already married to the Greek king. Her abduction by Paris started the Trojan War. While Aphrodite is criticised by Homer for her role in starting the conflict, she is celebrated here as the purveyor of true love.*

61. Anonymous, *Artemis of Ephesus*, 2nd century B. C. E.

62. Anonymous, *Aphrodite*, known as *Venus of Arles*, end of the 1st century B. C. E. Marble, h: 194 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

63. Anonymous, Cameo with Leda *and the Swan*. 2.5 × 1.7 cm. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples (Italy).

64. Anonymous, Hercules and Omphale, 1st century B. C. E. Carnelian. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (Austria).

65. Anonymous, *Mirror Cover Showing a Couple*, 1st century C. E. Bronze. Antiquarium, Rome (Italy).

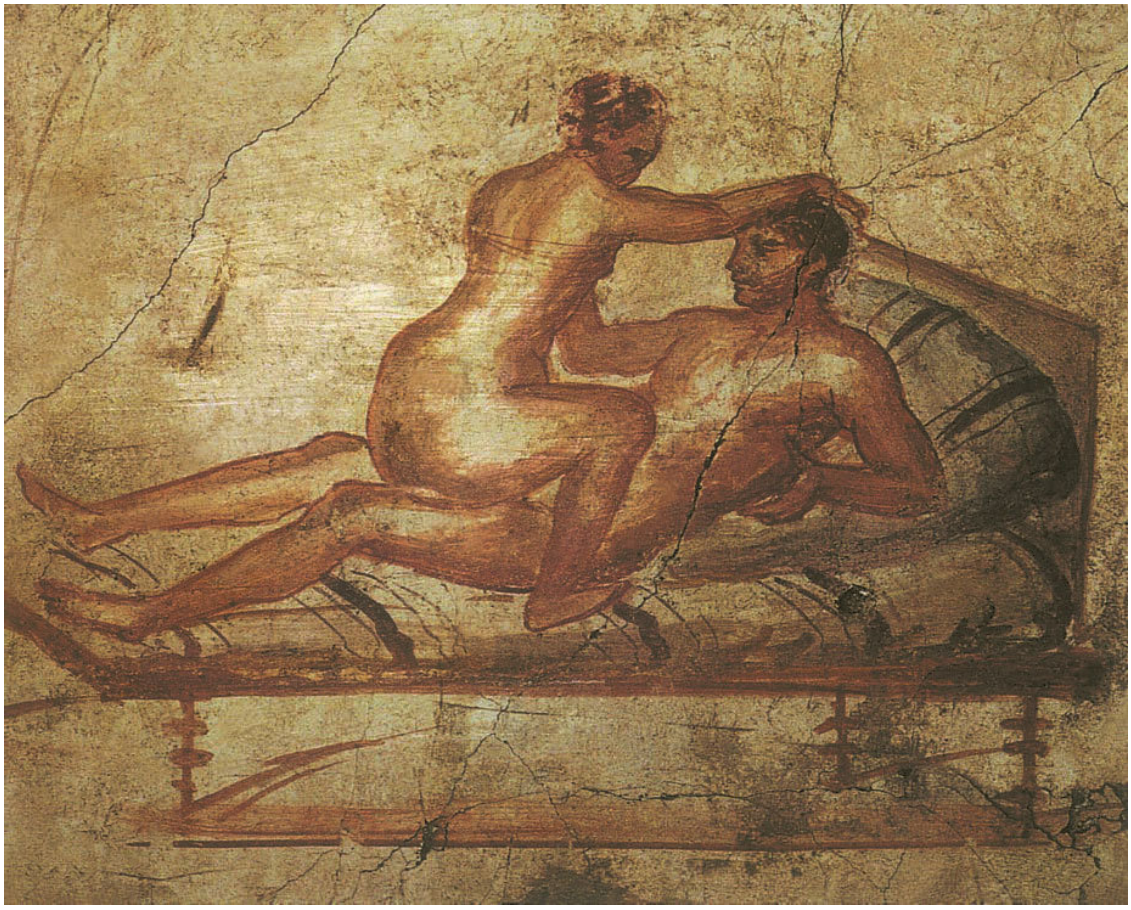
66. Anonymous, *Yakshi Swaying* (detail of a portal), 1st century B. C. E. Sculpted stone. Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh (India).

67. Anonymous, *Grimani Altar*, last quarter of the 1st century B. C. E. Museo Archeologico Nazional, Venice (Italy).

68. Anonymous, *Skyphos with an Erotic Group* (detail), c. 1st century C. E.

69. Anonymous, *Priapus, God of Fertility,* 1st century C. E. Naples (Italy).

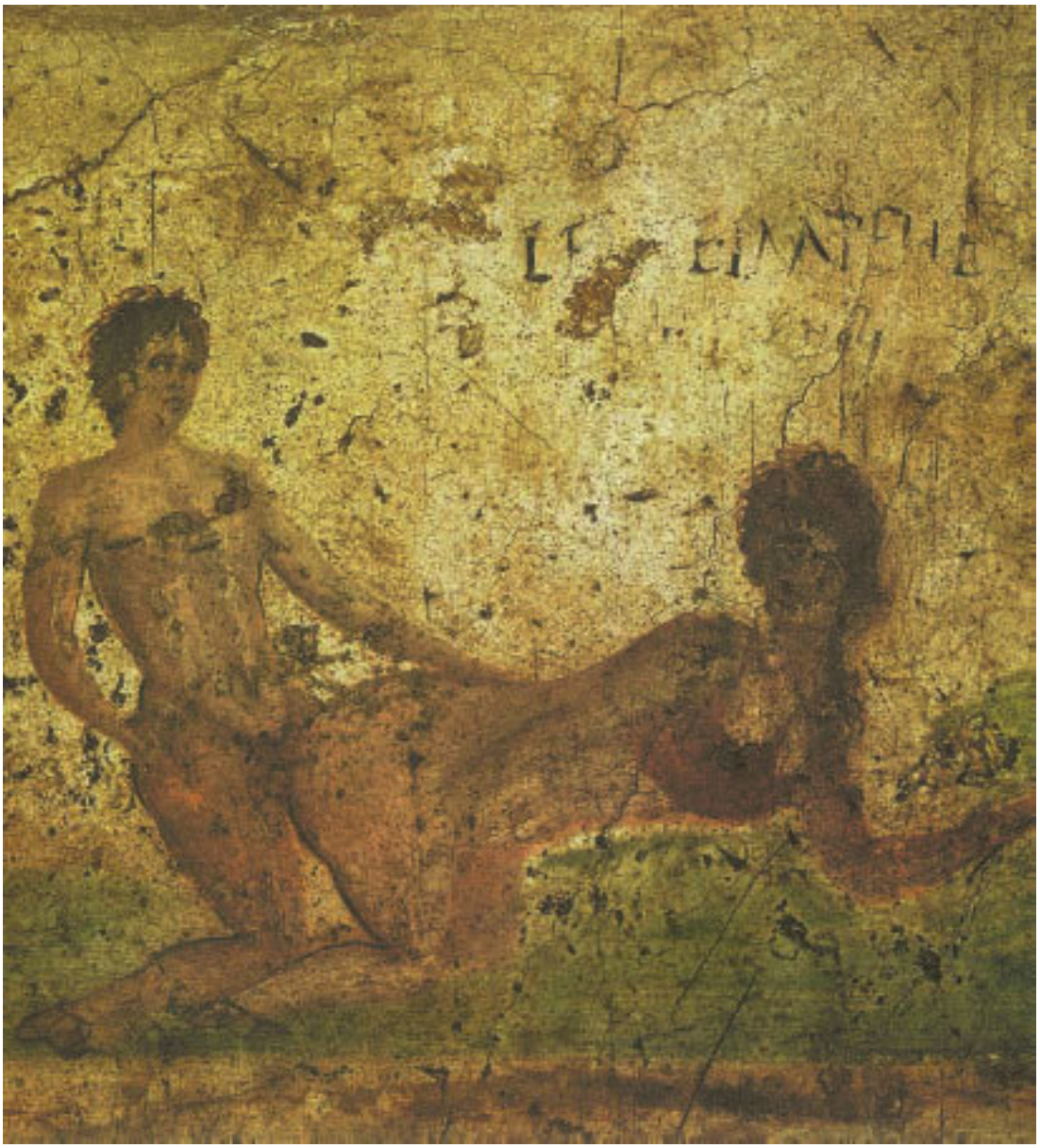
70. Anonymous, *Tripod with Ithyphallic Young Pans*, c. 1st century C. E. Bronze from Pompeii. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples (Italy).



71. Anonymous, *Couple*, known as *Venus Pendula*, 1st century C. E. House of the Vettii, Pompeii (Italy).

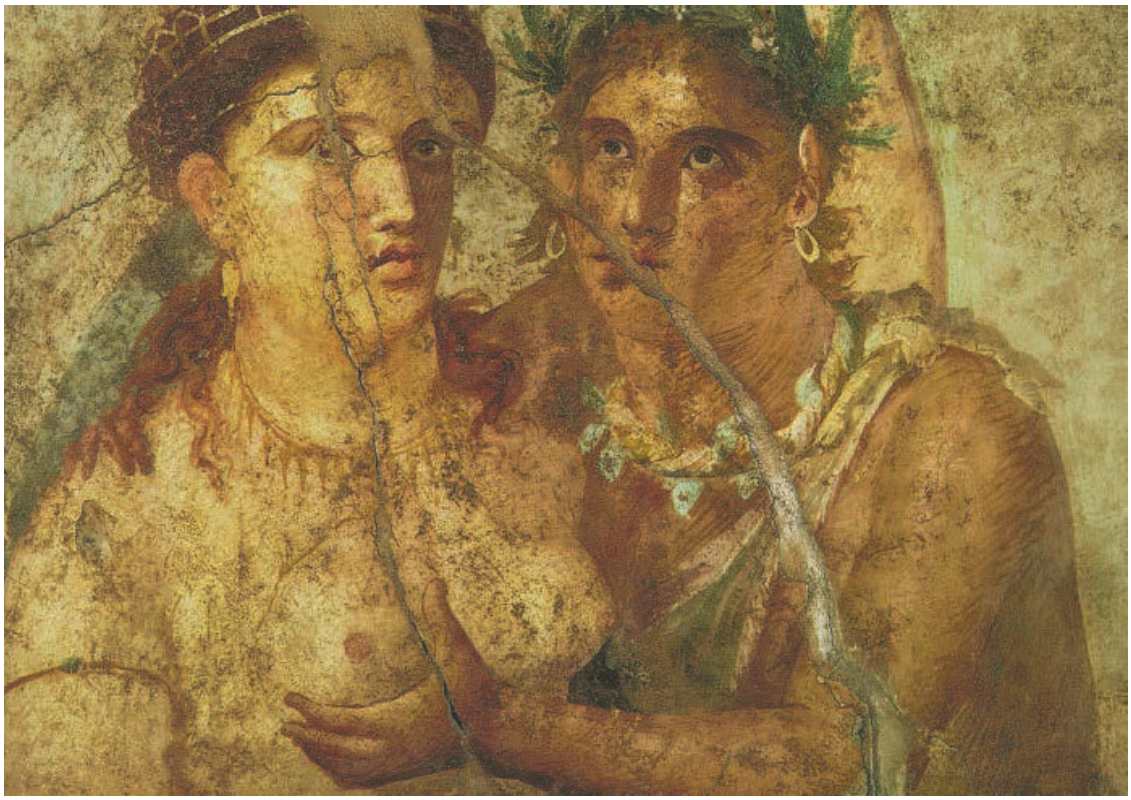
72. Anonymous, One of three small erotic pictures from a small room adjacent to the kitchen, 1st century C. E. House of the Vettii, Pompeii (Italy).

73. Anonymous, *The Standing Man Supports the Woman's Legs on his Shoulders while she half-lies on the Bed*, 1st century C. E. From the House of Punished Love, Pompeii (Italy).



74. Anonymous, *Depiction of "Coitus a Tergo",* 1st century C. E. Pompeii (Italy).

75. Anonymous, *Mars with his Spear and Plumed Helmet Caressing Venus' Breast as she Sits on a Throne and a Putto Looks on*, 1st century C. E. Fresco. From the House of Punished Love, Pompeii (Italy).



76. Anonymous, *Maenad Solicited by a Satyr wearing earrings*. Fresco. From the House of L. Caecilius Jucundus in Pompeii, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples (Italy).

77. Anonymous, *Coupling Scene between a Satyr and a Nymph*. From the House of the Faun, Pompeii (Italy).

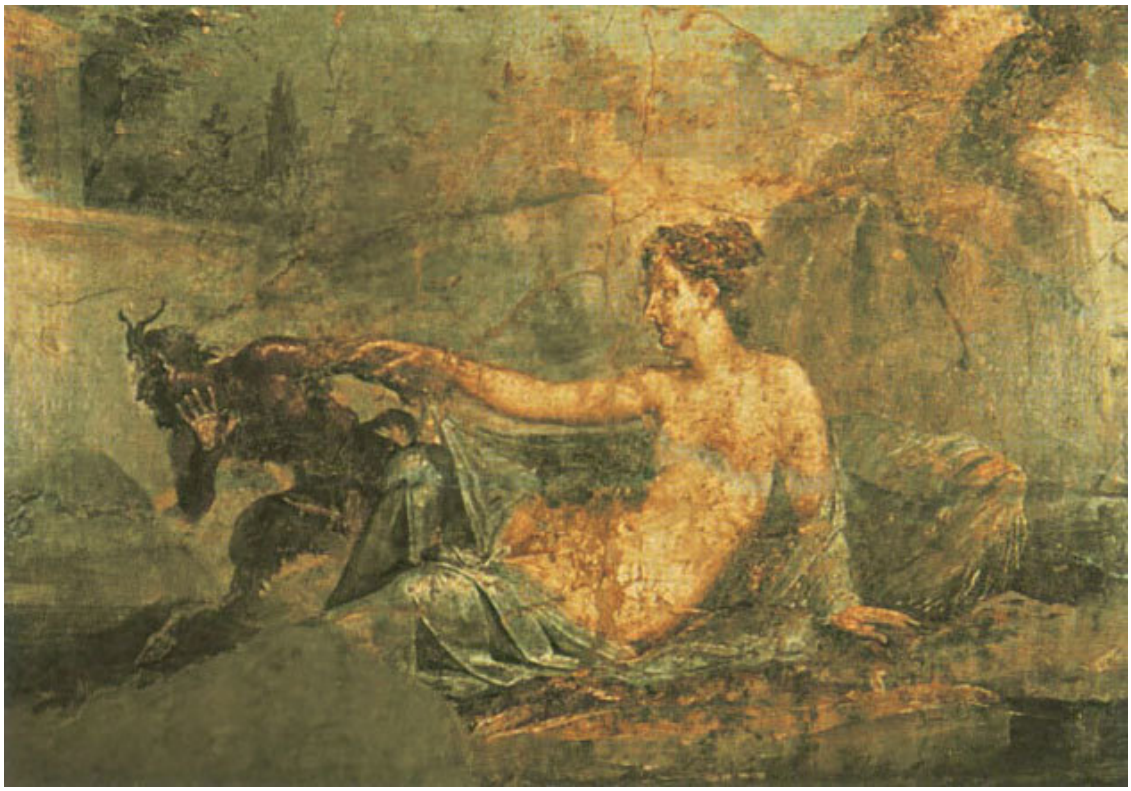
78. Anonymous, *Scene of Banquet in Open Air*, Pompeii, 1st century C. E. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples (Italy).

79. Anonymous, *Mercury with Many Penises*, c. 10 °C. E. Pompeii (Italy).

80. Anonymous, *Phallic Tintinnabulum,* 1st century C. E. Bronze. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples (Italy).

81. Anonymous, *Phallic Tintinnabulum.* Bronze. Pompeii (Italy).

82. Anonymous, *Erotic Scene from the Suburban Baths of Pompeii*.

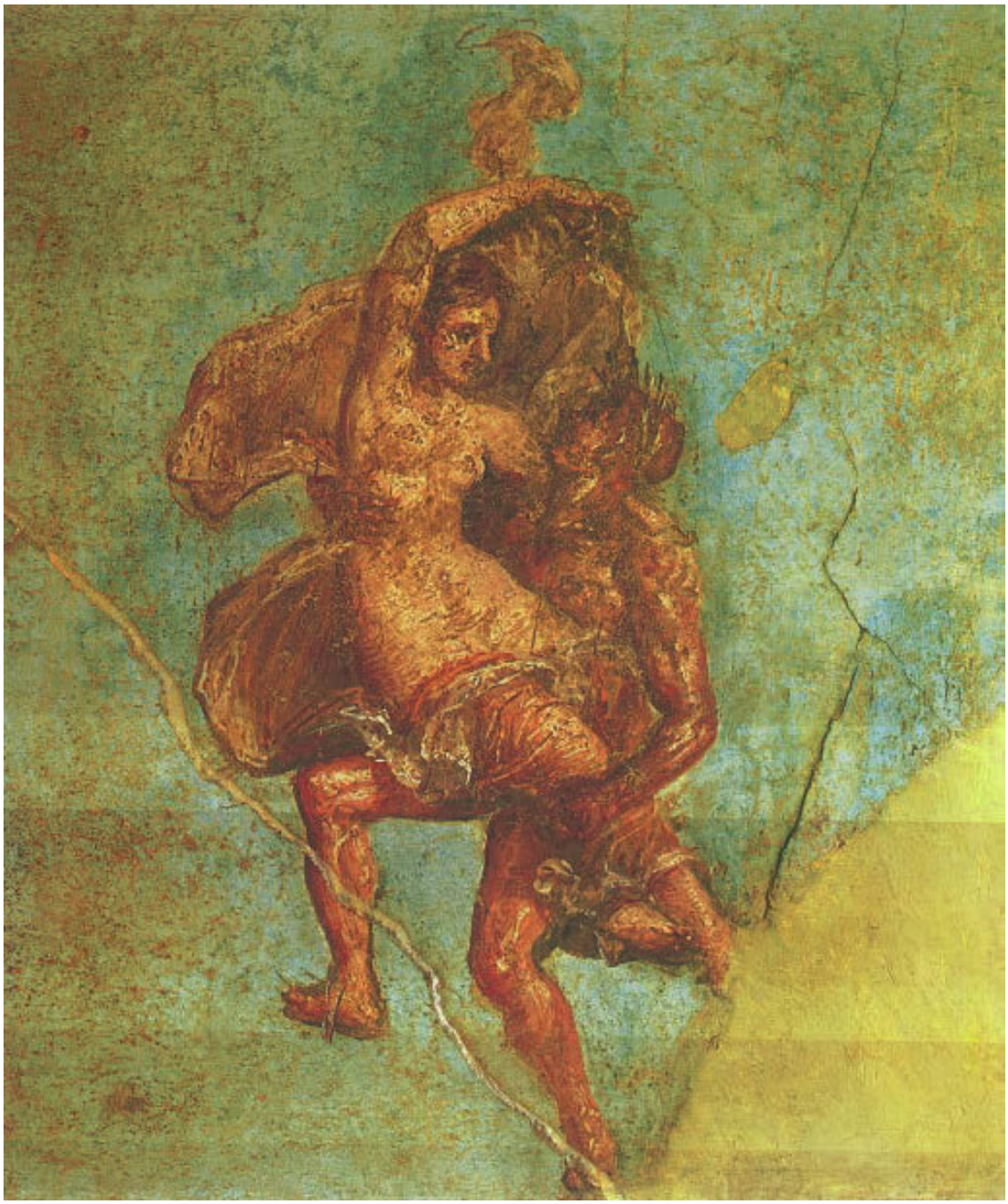


83. Anonymous, *Pan with Hermaphroditus,* atrium of the House of Dioscuri, Nero's reign. Wall painting from Pompeii. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples (Italy).

84. Anonymus, *Erotic Frieze*. Greek Antiquity.

85. Anonymous. *Marble low-relief.* The Tomb of the Bulls, Tarquinia (Italy).

86. Anonymous, *Leda and the Swan*, 3rd century C. E. Mosaic. Museum of Nicosia, Nicosia (Cyprus).



87. Anonymous, *Erotic Scene*. Fresco. Wall painting from Pompeii (Italy).

88. Anonymous, *Priapus*, 10 °C. E. Fresco. Wall painting from Pompeii (Italy).

89. Anonymous, *Faunus*, c. 10 °C. E. Pompeii (Italy).

90. Anonymous, *Statue of Antinous, Favourite of Emperor Hadrian*, c. 130–138 C. E. Marble, h: 199 cm. Archaeological Museum of Delphi, Delphi (Greece).

91. Anonymous, *Artemis of Ephesus,* 2nd century C. E. Bronze and alabaster. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples (Italy).

92. Anonymous, *Phalli*, 30 °C. E. Delos (Greece).

The Middle Ages: A Return to Prudery

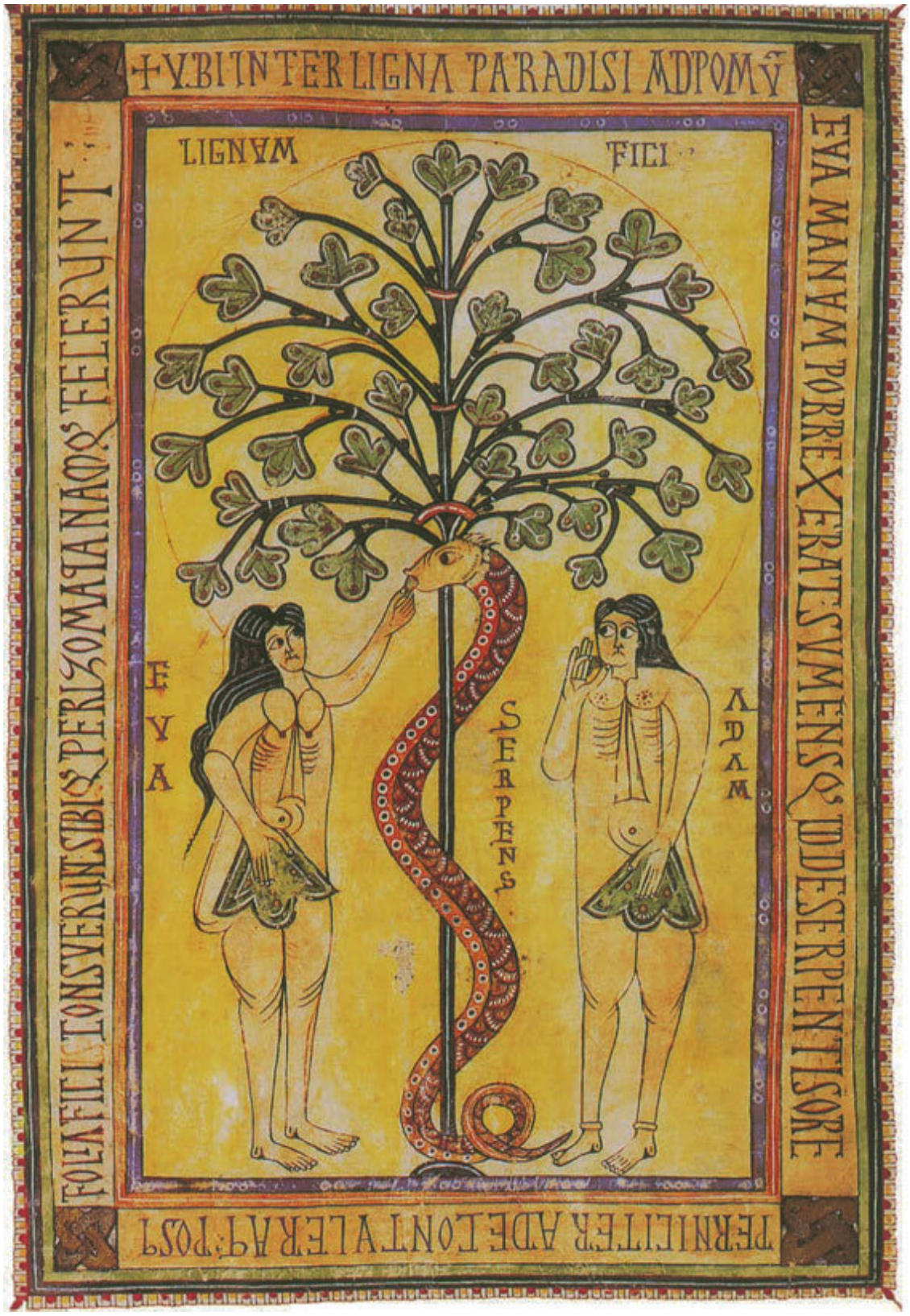
93. Anonymous, *Ariadne and her Cortege,* early 6th century C. E. Ivory, 40 × 14 cm. Musée national du Moyen Age, Thermes de Cluny, Paris (France).

On the whole, the rise of Christianity in Europe had a repressive effect on the development of erotic art. Although the early years of Christianity were congruent with Late Antiquity and with the ideals of that time, Christian theology soon began to effect changes in attitudes towards both sexuality and art. In the late fourth and early fifth centuries, Saint Augustine (known as one of the "Four Fathers of the Latin Church") established some of the basic theological beliefs that were to remain dominant for centuries to come. For Augustine, lust was among the gravest of sins, and had led to the original sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Augustine's repeated condemnations of lust and his advocacy of chastity created the belief that the body was a vehicle for sin. Sexual representations, and sexuality in general, were thus surrounded with guilt. In fact, among the few specific representations of sexuality in the Middle Ages were symbolic depictions of the sin of lust, personified as a nude figure (usually a woman) with a toad biting at the genitals, and sometimes with snakes biting the breasts.

Medieval images of nude figures were nearly always connected with sin, especially in the case of Adam and Eve. Shown in the Garden, they were most commonly depicted after the Temptation, when they showed shame at their nudity by trying to cover themselves. Among the most famous medieval nudes is the Romanesque lintel sculpture at the Cathedral of Saint-Lazare at Autun in which Eve reclines, reaching behind to grasp the forbidden fruit. Such highly stylised representations were typical of medieval art. For most of the era the Church focused on preparing Christians for the afterlife. Entry into Heaven required the avoidance of the myriad sins of the earthly realm. As a constant source of temptation and a mere stopping place on the way to one's ultimate redemption, accurate representation of the world (and particularly our sinful bodies) was hardly encouraged.

Such attitudes began to change in the late Middle Ages, particularly following the example of Saint Francis in the thirteenth century. Francis taught that the entire world was God's divine creation, and our bodies were made in God's image and were thus divine. This began a moderation of Augustine's prudish teachings about human bodies that led to the more naturalistic imagery of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Subject matter remained focused on religion, but was increasingly illusionistic. The Italian painter Giotto was the most famous technical innovator in this regard, but the Limbourg Brothers, working for the Dukes of Burgundy in France, showed a greater degree of realism in their subjects.

In this period when Europe was rarely interested in sexual subjects, India saw erotic art on a scale never rivalled before or since. At a time when Judeo-Christian taboo reigned over sexuality in European art and society, India, by contrast, took a radically unrestrained approach to sexuality, as evidenced by the free exploration of sexual positions in the *Kama Sutra* and the presence of erotic art on a scale never rivalled before or since. Later, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Chandela Dynasty of rulers in central India built dozens of temples at Khajuraho that prominently featured groups of figures in an enormous variety of sexual positions. While the specific purpose of these figures remains unclear, many varieties of Hinduism revered sexuality as sacred; some devotional acts involved worship of the *linga*, a stylised penis. These Hindu sculptures are among the most famous and explicit examples of erotic art of any time.

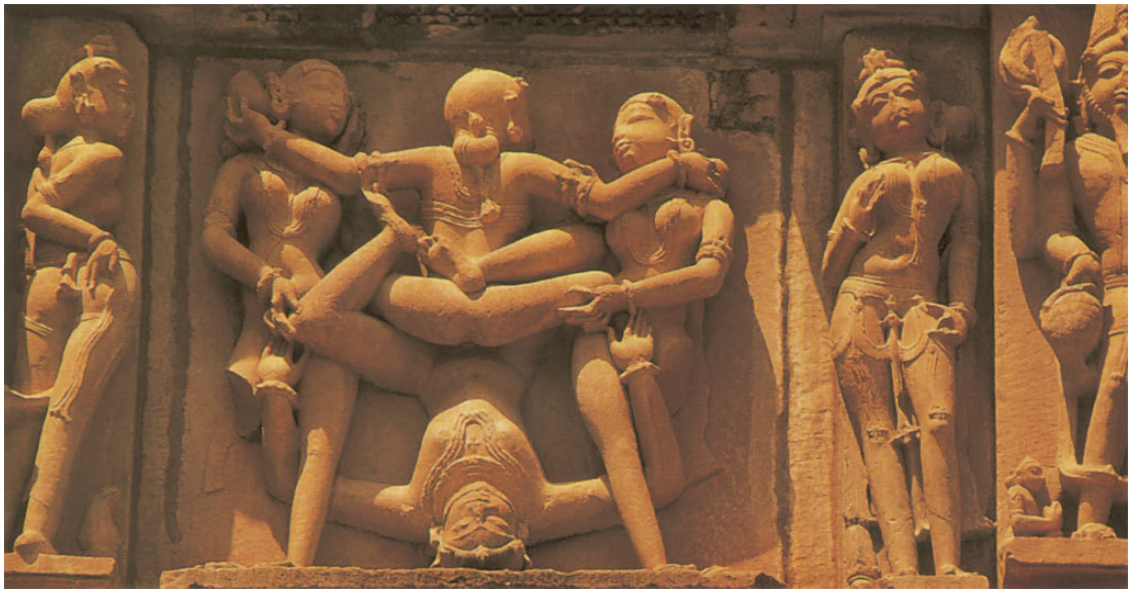


94. Anonymous, *Adam and Eve with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil* (miniature from the *Codex Aemilianensis*), 994. Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo, Escorial (Spain).

95. Anonymous, *Vrikshadhirudhakam*, Kalinga, Konarak, Orissa, Mid-12th century. Stone. Private Collection.

96. Anonymous, *Torso of Apsara*, Kiradu, Rajasthan, 11th century. Stone. Sardar Museum, Jodhpur (India).

97. Anonymous, *Linga within a Ring,* 11th century. Silver, h: 27.5 cm.



98. Anonymous, *Erotic Posture*, Vishvanath Temple, Upper Band of the North Wall, c. 950. Sandstone. Khajuraho (India).

99. Gislebertus, *Eve's Temptation* (Lintel from the North Portal of the Saint-Lazare Cathedral, Autun), c. 1130. Limestone, 72 × 131 cm. Musée Rolin, Autun (France).

100. Nino Pisano, *La Madonna del Latte*, c. 1345. Polychrome marble, h: 91 cm. Museo Nazionale de San Matteo, Pisa (Italy).

101. Giotto (Giotto di Bondone), *Hell* (detail from *Last Judgment*), 1304–1306. Fresco, 1000 × 840 cm. Capella degli Scrovegni, Padua (Italy).

GIOTTO (Giotto di Bondone)
(Vespignano, 1267 – Florence, 1337)

His full name was Ambrogiotto di Bondone, but he is known today, as he was in his own time, by the contraction, Giotto, a word which has come to stand for almost all the great things that art has accomplished. In his own day Giotto's fame as a painter was supreme; he had numerous followers, and these *Giotteschi*, as they were styled, perpetuated his methods for nearly a hundred years. In 1334, he designed the beautiful *Campanile* (bell tower), which stands beside the cathedral in Florence, and represents a perfect union of strength and elegance, and was partly erected in his lifetime. Moreover, the sculptured reliefs which decorate its lower part were all from his designs, though he lived to execute only two of them. Inspired by French Gothic sculpture, he abandoned the stiff presentations of the subjects as in Byzantine styles and advanced art towards more realistic presentation of contemporary figures and scenes so as to be more narrative. His breakthrough influenced subsequent development in Italian art. His significant

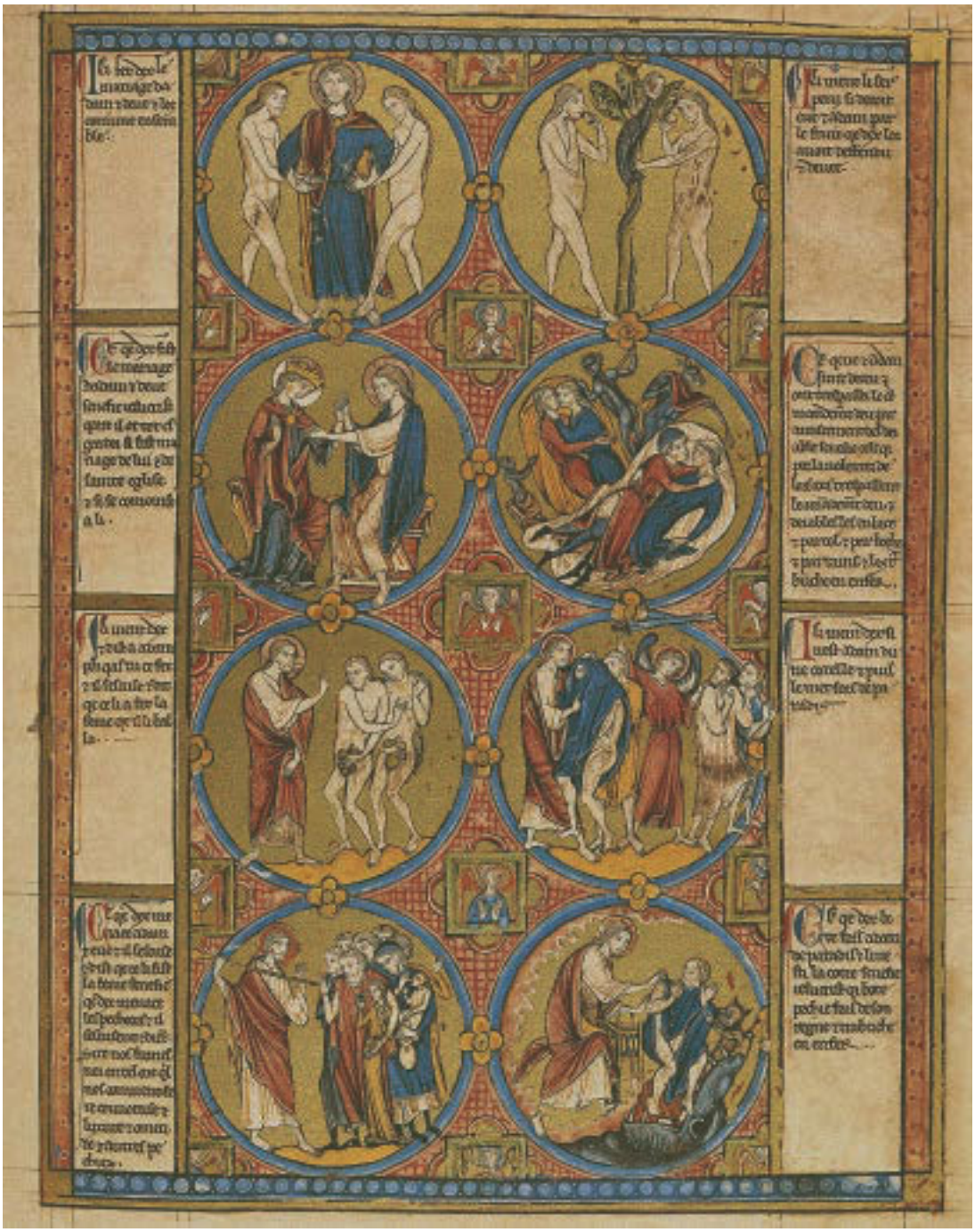
departure from past presentations of the Maestà, starting around 1308 (in *Madonna di Ognissanti*), brought to it his knowledge of architecture and its perspectives. However, the disproportion of subjects in the presentation is a device intended to rank the subjects by their importance, as was done in Byzantine icons.

Thus, architect, sculptor, painter, friend of Dante and of other great men of his day, Giotto was the worthy forerunner of that galaxy of brilliant men who populated the later days of the Italian Renaissance.

102. Anonymous, Illuminated Manuscript. Middle Ages.

103. Memmo di Filippuccio, *The Bedroom*, c. 1318. Museo Civico, San Gimignano (Italy).

104. Anonymous, *The King Wenceslas and the Bathers* (miniature from the *Bulle d'Or* of the Emperor Charles IV), 1400. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (Austria).



105. Anonymous, *Adam and Eve and Sodomites*, from the *Bible moralisée*, 13th-14th century. Manuscript. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (Austria).

106. Anonymous, Illuminated Manuscript. Middle Ages.

107. Guyart des Moulins, *The Historical Bible*, volume one, illustration to the Book of Daniel *(Susanna and the Elders in the Garden)*, Paris, Third quarter of the 14th century. Parchment, 45.5 × 31.5 cm.

108. Anonymous, *Young Nun Gathering Penises.* Illuminated Manuscript.

109. Bartholomeus Anglicus, *Book of the Properties of Things (De proprietatibus rerum)*, Paris, c. 1400. Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel (Germany).

110. Arnolfo di Cambio, *Sickman at the Fountain*, sculpture fragment. Marble. Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia (Italy).

111. Anonymous, *Adam* (from the south-side of the Notre-Dame Transept, Paris), c. 1260. Polychrome stone, h: 200 cm. Musée national du Moyen Age, Thermes de Cluny, Paris (France).

This statue of Adam is one of the rare nudes of medieval art. Larger than life-size, this statue originally decorated the exterior of Notre-Dame in Paris. Paired with Eve, it was part of a Last Judgment scene. The nudity of the figure recalls classical prototypes, and the s-shaped pose and sinuous body of Adam owes a particular debt to fourth-century B. C. E. sculptors such as Praxiteles and Lysippos. The soft, unmuscled body, however, does not reflect the classical ideal. Most of the human sculpture of the Middle Ages was clothed in long robes, and a sculptor would have had little opportunity to study the nude. Despite the lack of precedent, however, the sculptor of this piece has captured the human body in detail, showing the anatomy below the surface, especially on the figure's torso.

112. Filippo Calendario, *The Original Sin*, 1340–1355. Marble. Palazzo ducale di Venezia, Venice (Italy).

113. Donatello (Donato di Niccolo Bardi), *David*, c. 1440–1443. Bronze, h: 158 cm. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence (Italy).

Donatello's David *stands, victorious, over the head of the dead giant. He holds the large sword of the giant and wears a hat and boots. The statue caused a small scandal when it was first displayed because of the nudity of the figure. While nudity was not unknown in sculpture, it seems gratuitous here, not required by the subject, as it would be in a portrayal of Adam, for example. David's nudity is also accentuated by his hat and boots, which seem incongruous in the absence of other clothing. The statue is also notable in being cast of bronze, showing the advance in that technology. While the contrapposto stance is derived from classical models, the figure is more feminine looking than male sculptures from the Greek or Roman worlds.*

DONATELLO (Donato di Niccolo Bardi)
(Florence, c. 1386–1466)

Donatello, an Italian sculptor, was born in Florence, and received his initial training in a goldsmith's workshop; he worked for a short time in Ghiberti's studio. Too young to enter the competition for the baptistery gates in 1402, the young Donatello accompanied Brunelleschi when, in disappointment, he left Florence and went to Rome to study the remains of classical art. During this period Brunelleschi undertook his measurements of the Pantheon dome, which enabled him to construct the noble cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence, while Donatello acquired his knowledge of classic forms and ornamentation. The two masters, each in his own sphere, were to become the leading spirits in the art movement of the fifteenth century.

Back in Florence around 1405, he was entrusted with the important commissions for the marble *David* and for the colossal seated figure of *St John the Evangelist*. We find him next employed at Orsanmichele. Between 1412 and 1415, Donatello completed the *St Peter*, the *St George* and the *St Mark.*

Between the completion of the niches for Orsanmichele and his second journey to Rome in 1433, Donatello was chiefly occupied with statuary work for the campanile and the cathedral. Among the marble statues for the campanile are the *St John the Baptist, Habakkuk,* the so-called "Il Zuccone" (Jonah?) and *Jeremiah*.

During this period Donatello executed some work for the baptismal font at San Giovanni in Siena, which Jacopo della Quercia and his assistants had begun in 1416. The relief, *Feast of Herod*, already illustrates the power of dramatic narration and the skill of expressing depth of space by varying the treatment from plastic roundness to the finest *stiacciato*.

In May 1434, Donatello was back in Florence and immediately signed a contract for the marble pulpit on the facade of the Prato cathedral, a veritable bacchanalian dance of half-nude *putti*, the forerunner of the "singing tribune" for the Florence cathedral, on which he worked intermittently from 1433 to 1440.

But Donatello's greatest achievement of his "classic period" is the bronze *David*, the first nude statue of the Renaissance, well-proportioned, superbly balanced, suggestive of Greek art in the simplification of form, and yet realistic, without any striving after ideal proportions.

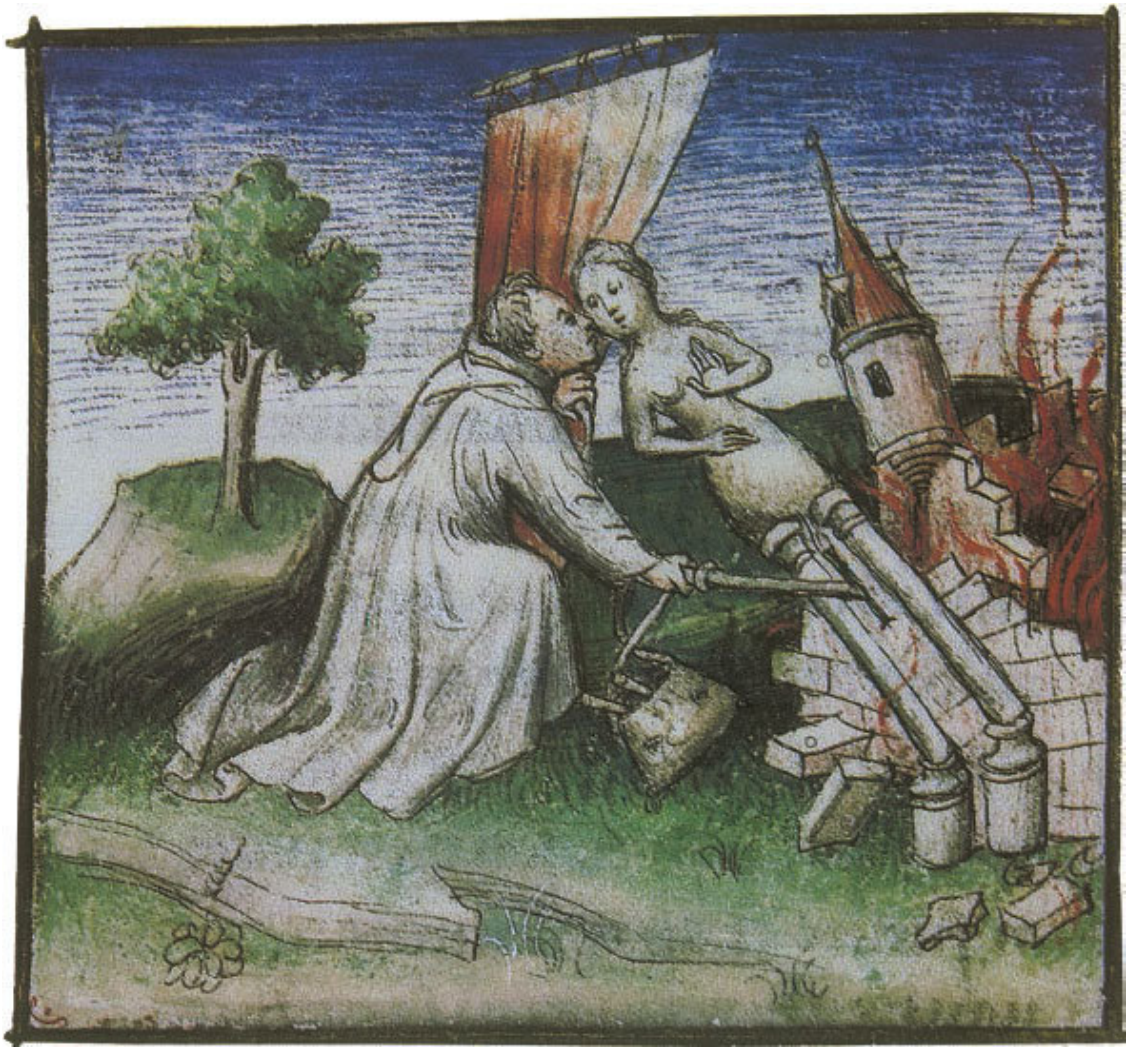
In 1443 Donatello was invited to Padua to undertake the decoration of the high altar of San Antonio. In that year the famous Condottiere Erasmo de' Narni, known as Gattamelata, had died, and it was decided to honour his memory with an equestrian statue. This commission, and the reliefs and figures for the high altar,

kept Donatello in Padua for ten years. The Gattamelata was finished and unveiled in 1453, a powerful and majestic work.

Donatello spent the remaining years of his life in Florence.

114. Anonymous Piedmontese, *Fountain of Youth* (detail), c. 1430. Italy.

115. Anonymous, Illuminated Manuscript. Middle Ages.



116. Anonymous, Illuminated Manuscript. Middle Ages.

117. Limbourg Brothers (Jean, Paul and **Herman),** *Temptations of a Young Christian* (miniature from *The Très Belles Heures of Jean of France, Duke of Berry*), 1408–1409. Ink, tempera, and gold leaf on vellum, 23.8 × 17 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Arts, Cloisters Collection, New York (United States).

118. Anonymous, *The Temptations of Wordly Delights* (miniature from the *Œuvres de Christine de Pisan*), First quarter of the 15th century. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris (France).

119. Anonymous (German School), *The Love Charm*, 15th century. Oil on panel, 24 × 18 cm. Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig (Germany).

120. Pisanello, *Lust*, c. 1430. Graphische Sammlung, Albertina, Vienna (Austria).

121. Limbourg Brothers (Jean, Paul and **Herman),** *The Original Sin* (miniature from *The Très Belles Heures of Jean of France, Duke of Berry*), c. 1417. Musée Condé, Chantilly (France).

122. Valerius Maximus, miniature from the manuscript *Faits et Dit*, middle of the 15th century. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin (Germany).

123. Rogier Van der Weyden, *St Luke Drawing the Virgin*, c. 1440. Oil on canvas, 138.6 × 111.5 cm. Alte Pinakothek, Munich (Germany).

St Luke the Apostle, who is the accredited author of one of the four accepted versions of the New Testament Gospel, is also by tradition the first painter of the Virgin's portrait. Rogier Van der Weyden kept up this tradition in his own picture of St Luke Drawing the Virgin. *This meticulously detailed work, typical of the Flemish tradition, shows Mary seated under a canopy as she attempts to nurse her infant, and Luke in front of her, drawing her face. A panoramic view can be seen between the columns in the background. Nursing-Madonna images had been part of the Marian tradition and lore since the Middle Ages. "Mary's milk" had, indeed, been a source of veneration in the form of a miracle-working substance regarded as one among many holy relics during medieval times, and reverence for it lasted well into Renaissance times. The origins of such a tradition and*

symbolism go back several thousands of years into Antiquity, when Creator Goddesses like Isis were celebrated as symbolic milk-givers in their roles as compassionate and nurturing Universal Mothers. The milky ribbon of stars called the Milky Way was believed to symbolise the Goddess, and Marian lore inherited that popular tradition.

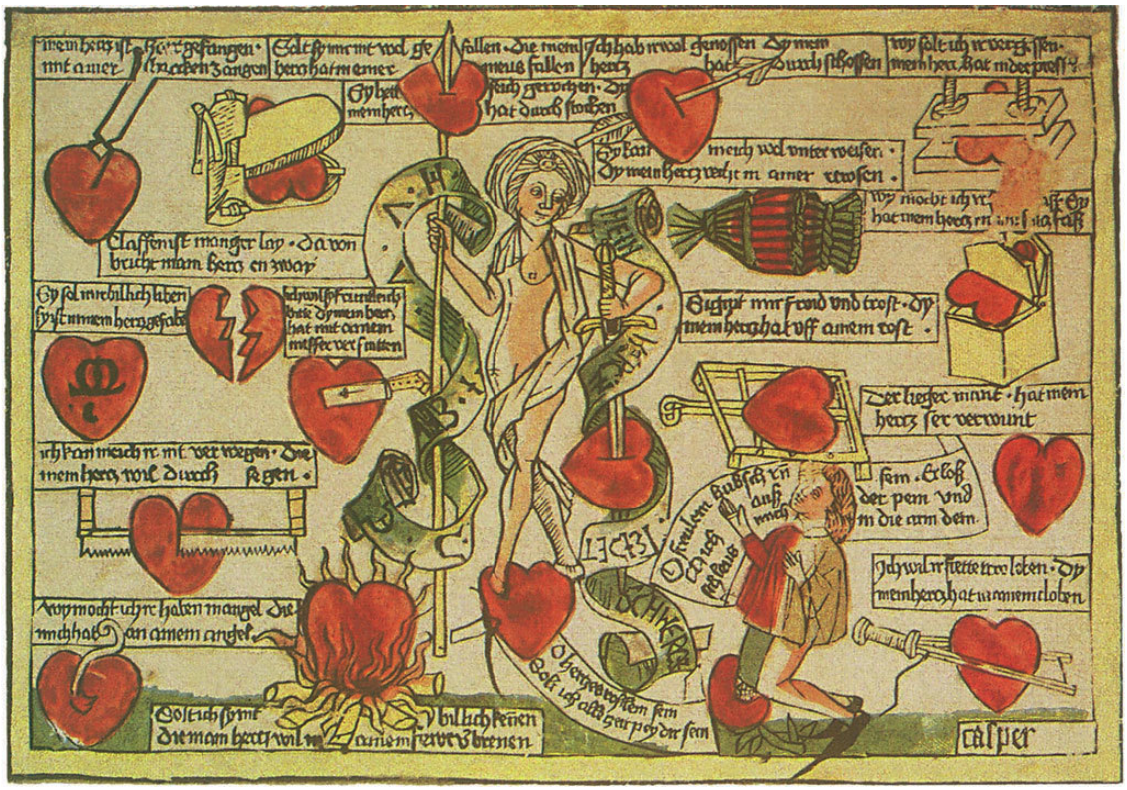
124. Robert Campin, known as the **Master of Flémalle,** *Virgin and Child before a Firescreen*, c. 1440. Tempera on oak, 63.4 × 48.5 cm. The National Gallery, London (United Kingdom).

Robert Campin of Tournai is also called the 'Master of Flémalle', because three paintings now in the Städelsches Kunstinstitut were wrongly supposed to have come from Flémalle. Together

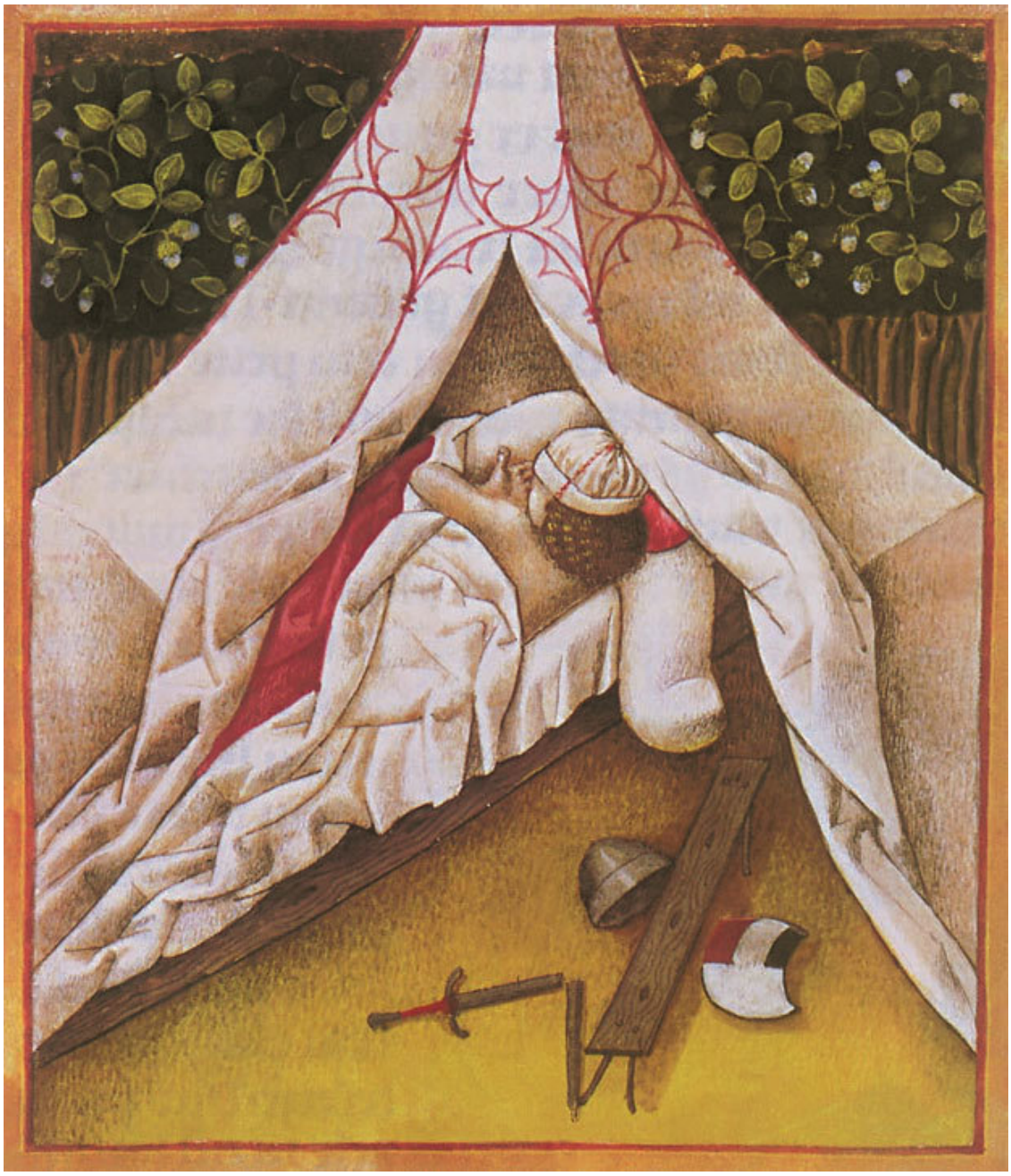
with Van Eyck, he may be considered the founder of the Netherlandish painting of the Early Renaissance. The Virgin seems somehow clumsy, almost plebeian. The halo is replaced by the fire screen, which testifies of the homely detail and down-to-earth realism of the artist.

Rogier VAN DER WEYDEN
(Tournai, 1399 – Brussels, 1464)

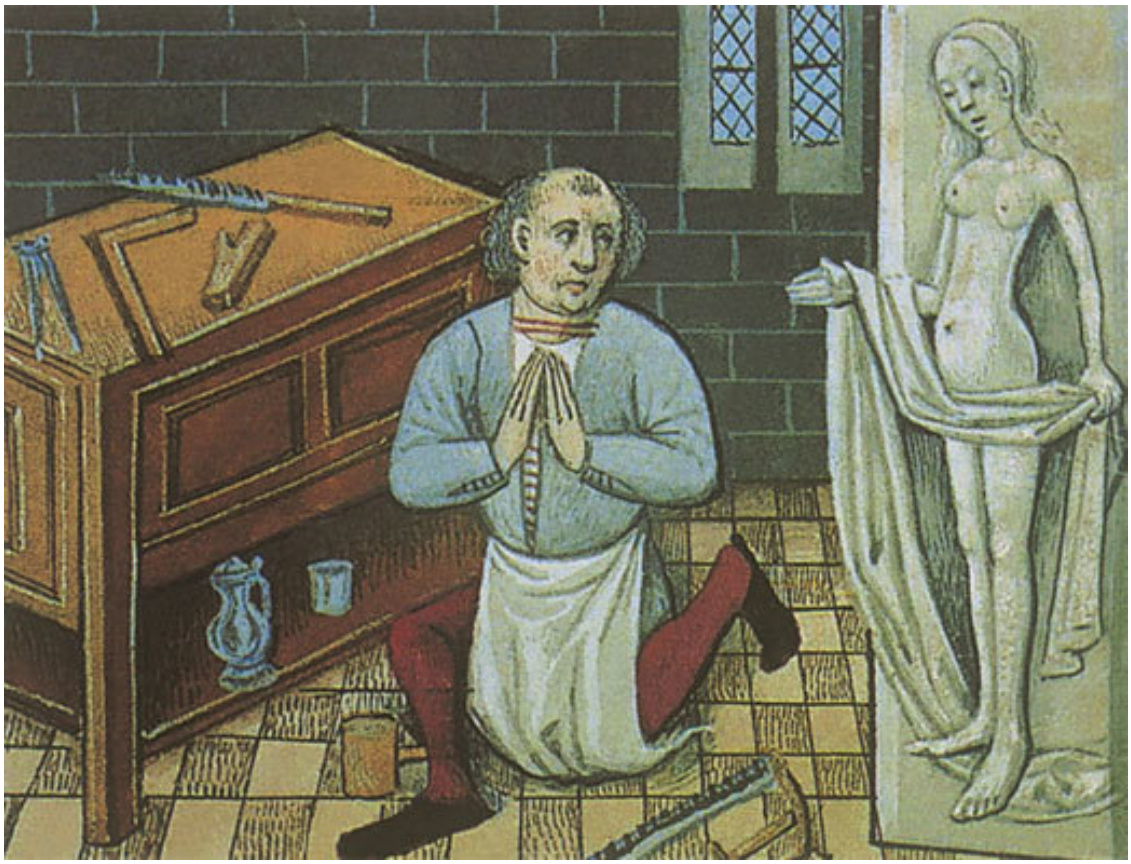
He lived in Brussels where he was the city's official painter (from 1436), but his influence was felt throughout Europe. One sponsor was Philip the Good, an avid collector. Van der Weyden is the only Fleming who truly carried on Van Eyck's great conception of art. He added to it a pathos of which there is no other example in his country except, though with less power and nobility, that of Hugo Van der Goes towards the end of the century. He had a considerable influence on the art of Flanders and Germany. Hans Memling was his most renowned pupil. Van der Weyden was the last inheritor of the Giottesque tradition and the last of the painters whose work is thoroughly religious.



125. Anonymous, Illuminated Manuscript. Middle Ages.



126. Anonymous, Illuminated Manuscript. Middle Ages.



127. Anonymous, Illuminated Manuscript. Middle Ages.

128. Anonymous, Illuminated Manuscript. Middle Ages.

The Renaissance: The Golden Age of the Body 1453–1563

129. Piero di Cosimo, *Portrait of Simonetta Vespucci*, c. 1485. Oil on panel, 57 × 42 cm. Musée Condé, Chantilly (France).

Here is one of the artist's finest portraits. Simonetta Vespucci is depicted as Cleopatra with the asp around her neck. The snake, also being a symbol of immortality, reinforces the strange atmosphere of this work.

Several momentous events mark 1453 as an historical dividing line: the French finally expelled the English to end the Hundred Years War; Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks, extinguishing the last vestiges of the old Roman Empire and establishing Rome as the capital of Christendom; and in art, the Renaissance was in full bloom after synthesising the innovations of the previous two centuries, symbolically concluding the old order of things from Late Antiquity.

As the name suggests, the Renaissance was a re-birth – in this case a re-birth of Classical ideals. Ideologically, Renaissance humanism attempted to reconcile ancient learning with Christian traditions, thus renewing interest in the writings of Ancient authors. The Islamic world had preserved much ancient knowledge, particularly of the Greeks, and these texts were now translated into Latin. Built on the ruins of Antiquity, Italy was the centre of Renaissance thought. Along with the renewed interest in the Antique came an evolution in attitudes towards the body, as Augustinian condemnation of the body yielded before the beauty of ancient nudes. The eroticism of classical myth also shaped this revival.

Among the most famous of Renaissance artists was Botticelli who, under the patronage of Lorenzo de' Medici of Florence, sometimes based his elegantly idealised nudes on specific antique statues and often painted humanistic subjects. His famous *Birth of Venus*, while ostensibly a high-minded humanist allegory, focused on a provocative representation of the nude goddess of love. High Renaissance artists of the next century went even further. Michelangelo developed an ideal of muscular masculine beauty that survives even today. The *Dying Slave* for the tomb of Pope Julius II seems not to be in bondage as was intended, but to be languorously revelling in sexual ecstasy. In Venice, Titian created a parallel ideal of feminine beauty with his reclining nudes, particularly the coy *Venus of Urbino*.

The rest of Europe developed on a slightly different course. Late medieval stylistic traditions lingered, but artists still used erotic subjects. The Flemish artist Bosch painted visionary images based on religious themes, and managed to make sin look worth the punishment in *The The Garden of Earthly Delights*, where nude figures frolic and indulge themselves sexually and sensually in a fantastic, dream-like landscape. German artist Dürer brought Italian ideas to northern Europe. Often called the "Leonardo of the North," Dürer's scientific interests paralleled those of Italian humanists. His nudes often bore an unexpected mix of Italian idealism and northern realism. Dürer's artistic revolution was simultaneous with the Reformation, which perhaps had a greater ultimate impact on art and society than Renaissance humanism.

By the 1520s, High Renaissance idealism had evolved into Mannerism. The refined court culture of Europe provided an educated audience for an art appealing to complex and sophisticated tastes. Mannerist artists such as Bronzino employed exquisite artifice in works such as *Allegory with Venus and Cupid* – a subject so complex and mysterious that its intended meaning is still uncertain. What is clear is the obvious, the transgressive eroticism of a nude Venus in a sexual embrace with her own son. Mannerist artists commonly used eroticism as a means to increase the complexity of their work. With sexuality and erotic bodies on such open display, a reaction was probably inevitable. The Catholic Church responded militantly to the rise of Protestantism with the Counter-Reformation and re-asserted traditional Church doctrines – including strictures against nudity and sexual expression. The Renaissance adulation of the body seemed to have reached an end.

130. Jean Fouquet, *The Virgin and Child Surrounded by Angels* (detail from the *Melun Diptych*), c. 1450–1460. Oil on canvas, 94 × 85 cm. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, Antwerp (Belgium).

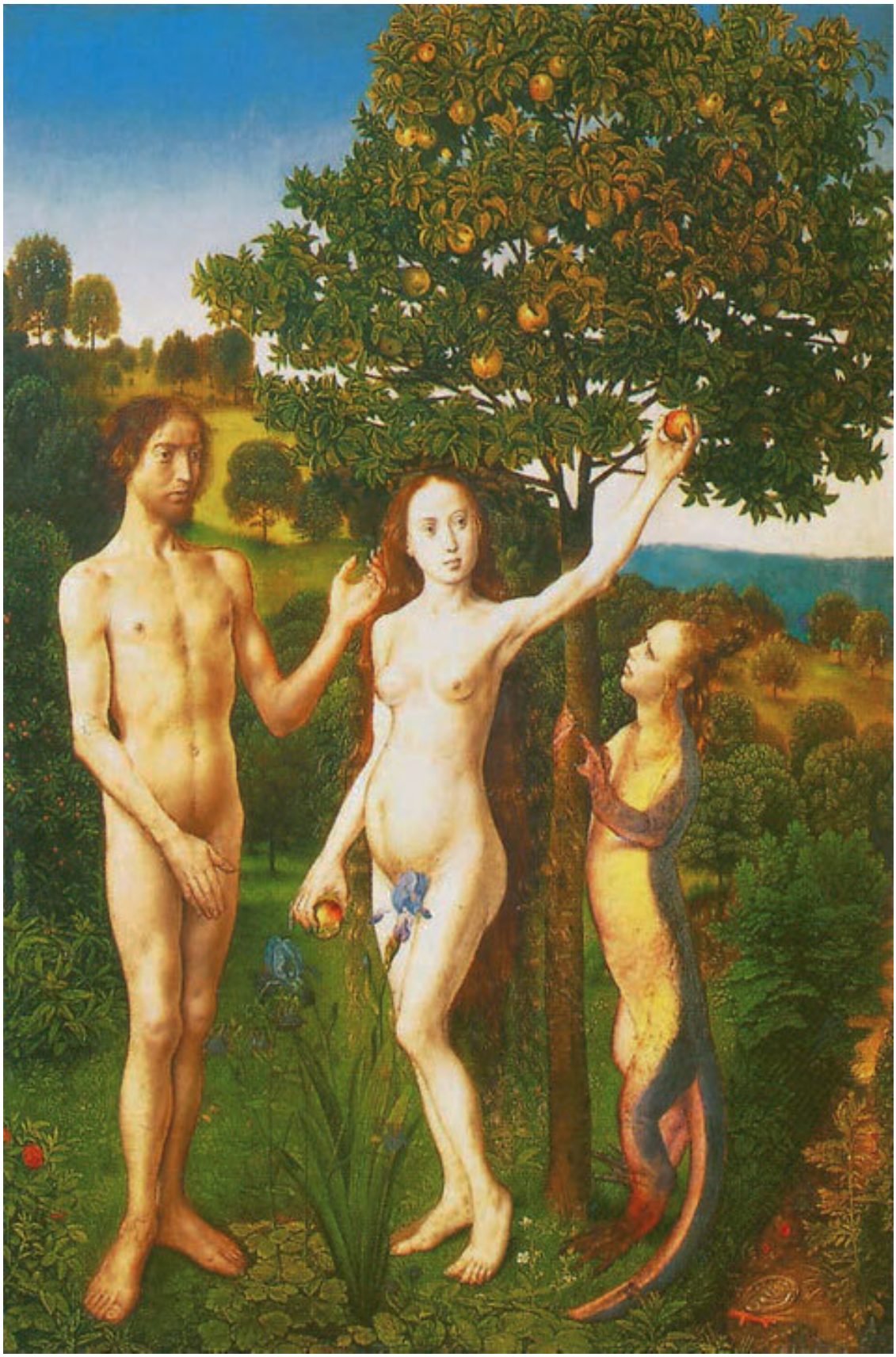
The particularity of this painting is due to its geometric composition, set in a convex pentagon often used by Fouquet. The volume given accentuates the sculptural aspect of this Virgin whose face was inspired by Agnes Sorel (the mistress of Charles VII). The diptych assembles the portrait of a Virgin with the one of the patrons in prayer in front of his protector saint.

Jean FOUQUET
(Tours, 1420–1481)

A painter and illuminator, Jean Fouquet is regarded as the most important French painter of the fifteenth century. Little is known about his life but it is quite sure that he executed, in Italy, the portrait of Pope Eugenius IV. Upon his return to France, he introduced Italian Renaissance elements into French painting. He was the court painter to Louis XI. Whether he worked on miniatures rendering the finest detail, or on larger scale in panel paintings, Fouquet's art had the same

monumental character. His figures are modelled in broad planes defined by lines of magnificent purity.

131. Dirk Bouts, *Virgo Lactans*, c. 1460. Illustration, 29 × 20 cm. Museo Correr, Venice (Italy).



132. Hugo Van der Goes, *Diptych: The Fall of Man and the Lamentation*, c. 1470–1475. Tempera on wood, 32.3 × 21.9 cm. Kunsthistoriches Museum, Vienna (Austria). *Contemporary of Piero della Francesca, Van der Goes is resolute to depict reality while using refined colours.*

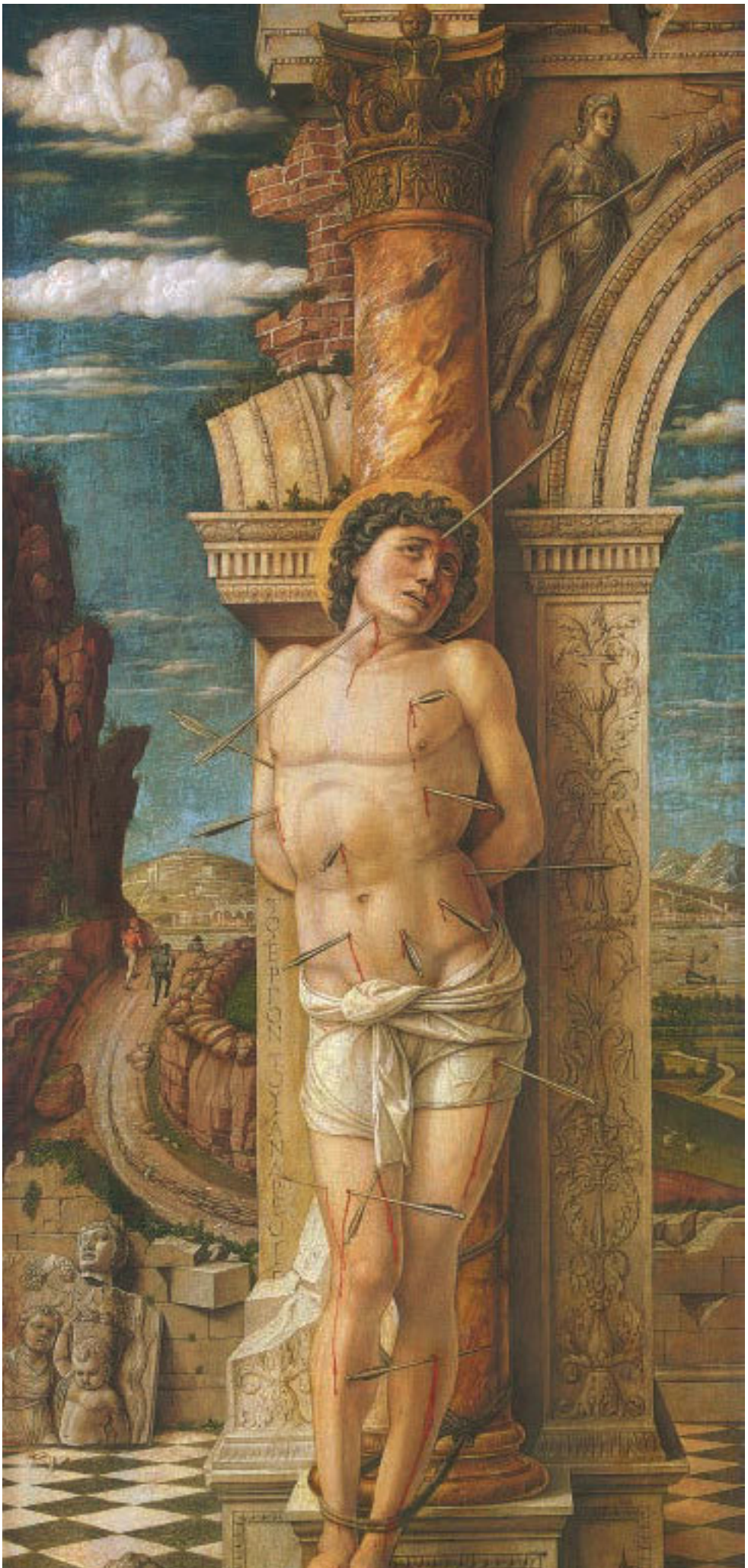
His painting is more and more illusionist here and betrays the artist's like for details and depiction of light.

133. Antonello da Messina, *St Sebastian*, 1476. Panel transposed on canvas, 171 × 85 cm. Gemäldegalerie, Dresden (Germany).

Antonello da MESSINA
(Messina, 1430–1479)

If little is known about his life, the name of Antonello da Messina corresponds to the arrival of a new technique in Italian painting; oils. He used them especially in his portraits where they were very popular in his day, such as *Portrait of a Man* (1475).

Now, if this appears to be not exactly true, still his work influenced Venetian painters. His work was a combination of Flemish technique and realism with typically Italian modelling of forms and clarity of spatial arrangement. Also, his practice of building form with colour, rather than line and shade, greatly influenced the subsequent development of Venetian painting.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134. Andrea Mantegna, *St Sebastian*, c. 1455–1460. Tempera on panel, 68 × 30 cm. Kunsthistoriches Museum, Vienna (Austria).

Andrea MANTEGNA
(Isola di Carturo, 1431 – Mantua, 1506)

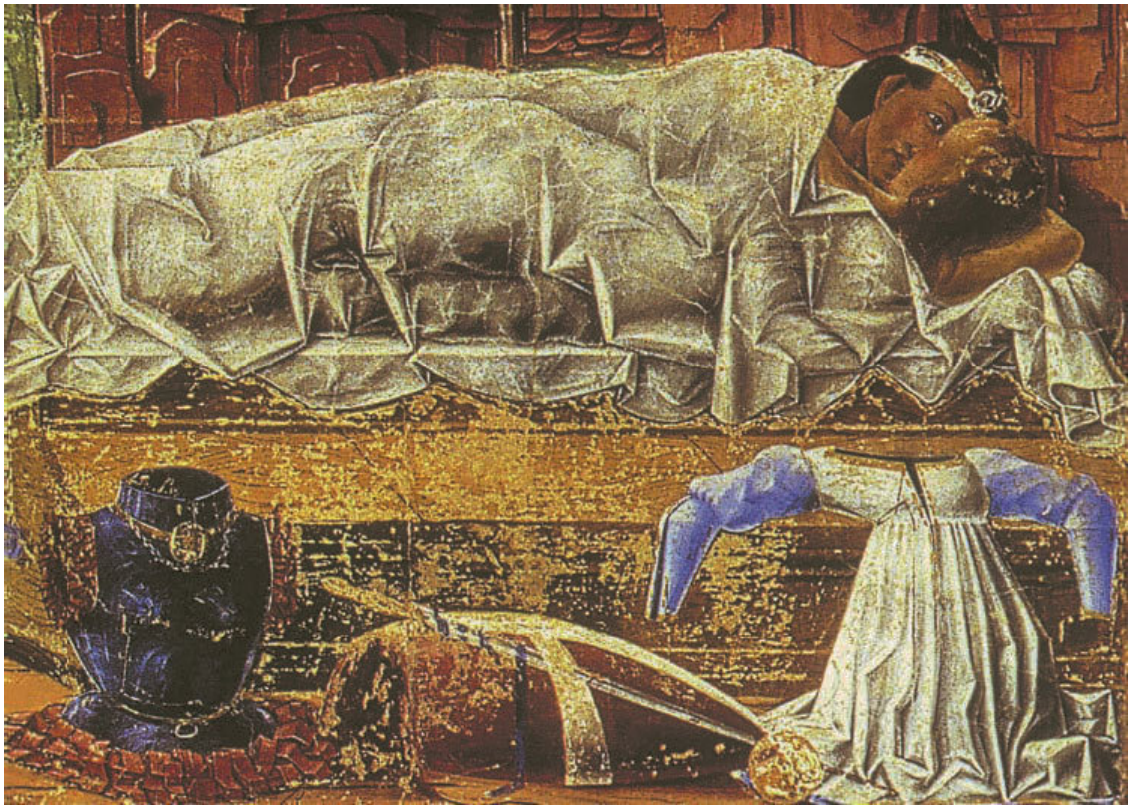
Mantegna; humanist, geometrist, archaeologist, of great scholastic and imaginative intelligence, dominated the whole of northern Italy by virtue of his imperious personality. Aiming at optical illusion, he mastered perspective. He trained in painting at the Padua School where Donatello and Paolo Uccello had previously attended. Even at a young age commissions for Andrea's work flooded in, for example the frescos of the Ovetari Chapel of Padua.

In a short space of time Mantegna found his niche as a modernist due to his highly original ideas and the use of perspective in his works. His marriage with Nicolosia Bellini, the sister of Giovanni, paved the way for his *entrée* into Venice.

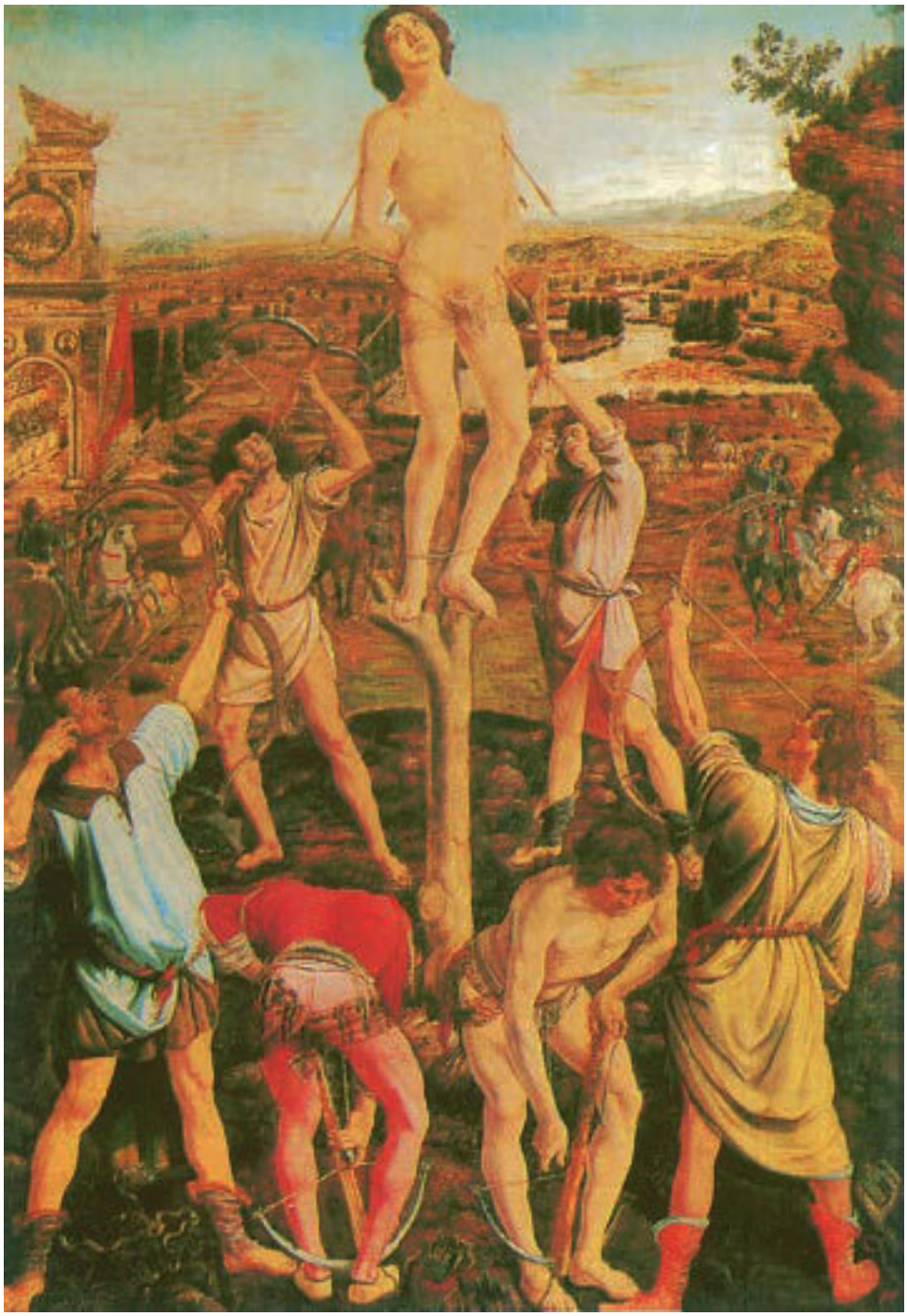
Mantegna reached an artistic maturity with his *Pala San Zeno*. He remained in Mantua and became the artist for one of the most prestigious courts in Italy – the Court of Gonzaga. Classical art was born.

Despite his links with Bellini and Leonardo da Vinci, Mantegna refused to adopt their innovative use of colour or leave behind his own technique of engraving.

135. Andrea Mantegna, *St Sebastian*, c. 1475–1485. Tempera on canvas, 275 × 142 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).



136. Ercole de' Roberti, *The Month of September: The Love between Mars and Venus* (detail), c. 1470. Fresco. Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara (Italy). *The pyramidal composition and the attention paid to the quality of the drawing are characteristic of the Florentine researches at the time.*



137. Antonio del Pollaiuolo, *Martyrdom of St Sebastian*, 1475. Oil on poplar, 291.5 × 202.6 cm. The National Gallery, London (United Kingdom).

138. Hans Memling, *Vanity* (central panel of the *Triptych of Terrestrial Vanity and Celestial Redemption*), c. 1490. Oil on wood, 20 × 13 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg (France).

Hans MEMLING
(Seligenstadt, 1433 – Bruges, 1494)

Little is known of Memling's life. It is surmised that he was a German by descent but the definite fact of his life is that he painted at Bruges, sharing with the Van Eycks, who had also worked in that city, the honour of being the leading artists of the so-called 'School of Bruges'. He carried on their method of painting, and added to it a quality of gentle sentiment. In his case, as in theirs, Flemish art, founded upon local conditions and embodying purely local ideals, reached its fullest expression.

139. Sandro Botticelli (Alessandro di Mariano Filipepi), *Primavera*, c. 1478. Tempera on panel, 203 × 314 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence (Italy).

The painting, sometimes called Primavera*, but now and again also* Realm of Venus*, is Botticelli's most celebrated masterpiece. This work is one in a series of paintings depicting heathen myths and legends in the form of antique gods and heroes. Just as convincingly and naively, and with the same enthusiasm, Botticelli makes the beauty of the naked human body his task. In the large presentation of* Primavera *he does indeed describe an antique subject, stipulated by his clients and advisers, but he penetrates it with his mind, his imagination and his artistic sense. The composition is built up in nine, almost life-size figures in the foreground of an orange grove. The individual figures are borrowed from Poliziano's poem about the great tournament in the spring of 1475, the Giostra, in which Giuliano was declared the winner. The artistic appearance of* Primavera *which, apart from the dull old layer of varnish, is well preserved, deviates from most of Botticelli's paintings in so far as that the local colours are rather secondary. This is how the artist tried to bring out the full beauty of the figures' bodies, which, apart from Venus and Primavera, are more or less naked. He enhances this with the deep green background, covered with flowers and fruit. There, where local colours occur to a greater extent as, for example, in the short red robe of Mercury, the pale blue decoration of the god of wind or the blue dress and red cloak of Venus in the middle, the colours have been strongly tinted with gold ornaments and glaze.*

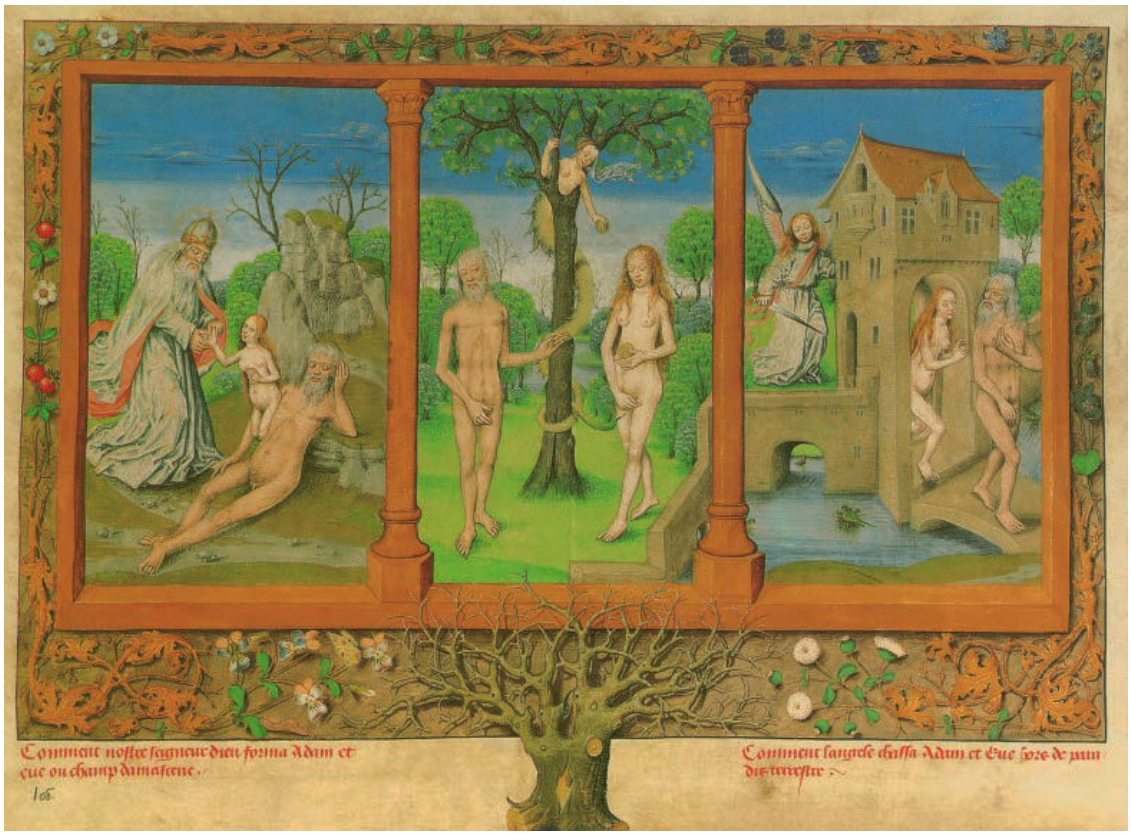
Sandro BOTTICELLI (Alessandro di MARIANO FILIPEPI)
(Florence, 1445–1510)

He was the son of a citizen in comfortable circumstances, and had been, in Vasari's words, "instructed in all such things as children are usually taught before they choose a calling." However, he refused to give his attention to reading, writing and accounts, continues Vasari, so that his father, despairing of his ever becoming a scholar, apprenticed him to the goldsmith Botticello: whence came the name by which the world remembers him. However, Sandro, a stubborn-featured youth with large, quietly searching eyes and a shock of yellow hair – he has left a portrait of himself on the right-hand side of his picture of the *Adoration of the Magi* – would also become a painter, and to that end was placed with the Carmelite monk Fra Filippo Lippi. But he was a realist, as the artists of his day had become, satisfied with the joy and skill of painting, and with the study of the beauty and character of the human subject instead of religious themes. Botticelli made rapid progress, loved his master, and later on extended his love to his master's son, Filippino Lippi, and taught him to paint, but the master's realism scarcely touched Lippi, for Botticelli was a dreamer and a poet.

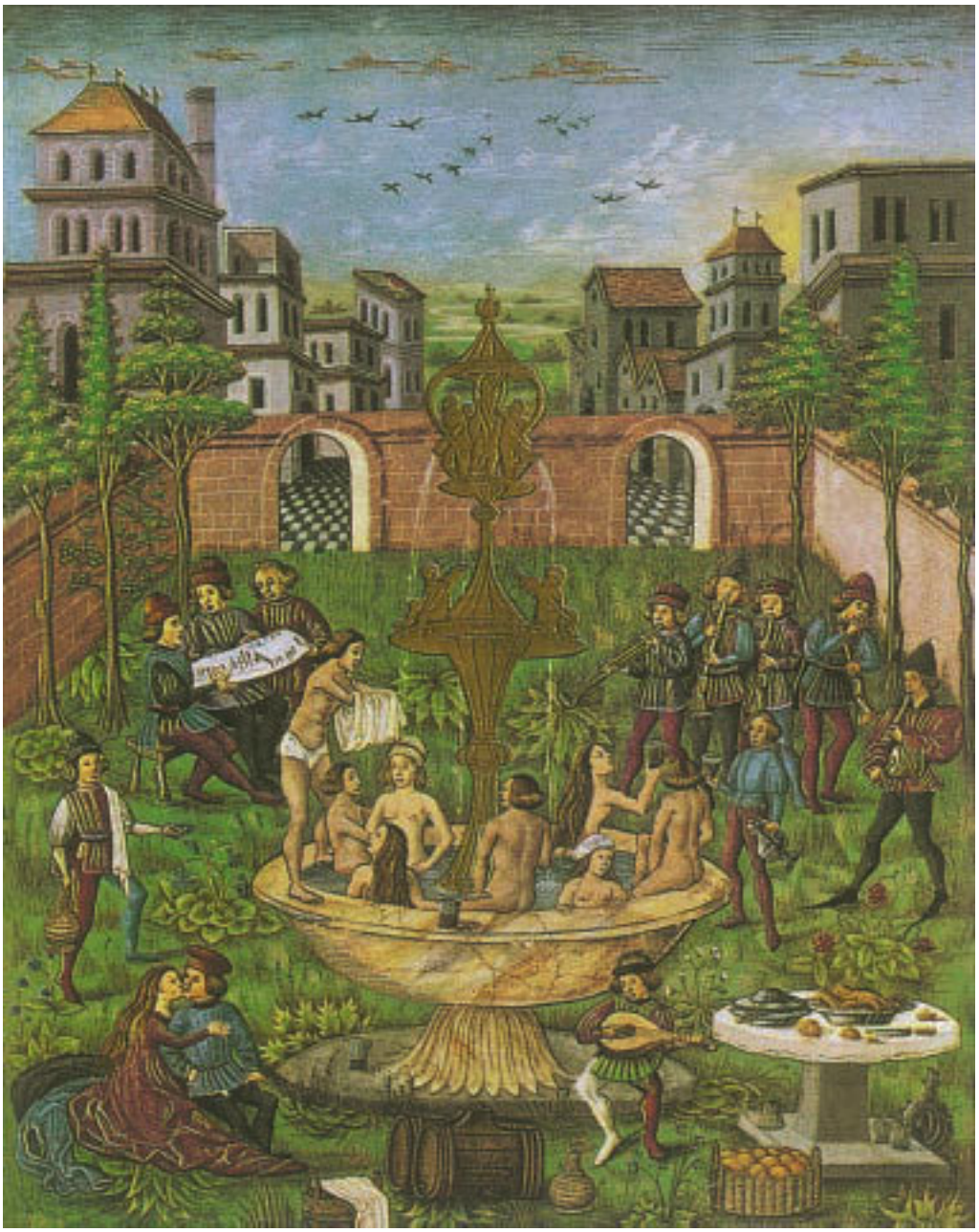
Botticelli is a painter not of facts, but of ideas, and his pictures are not so much a representation of certain objects as a pattern of forms. Nor is his colouring rich and lifelike; it is subordinated to form, and often rather a tinting than actual colour. In fact, he was interested in the abstract possibilities of his art rather than in the concrete. For example, his compositions, as has just been said, are a pattern of forms; his figures do not actually occupy well-defined places in a well-defined area of space; they do not attract us by their suggestion of bulk, but as shapes of form, suggesting rather a flat pattern of decoration. Accordingly, the lines which enclose the figures are chosen with the primary intention of being decorative.

It has been said that Botticelli, "though one of the worst anatomists, was one of the greatest draughtsmen of the Renaissance." As an example of false anatomy we may notice the impossible way in which the Madonna's head is attached to the neck, and other instances of faulty articulation and incorrect form of limbs may be found in Botticelli's pictures. Yet he is recognised as one of the greatest draughtsmen: he gave to 'line' not only intrinsic beauty, but also significance. In mathematical language, he resolved the movement of the figure into its factors, its simplest forms of expression, and then combined these various forms into a pattern which, by its rhythmical and harmonious lines, produces an effect upon our imagination, corresponding to the sentiments of grave and tender poetry that filled the artist himself.

This power of making every line count in both significance and beauty distinguishes the great master-draughtsmen from the vast majority of artists who used line mainly as a necessary means of representing concrete objects.



140. Anonymous, *Universal Chronology, The Creation of Eve, The Original Sin, Adam and Eve Expelled from Paradise*, Bruges, c. 1480. National Library of Russia, St Petersburg (Russia).



141. Ambrogio and **Cristoforo de Predis,** *Fountain of Love*, c. 1490. Biblioteca Estense, Modena (Italy).

142. Sandro Botticelli (Alessandro di Mariano Filipepi), *The Birth of Venus*, 1484–1486. Tempera on canvas, 180 × 280 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence (Italy).

The title announces the influence here of the Roman classics, as it selects the Roman name, rather than the Greek name for the goddess of love – Aphrodite. The geometric centre of the work is the gesture of modesty near the left hand of Venus, the central figure, although the triangular arrangement of the overall work leads our eye to accept her upper torso as central. Her long tresses and flowing garments throughout make the overall geometric arrangement soft and dynamic. The sides of an equilateral triangle are formed by the bodies of the figures on either side of Venus; the base of the triangle extends beyond the sides of the work, making the painting seem larger than it is (Piet Mondrian will exploit that technique in a minimalist way centuries later). The mature goddess has just been born from the sea, blown ashore by Zephyr (The West Wind), and his abducted nymph Chloris. The stylised waves of the sea bring the shell-boat forward and counter-clockwise to The Hour waiting on the shore. The sea has somehow already provided a ribbon for her hair. Her introspective expression is typical of the central figures in the painter's work (See Portrait of a Man *(1417)). The Hour, symbolising Spring and rebirth, begins to clothe the naked, new-born goddess with an elegant, high fashion robe covered in flowers, similar to her own gown on which there are corn flowers. Several spring flowers are sprinkled throughout the scene: orange blossoms in the upper right; evergreen myrtle around The Hour's neck and waist; a single blue anemone between The Hour's feet; over two dozen pink roses accompany Zephyr and Chloris. Cattails in the lower left balance the strong verticals of the orange trees. Each of the figures is outlined in thin black lines, characteristic of the artist. Sometimes the artist doesn't follow his outline, but doesn't cover it up either; as we see along the right arm of Venus, the outline has become visible over the years.*

143. Sandro Botticelli (Alessandro di Mariano Filipepi), *Venus and Mars*, c. 1485. Tempera and oil on panel, 69.2 × 173.4 cm. The National Gallery, London (United Kingdom).

144. Pietro Perugino, *St Sebastian*, c. 1490–1500. Oil on wood, 176 × 116 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (France).

Pietro PERUGINO

(Citta della Pieve, 1450 – Perugia, 1523)

Perugino's art, like Fra Angelico's, had its roots in the old Byzantine tradition of painting. The latter had departed further and further from any representation of the human form, until it became merely a symbol of religious ideas. Perugino, working under the influence of his time, restored body and substance to the figures, but still made them, as of old, primarily the symbols of an ideal. It was not until the seventeenth century that artists began to paint landscape for its own sake.

However, the union of landscape and figures counts very much for Perugino, because one of the secrets of composition is the balancing of what artists call the full and empty spaces. A composition crowded with figures is apt to produce a sensation of stuffiness and fatigue; whereas the combination of a few figures with ample open spaces gives one a sense of exhilaration and repose. It is in the degree to which an artist stimulates our imagination through our physical experiences that he seizes and holds our interest. When Perugino left Perugia to complete his education in Florence he was a fellow-pupil of Leonardo da Vinci in the sculptor's *bottegha*. If he gained from the master something of the calm of sculpture, he certainly gained nothing of its force. It is as the painter of sentiment that he excelled; though this beautiful quality is confined mainly to his earlier works. For with popularity he became avaricious, turning out repetitions of his favourite themes until they became more and more affected in sentiment.

145. Hans Memling, *King David Spies on Bathsheba*, 1485–1500. Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart (Germany).

146. Lorenzo di Credi, *Venus*, c. 1493. Oil on panel, 151 × 69 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence (Italy).

147. Andrea Mantegna, *St Sebastian*, c. 1495–1505. Tempera on canvas, 210 × 91 cm. Galleria Franchetti, Ca' d'Oro, Venice (Italy).

148. Pier Jacopo Alari-Bonacolsi, known as **Antico,** *Apollo*, end of the 15th century. Bronze and silver, h: 54.6 cm. Ca' d'Oro, Venice (Italy).

The sculptor Pier Jacopo Alara-Bonacolsi was called "Antico" because of the references to antique sculpture found in his work. He would have not only seen Greek and Roman statues that had recently been rediscovered and curated, but he also made copies of them and even worked on the restoration of some pieces. Classical subjects and forms inform his work. He is best known for small bronzes such as this one of the archer Apollo, a god of the Greek pantheon. Like some of the bronze statues that survive from Antiquity, Antico's bronze are often accented with other metals, such as silver in the eyes or gilding on details. Here, Apollo's cloak, sandals, and his golden hair are gilded, providing a decorative contrast to the duller bronze of the body. Antico took advantage of the technology of his chosen medium and sometimes cast not only the original figurine, but also copies. There are three known versions of this piece.

149. Michelangelo (Michelangelo Buonarroti), *Bacchus*, 1496–1497. Marble, h: 203 cm. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence (Italy).

150. Michelangelo (Michelangelo Buonarroti), *David*, 1501–1504. Marble, h: 410 cm. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Florence (Italy).

151. Albrecht Dürer, *Four Naked Women (The Four Witches)*, 1497. Engraving, 19 × 13.1 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (United States).

Albrecht DURER
(Nuremberg, 1471–1528)

Dürer is the greatest of German artists and most representative of the German mind. He, like Leonardo, was a man of striking physical attractiveness, great charm of manner and conversation, and mental accomplishment, being well grounded in the sciences and mathematics of the day. His skill in draughtsmanship

was extraordinary; Dürer is even more celebrated for his engravings on wood and copper than for his paintings. With both, the skill of his hand was at the service of the most minute observation and analytical research into the character and structure of form. Dürer, however, had not the feeling for abstract beauty and ideal grace that Leonardo possessed; but instead, a profound earnestness, a closer interest in humanity, and a more dramatic invention. Dürer was a great admirer of Luther; and in his own work is the equivalent of what was mighty in the Reformer. It is very serious and sincere; very human, and addressed the hearts and understanding of the masses. Nuremberg, his hometown, had become a great centre of printing and the chief distributor of books throughout Europe. Consequently, the art of engraving upon wood and copper, which may be called the pictorial branch of printing, was much encouraged. Of this opportunity Dürer took full advantage.

The Renaissance in Germany was more a moral and intellectual than an artistic movement, partly due to northern conditions. The feeling for ideal grace and beauty is fostered by the study of the human form, and this had been flourishing predominantly in southern Europe. But Albrecht Dürer had a genius too powerful to be conquered. He remained profoundly Germanic in his stormy penchant for drama, as was his contemporary Mathias Grünewald, a fantastic visionary and rebel against all Italian seductions. Dürer, in spite of all his tense energy, dominated conflicting passions by a sovereign and speculative intelligence comparable with that of Leonardo. He, too, was on the border of two worlds, that of the Gothic age and that of the modern age, and on the border of two arts, being an engraver and draughtsman rather than a painter.

152. Piero di Cosimo, *Venus, Mars and Cupid*, c. 1500. Oil on panel, 72 × 182 cm. Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin (Germany).

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.