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CHAPTER VI

The Decoration of the Houses of Parliament and Church Art

Dr Waagen in his evidence before the Select Committee on Arts and Manufacture in 1835 recommended the employment of painters in public buildings, and stated that the new Houses of Parliament replacing the old building which had burnt down in 1834, would provide an "honourable opportunity" for such decoration, preferably in fresco. 1 The Committee took up Waagen's suggestion, and in the conclusion to Report of 1836 expressed the hope that architecture might be embellished with sculpture and painting "to the advancement of the Arts and the refinement of the people". 2 In 1841 the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, appointed a Select Committee to "take into consideration the Promotion of the Fine Arts of this country, in connexion with the Rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament". 3 This Committee recommended the setting up of a royal commission to be responsible for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament, and this was

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appointed in November, 1841. Prince Albert agreed to be its President, Charles Eastlake its Secretary.

This active involvement of the government in the Fine Arts was the result of the coalescence of three separate, though related, streams of thought. The first was the desire to establish in England a school of history painting, to enhance national prestige, improve the quality of design for manufacture, elevate public taste and morality, and generally disseminate civilization among the masses.

Secondly, there was the conviction that patronage of the higher levels of art must be public, since only the state had the resources for a grand undertaking and since only through public patronage could the pursuit of the national good in art be assured. The modern model of a state with enlightened public patronage was Bavaria, whose king, Ludwig I, was transforming Munich into the art capital of northern Europe.

The Report of the Select Committee of 1841 had indeed referred to the example of Munich, specifically to the decoration of public buildings in that city with fresco. This brings us to the third factor in the scheme for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament: the ambition to emulate modern German artists in their successful revival of fresco. The Select Committee had in fact come about as a result of a motion by Henry Labouchere, President of the Board of Trade, for a small grant for some experiments in fresco technique. The Committee in its Report recommended the use of fresco, although with the cautionary rider that,

4. Ibid., p. 334.
in view of the inexperience of English artists in the medium, there should first be experiments.

The arguments in favour of fresco seemed at the time convincing, more convincing than the arguments against it, which stressed the unsuitability of the London climate and the river site, the ignorance of fresco technique of English artists, and their lack of experience in composing and painting on a grand scale. These were arguments which events sadly justified. But in the 1840s the arguments for fresco seemed much the weightier. Fresco was the most suitable medium for monumental works in public buildings, where painting was integrated with architecture. Fresco was durable and did not reflect light. Fresco would force English artists to concentrate on drawing and to work broadly and simply, since it did not allow niggling detail. The weaknesses and deficiencies of native art would be eliminated and a noble and elevated style of painting achieved. Fresco was morally superior to oil, since it was more difficult and demanding. Moreover, history showed that the decline of fresco was coincident with the decline of art and the sacrifice of "the soul of art" to "mere mechanical power". It was hoped that the experiment in the Houses of Parliament would inspire similar undertakings in other public buildings, and England of the nineteenth century would become like Florence in the fifteenth century or Rome in the sixteenth century. However probably the most influential argument was the revival of fresco by modern German artists.

German examples were constantly referred to in the meetings of the Select Committee of 1841. A number of Committee members and witnesses had seen for themselves the frescoes in Rome, Munich and elsewhere in Germany: Dyce, Eastlake, Henry Bellenden Ker, Thomas Wyse, and William Bankes. Indeed this was probably the main reason for their involvement in the first place. William Bankes had invited Cornelius to London, and during his visit in the autumn of 1841 Eastlake interviewed him about fresco technique and styles. In his capacity as Secretary to the Royal Commission he also communicated with prominent German artists on the subject. It would be fair to say that the fresco experiment in the Houses of Parliament was inspired by recent German, not earlier Italian, frescoes. In the words of one commentator:

By the revival of fresco the painters of Bavaria have acquired a high reputation all over Europe, for it is supposed that with the mode, some of the genius of Masaccio, of Michael Angelo and Raphael has been revived. The German imitations have produced among our lenders a desire for rivalry that the originals by the great Italian masters had failed to do for centuries.

All the same, the taste that was developing for the earlier Italian masters had some influence on the fresco revival in England. Richard Monckton Milnes, in his cross-examination of Eastlake in 1841, suggested to him that the attention of English artists had been directed to the modern German and earlier Italian schools of painting in the previous few years. Eastlake agreed.

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are examples of men involved in the Select Committee of 1841 who were interested in early Italian painting, knowledgeable about the modern Germans, and in favour of fresco. Indeed, since the Germans professed to have been inspired by the early Italians, such a conjunction of interests is hardly surprising. Thus we find Monckton Milnes asking Eastlake:

But do you not think that devotion to the early Italian and German painters, which is perhaps the foundation of the modern school of Germany, has been a great instrument in bringing to perfection the modern school of fresco painting at Munich?

To which Eastlake replied, revealing also his preference for the more ideal art of Italy:

No doubt of it; and I wish there were such a passion in this country, for it may be said to amount to a passion among the Germans; but I would rather that such an enthusiasm existed with regard to Italian works of art, than with regard to the early German works. There is not enough beauty of form in the early German works of art to render them fit objects of imitation.

Another member of the Committee with the same interests was Philip Pusey. He had also been on the Select Committee on Arts and Manufacture of 1835-6, where he had made reference to the "purer and more manly style" and the "more chaste works" of Raphael's contemporaries and predecessors, as opposed to the later and more effeminate schools in Italy.

The questions he asked in 1841 show him to have been decidedly in favour of fresco. Another of the witnesses, William Dyce, also exemplifies this conjunction of a taste for the earlier Italians with a preference for fresco. He was at this time

8. Ibid.
Superintendent of the Government School of Design. Dyce was one of the artists whom Thomas Uwins referred to in 1834 as having "done something towards introducing" fresco in England. However, it does not seem that he had had any practical experience of fresco before 1844.

Still, it must be repeated that the principal influence on the fresco experiment in the Houses of Parliament was the German revival. But interest in the Germans inevitably stimulated interest in the artists who inspired them. Moreover, the work of the Italian fresco painters would have to be studied if the medium was to be introduced into England. And this of course would help foster a more general interest in their art. As a correspondent wrote in the Art-Union in 1842:

> Whatever the practical effect may result to the mechanism of painting, from the interesting discussion lately published in the Art-Union, regarding the vehicles used by ancient painters, it may be the means of calling the attention of your readers to the merits of those early masters, who have been hitherto greatly and unduly overlooked in England.

James Tennistoun, at any rate, believed that the fresco experiment had helped create an awareness of earlier painting. Until "the contemplated decorations of our palace of parliament began to shed a golden light upon historic art", he wrote in 1845, "we doubt if ten Royal Academicians had

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11. In 1844 he wrote to Eastlake: "I have been so occupied with working for more subsistence that I have found it impossible to make a single experiment or to enquire about the means of executing specimens of fresco until this moment" (Letter, 2 May, 1844. Dyce Papers. loc. cit., p.747).

studied Masaccio or had heard of Pinturicchio or Ghirlandaio."

The Royal Commission, conscientious in all things, was particularly assiduous in its investigations into painting media. Official findings were published as appendices to reports. Eastlake was extraordinarily thorough. The most interesting of his researches into different materials and suitable styles, "Styles and Methods of Painting suited to the Decoration of Public Buildings", was appended to the Second and Fifth Reports of 1843 and 1846. His research into oil techniques was so long that it was published as a book, Materials for a History of Oil Painting, in 1847.

In 1842 Charles Heath Wilson, soon to be Dyce's successor as Superintendent of the Government School of Design, was sent abroad to study mediaeval frescoes and other wall paintings. His findings were published with the Second Report of the Commissioners. As well as the frescoes of sixteenth century painters, Wilson investigated earlier works in Rome, Assisi, Orvieto, Spello, Siena, Florence and Padua. Dyce travelled in Italy in 1845-6, and filled a notebook with his opinions and discoveries. "Observations on Fresco Painting, by Mr Dyce" was appended to the Sixth Report of the Commissioners in 1846. The Campo Santo in Pisa, the walls of the Sistine chapel, the Piccolomini chapel in Siena, are some of the earlier cycles he referred to.

As well as these official reports there were also unofficial studies being published. Numerous articles on

fresco appeared in the press. In 1842, for example, the Art-Union contained an article on fresco painting by "S.R.H." In the same year the Athenaeum published three articles by the painter Joseph Severn on fresco painting, although these referred only to sixteenth-century fresco cycles.

There were also books published on the subject. W.B. Sarsfield Taylor's *A Manual of Fresco and Encaustic Painting* appeared in 1843. It traced the history of fresco painting, and contained detailed instructions about methods. The following year saw the publication of Mrs Herrifield's translation of Cennino Cennini's treatise on painting. This was followed by *The Art of Fresco Painting* in 1846. In the same year F.K. Hunt's *The Book of Art. Cartoons, Frescoes, Sculpture, and Decorative Art, as applied to the New Houses of Parliament* was published. The text for the most part was taken from official reports, and the book was thus useful for the way it disseminated material otherwise buried among parliamentary papers. The 1847 edition of the Murray Handbook to Northern Italy contained an article on fresco.

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16. This was followed by her *Original Treatise dating from the XIIIth to the XVIIIth centuries, on the art of painting in oil, miniature, fresco and on glass* (London, 1847). Both these publications were the outcome of official employment on researches for the Royal Commission. In 1850 she contributed a series of articles on mural painting to the *Art Journal*. On Mrs Herrifield, see A.C. Sward's *Introduction to The Art of Fresco Painting* (London, New et., 1952).
painting, which stressed the importance of the traveller's studying the works that he saw in Italy.

Those who studied fresco technique carefully, notably C.H. Wilson, Dyce, and Mrs Merrifield, made discoveries which were not always easy to reconcile with preconceptions. The skill of the early masters from the point of view of craftsmanship was impressive. "Although deficient in design and drawing, and entirely ignorant of the theory of art", wrote Mrs Merrifield, "these early masters were acquainted with some method of painting which preserved the durability of the colours of their pictures in a most extraordinary degree".\(^\text{17}\) Wilson praised the high quality of the manipulation of the Italian masters, the subtlety of their brushwork, the lightness of their execution, the transparency of their colouring. There was indeed as much diversity of touch and handling as could be achieved in oil. In this respect the Italians were far superior to the modern Germans, who failed to achieve transparency and whose execution was by comparison laboured and heavy.\(^\text{18}\)

One thing which particularly puzzled him was the meaning of the sinopie revealed where the intonaco had fallen away. He assumed that the early fresco painters used cartoons, though he admitted that Cennini did not speak of them. Yet these sketches were freehand drawings, not tracings, which implied "a certainty and readiness in drawing which it is hardly possible to conceive". And yet, he went on, "this

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\(^\text{17}\) Introduction to Cennino Cennini, op.cit., p.xvii.

readiness seems asserted in the O of Giotto, who, on the occasion when he drew it, seemed desirous of exemplifying the perfection with which he could outline with the hair pencil. Wilson's difficulty is understandable, given the general belief in the artistic incompetence of the Primitives.

This same assumption affected attitudes towards the history of fresco technique in Italy, particularly the use of *buon fresco*. Modern scholars do not agree on the extent of its use in Italian painting from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. However, it would be agreed that by Vasari's day, *buon fresco*, that is, painting on wet plaster, was well on the way out. Vasari might have lamented its decline, but he himself painted in oil on walls. When Mrs Merrifield was writing the general opinion was that *buon fresco* did not exist before the Carracci. Mrs Merrifield did not accept this view, though she agreed there were few examples of fresco without retouching a secco before Vasari. Her interpretation of the development of fresco in Italy depends on the opinion of Mrs Merrifield, and indeed on the opinion of the great masters of fresco painting themselves. The majority of them believed that *buon fresco* was practised almost without exception in the trecento, and that the great mural paintings from Cimabue to Michelangelo were all true frescoes. He does not deny that re-touching in tempera was a common practice, but states that this was limited to non-essential parts (La tecnica dei lieti artichi affreschi e il loro distacco e piegatura, Firenze, 1955, pp. 7-9). Lionello Rintori and William R. Isbell, on the other hand, argue that "true fresco painting is often greatly adulterated", and that major cycles in the fourteenth century "contain scarcely any fresco at all but are almost entirely in the more perishable tempera" (The Painting of the Life of St Francis of Assisi, Ph.D. thesis on the Arena Chapel, B.A., 1962, p. xiv).
on her assumption that the technique was beyond the

capacities of the early masters:

It is now well known that the art of painting
in buon-fresco without re-touching in secco, is
not of early date, and that it rose out of the
earlier methods to which it was deemed superior;
for the old painters did not possess sufficient
skill and facility of execution to enable them
to complete their pictures while the wall remained
damp, and they were forced to finish them in secco. 21

Wilson also attributed the practice of finishing frescoes
with tempera to incapacity. 22

Dyce, on the other hand, argued that "Tempera was employed
by the old painters, not to correct actual failures in fresco,
but to make amends for the inadequacy of the very process
itself". 23 Indeed Dyce was in favour of finishing a fresco
with tempera since the additions gave beauty and variety to
the work. But Dyce approached the subject with a preference
for the quattrocento, as the notes on which he based his
report reveal. He thought Michelangelo's frescoes in the
Sistine chapel badly executed. The older artists who painted
on the walls might have been inferior designers, but they
were certainly more skilful painters. 24 The painters he
responded to there were Perugino and Pintoricchio, the latter
especially.

Of the older masters he is certainly on the whole
the greatest and most uniformly good colourist in
fresco; and as an ornamentist (I mean as one who
decorated apartments by various kinds of design.

23. Fifth Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts,

Parliamentary Papers (1848), vol. XXXIV, p. 12.
whether of figures, stuccoes, or painted arabesques) he stands in his day quite unrivalled. Of course I presuppose that he is what now is termed a Purist, or church painter, and that he is to be judged as such. His designs for pictures are not skilful, but the arrangement of colour and the general aspect of a room decorated by him are almost always admirable.25

Yet we see that even Dyce, with all his enthusiasm for Christian art and his appreciation of Pintoricchio as a decorator, cannot totally accept his art. He must be judged as a Purist, that is, relatively. Hence, of course, the universal doubts about the desirability of studying too closely the style, as opposed to the technique, of the early fresco painters.

As far as the decorations of the Houses of Parliament went there was considerable concern lest English artists imitate the Germans in their imitation of a time when art was in its immaturity. Eastlake, who probably knew more about the Germans than any other Englishman (except perhaps Dyce), was clearly disturbed that local artists might follow the German example too assiduously. He sent to the Select Committee of 1841 a paper outlining the origins of the modern school of German fresco painting, which was published with the Report of the Committee. He stressed the nationalist origins of the revival, which had little relevance for English artists. It was German patriotism they should imitate, not German practice.26

Not surprisingly, in view of the prejudice against the so-called imperfections of the early masters, an argument for

a style of painting in keeping with the Gothic style of Barry's building was hardly likely to win support. Barry himself, when asked by the Select Committee whether it was not incongruous to introduce a style of painting not known at the period of the style of his building, replied that he was not prepared to say "that the subsequent improvements in art might not to a very considerable extent be introduced with good effect in a painting to be applied to this building at the present day". 27

Eastlake reported from his conversations with Cornelius that the German painter, while not in favour of a truly Gothic style of painting, thought "that the style of some Florentine Masters of the fifteenth century would harmonize well with Gothic structures of an earlier date or character". 28 However, Eastlake added, for Cornelius the question of the adaptation of a style of painting to architecture was connected with the general desirability of returning to the severer style of an earlier age.

Eastlake's own thoughts on the subject were communicated in his papers on "Styles and Methods of Painting suitable to the Decoration of Public Buildings". While concerned mainly with the principles of architectural decoration and high art without reference to any historical style, Eastlake did have a little to say about historical precedents. When Signorelli (who was near the golden age) painted in Orvieto Cathedral, his aim was not to imitate but to surpass the ruder productions which would have been contemporary with the building. It

27. Ibid., p.348.
could be assumed therefore that had Raphael or Michelangelo painted in a Gothic structure they would not have reverted to an earlier style. In any case the problem need not arise since the

Tudor style of Gothic (the style of the Palace of Westminster) is coeval with the highest development of art in Italy; and buildings erected in the time of Henry VII or Henry VIII might have been decorated by the hand of Raphael, had he accepted the invitation of the last-named monarch to visit England. 29

Joseph Severn's attempts to justify on historical grounds a Raphaelesque style of painting in a Gothic building were even more ingenious than Eastlake's. He argued that Raphael, though commonly called a classical painter, was in fact essentially Christian and his frescoes were associated with the mediaeval period. The proof of Raphael's mediaevalism was that he put his Roman soldiers in the Gothic armour of the Swiss guard! 30 Even his Madonnas were Gothic. The implication is, of course, that since Raphael is in spirit northern and Gothic, he can qualify as a suitable model to aspiring decorators of the new Palace of Westminster.

I have dealt with the question of the relationship between the style of the building and a suitable style of painting in some detail, since it does show the way

30. Art Journal (9 April, 1842), p.316. Severn presumably had in mind the soldiers of the Swiss Guard in the Hall of Solomon in the Vatican stumps. Their presence in the fresco was, it needs hardly be said, nothing to do with Raphael's supposed mediaeval sympathies. The fresco honours Pope Julius II, the founder of the Guard, who in painted hearing the Mass.
prejudice against the technical deficiencies of painters of the fifteenth century and earlier worked against a revival in painting parallel to that which had occurred in architecture. However it would be a mistake to overemphasize the importance of discussions on this subject, which in fact were infrequent and brief. When fresco style was thought about it was in terms of a style appropriate to the medium and to an architectural setting generally.

Suitable models were the frescoes of the golden age in Italy, that is, of the first half of the sixteenth century (and these did not need the elaborate justification given above), and the work of the modern Germans. But it was hoped that a truly national style would emerge, in association with a British school of history painting, as expressive of the spirit of the age as were the frescoes of Raphael and Michelangelo in their age, and with none of the faults of colouring or the archaism which impaired the otherwise worthy attainments of the Germans.

There was one way in which the earlier painters set an example which it was sometimes thought desirable to follow, and that was the master-pupil system, where there was one painter in charge of a cycle and others working under him. The system had been successfully adopted in Germany by Cornelius and others. It was a way of ensuring the harmonious relationship of paintings with each other, as well as with their setting. From a long term point of view it was seen as a way of training artists in fresco, the master initiating his pupil in the secrets of the craft as had been the practice in the Middle Ages. In his review of Mrs Merrifield's translation of Gemma Gemmini, Lord Egerton, who had been a
member of the Select Committee and who was on the Commission, remarked that he would like to see something like the relationship of the Giotto and the Agnolo Gaddis and their pupils more prevalent in England. This system of organization had been referred to during the procedures of the Select Committee of 1841, but in its Report, it simply stressed the need for some overall plan. In fact, it was generally accepted the master-pupil system would not work in England, since no English painter would consent to submit himself to another.

The Royal Commission was as conscientious in its efforts to give English artists a chance to show their abilities as designers on the grand scale and painters of fresco as it had been in its investigations into fresco techniques, past and present. The First Report of the Commissioners released in April 1842 announced a Cartoon competition. This attracted a hundred and forty entries, which were exhibited in Westminster Hall in 1843, where they aroused tremendous public interest. This was followed by further competitions, for cartoons and fresco specimens in 1844, for fresco in 1845. In that year the first definite commissions were awarded, for frescoes in six compartments in the House of Lords. In the meantime Prince Albert, as a personal contribution, organised the decoration with frescoes of a small garden pavilion in the grounds of

Buckingham Palace.

From the beginning there was, as has been already said, some concern that English artists might revert to an archaic style of painting. The Rev. John Eagles, for example, in an article on the decoration of the Houses of Parliament in *Blackwood's* in 1842 reported misgivings about "the Gothicized severities of the German school" being held up as patterns. And in the ensuing years it seemed to some that such fears had proved to be justified. The Houses of Parliament as a repository for every manner of Gothic deformity in the arts kept Punch's writers, readers and illustrators entertained throughout the 1840s. Pugin (then employed on the building's ornament and fittings), the Commissioners, German painting, fresco, High Art, Purism, the Middle Ages -- all became the butt of Punch's humour (Fig. 26).

The authorities were accused of a pro-German, pro-medieval bias. William Bell Scott, like his brother David an unsuccessful entrant in the Cartoon competition, later claimed that Eastlake and the jury were "biassed by the authority of Cornelius and the German revival method of simple outline". B.R. Haydon had written darkly of a

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33. The most important decorations were in the central octagon room, where lunettes were frescoed with scenes from Cucur. The artists participating were Clarkson Stanfield, C.R. Leslie, Landseer, Sir William Ross, Thomas Dwins, Raclishe, Eastlake and Dyce. Dyce replaced Bury who failed to satisfy his royal patrons (Boase, *G.C.M.*, pp.334-5).

34. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol.11 (March, 1842), pp.52.


"German sect who wish to introduce Gothic art among us" in his diary in June 1842. Haydon was a lifelong advocate of the cause of High Art in England. Initially he had been very excited about the fresco experiment. However, disappointment at his own failure in the Cartoon competition and suspicions about the machinations of the "German sect" turned enthusiasm for the scheme into fury over its execution. Initially, Haydon had not been entirely critical of modern German painting, but he now railed against their Gothicism, their insanity. And like the Germans, English artists were to become as babes in art. But,

why take the practice of the Babies in Art, where we have the perfection of the full grown men! Their flatness, their gilt grounds, their rigid definition of things imitated were proofs of uncultivated eyes, developing (sic) by miserable imitation pure & holy thoughts -- are pure & holy thoughts injured or weakened by a better mode? Nonetheless, the frescoes in the Houses of Parliament were to be in "the Style of Cimabue!"

"Style of Cimabue" is simply a term of abuse, betraying as much ignorance of the modern Germans as of the early Italians. It is worth remembering that the German painters owed little stylistically to the Primitives. Perugino, Pintoricchio, Signorelli – this was as close to the Middle

38. e.g., "No man can be more alive to the great merit of the German school than I am, in their struggle to revive the great principle of monumental decoration" (Lectures on Painting and Design, op.cit., vol.ii, p.183).
40. Diary entry, 5 February, 1846. Ibid., p.517.
Ages as the Nazarenes got, although they did sometimes borrow individual poses and gestures, and compositional formulae from earlier art. However none of them could be accused of mimicry of Fra Angelico or Filippo Lippi, let alone Giotto and Cimabue. What Haydon had in mind, however, with phrases like "Cimabue's Gothicism" was a kind of painting which exhibited any or all of the following characteristics: simple, balanced composition, clearly defined shapes and contours, limited perspective, local colour, even lighting, flat and textureless painting, mediaeval subjects or religious subjects in mediaeval costume, and picture frames shaped like Gothic altarpieces. In other words, he had in mind the art of the Nazarenes and their successors in Germany. It is a style which in England derived from this source rather than Italian art. In fact it would for the most part be a futile exercise to try and separate the two, since, even when as in the case of Dyce, there has been close study of Italian painting, the results are practically identical with German works. Or to put it more precisely, the differences between Overbeck and Dyce do not arise from different perceptions of Italian painting, but have other causes.

To consider now the accusations of William Bell Scott and Haydon in turn. The results of the Cartoon competition do not suggest a German bias on the part of the judges. 41 Only one of the three cartoons which won £300 showed Nazarene influences, Charles West Cope's The First Trial by Jury.

41. They were Lord Lansdowne, Sir Robert Peel, Samuel Rogers and three Royal Academicians, Richard Westmacott, Richard Cosk and William Elty (Boase, __cit., p.326).
On the other hand, the other two prize winners, Watts and Armitage, were only to receive minor commissions, whereas the Commissioners chose Cope to paint in the House of Lords and to decorate the whole of the Lords corridor.

Not that all who worked in a German style were successful, as the case of William Cave Thomas shows. His St Augustine Preaching (Fig. 11) was one of the ten cartoons awarded £100 after the opening of the Cartoon exhibition. He had gone to Munich to study fresco under Cornelius and Hess in 1840, returning to England in 1842. His prize-winning cartoon is a jigsaw of classical, quattrocento and High Renaissance quotations. The figure of St Augustine seems to derive from St Paul visiting St Peter in prison in the Brancacci chapel, then attributed to Masaccio, and well known through Thomas Patch's engraving and later versions of this print (Fig. 12). Cave Thomas also won a prize in the Fresco competition of 1844, with a single figure of Justice against a gilt background. Yet his design for a fresco in the House of Lords, commissioned for the following year, was rejected. Critics referred to "a grim gloomy rigid German mannerism" in his figure of Justice. He subsequently received a minor commission, but this design was also rejected, and he refused to participate after that. Cave Thomas's faith in fresco and

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42. E. Armitage's Caesar's Invasion of Britain is a crowded and dramatic exercise which reveals his French training; G. Watts' Caractacus led in triumph through the streets of Rome is in the manner of the Italian High Renaissance. Contemporary lithographs after these cartoons are reproduced in 1845, Plates 46a and 46b.


44. The Spectator (July 5, 1845), p. 644.
high art was not shaken by his own lack of success or the overall failure of the experiment at Westminster.

Nonetheless Haydon was substantially correct in his assertions about the German bias of the Commissioners. With Prince Albert as President of the Commission such a bias was pretty well inevitable. Others on the Commission seem to have been drawn towards the Germans, for example, Thomas Wyse and Lord Francis Egerton, both of whom had sat on the Select Committee of 1841. Eastlake was accused of being pro-German by his critics, but this was not really the case. When he did reveal himself so far as to

45. See his Mural or Monumental Decoration: its aims and methods (London, 1869).

46. Prince Albert had travelled in Italy in 1838-9, and possibly then saw the frescoes in the Casa Bartholdy and Villa Kassino. He did meet one of the early members of the Brotherhood, Schorr von Carolsfeld, in Munich, and visited his studio. He probably also saw Cornelius’ frescoes there. He purchased some examples of the modern Germans, including Overbeck’s cartoon for his mural of Triumph of Religion over the Arts (See Winslow Ames, Prince Albert and Victorian Art, London, 1967, pp.12-15, p.139). In October 1841 he sent Sir Robert Peel a copy of Das Nibelungenlied (1840), illustrated with “fine specimens of the school of Dusseldorf”. I am sure you will be pleased with the correctness of drawing and composition” (Quo. Theodore Martin, The Life of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort, 3 vols, London, 1875–80, vol.1, p.120). Sir Robert Peel had been a member of the Select Committee of 1841 and was on the Royal Commission.

47. Lord Francis Egerton, although familiar with the German school only through engravings, believed ‘there is no quarter from when our artists are so likely to derive a salutary example, and a corrective to their peculiar errors’ (Quarterly Review, vol.lxvii, “June, 1858,”, p.155). Thomas Wyse was very much impressed with the frescoes he has seen in Munich, Parliamentary Papers (1841), vol.6, pp. 406-7.

48. E.G., Haydon wrote of his attachment to the "Infantine trash" of German art (Diary entry, 27 October, 1842, Diary of Benjamin Robert Haydon, Ed. cit., p.215).

49. He admired Overbeck, but had no great opinion of Cornelius as an artist. Of Cornelius’ frescoes in Munich he wrote: ‘the colour in these frescoes is absolutely below criticism, the expressions vulgar and exaggerated and the forms
declare the style he favoured, he opted for one which combined the design of the Romans with the colouring of the Venetians, a preference reflecting the principal influences on his own paintings and his belief that English artists should not be debarred from exercising their skills in that sphere where they were strong and the Germans weak, namely colouring.

However the principal evidence in support of this bias is the way in which some of the major commissions were awarded. John Rogers Herbert's only competition entry was a cartoon in 1844 which was too late to be eligible, and which was likened by one critic to a "half worn out illustration of a missal". It was on the strength of paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy, usually religious in subject (Herbert was a Catholic convert) and compared variously to modern Germans, early Italians, and manuscript illuminations, that he was commissioned to paint one of the frescoes in the Upper Waiting Hall, and the whole of the Peers' Robing Room.

Ryce, too, seems to have had preferential treatment. After several years as a fashionable portrait painter in Edinburgh, working in a style that owed a lot to Raeburn, he had begun painting religious subjects in a severe quattrocento style. In 1838 he exhibited a Madonne and Child at the Royal Academy (probably that now in the Nottingham...
Museum), and in the following year St Dunstan Separating
Rex and Elgiva, which caused the Art-Union to comment: "He
is Gothic in his style, and probably in his mind, and has
evidently taken for his models the sternest of the old
masters". Dyce had not entered the Cartoon competition,
but sent a fresco specimen to the 1844 competition. This
was of two heads from a mural, The Consecration of Archbishop
Parker in Lambeth Palace, which he was painting in Lambeth
Palace and which was again in a quattrocento style (Fig. 14).
It was rumoured that Dyce had entered the competition at
the invitation of Prince Albert and the Commissioners.
According to Ford Madox Brown his part had been fixed. He
said that Prince Albert had made overtures to Cornelius to
come and paint frescoes in the Houses of Parliament. But
Cornelius had recommended Dyce, who was then discovered and
hastily bid to send in a fresco specimen. 53 The story is
almost certainly apocryphal. After all, as a former
Superintendent of the Schools of Design and a witness at the
Select Committee of 1841, he could hardly be described as
unknown. Furthermore, some time early in 1844 he had been
asked by Prince Albert to paint one of the lunettes in the
garden pavilion, after Etty's effort had failed to satisfy(fig.11).
However it is not unlikely that he was deliberately sought
out as a suitable painter for the new Houses of Parliament.
Dyce was to become one of the Prince's favourite artists.
He bought the Madonna and Child exhibited at the Royal Academy
in 1845 and commissioned him to paint a fresco in Osborne.

52. Art-Union (May 1839), p.70.
53. F. M. Brown, Ford Madox Brown: A Record of his Life
House, on the Isle of Wight.

Dyce was the first artist to be definitely employed at Westminster. In 1845 he was given The Baptism of Ethelbert, one of the subjects chosen for the House of Lords. After receiving the commission Dyce went to Italy to study frescoes, concentrating, as we have seen, on fifteenth-century works. On his return he started on his fresco, which was completed by the middle of 1847. The subjects of the frescoes in the six compartments in the House of Lords were a combination of allegory and history, Religion, Justice and Chivalry being represented, together with three historical incidents from the Middle Ages illustrating the three allegories. For this reason the subjects, unlike most of the others at Westminster, lent themselves to a more ideal mode of representation.

Dyce's fresco set the tone for the others (Fig. 15). The compartment is shaped like a Gothic altarpiece (although, for the sake of historical truth, the arches in the fresco are Norman). Within the frame the subject, which after all is historical, is treated with the directness of a scene in a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century religious cycle. There is a central incident witnessed by a crowd of spectators. King Ethelbert himself is taken from the man being baptized in Masaccio's fresco in the Brancacci chapel (Fig. 16).

The composition is on two levels, and the space occupied by the figures very shallow. In this respect the fresco is rather different from the fifteenth-century models which Dyce had so carefully studied, where one finds a fascination with architectural space and the effects to be
achieved through the use of mathematical perspective. Yet what is striking in the nineteenth-century translations of the quattrocento is their spatial constrictedness. This is to be found in German as well as English art. In its shallowness this kind of composition is reminiscent of both Ciofeto and Neo-classicism.

This complete disregard of quattrocento space is curious. The flatness of Dyce's fresco is, to be sure, in obedience with the prescriptions, delivered by Eastlake and others, regarding the necessity of respecting the wall surface and of subordinating the painting to the architecture. Yet even Pontormo, a painter much admired by Dyce as a decorator, introduces more space into his frescoes than Dyce.

Dyce's fresco is flanked by Cope's paintings of Edward the Black Prince receiving the Order of the Garter from Edward III (Fig. 17) and Prince Henry acknowledging the authority of Chief Justice Gascoigne. They are similar in composition to Dyce's work, being designed to harmonize with the central compartment. Unfortunately the kneeling figure in Edward the Black Prince is so badly constructed that fears about the retrograding effects of the study of old Italian art on English artists seemed confirmed. Punch took particular exception to the Prince Henry fresco, a work which is claimed to be in the "Mediaeval-Angelico-Pugin-Gothic, or Flat Style".55

The allegorical frescoes are on the opposite wall. They

54. Reproduced in Boase, op.cit., Plate 49d.
55. *Punch*, vol.xiv (1848), p.197.
are based on the *sacra conversazione*. The central panel, by John Callcott Horsley, nephew of Sir Augustus Callcott. It was the weakest of the six. The *Athenaeum* critic wrote:

To look to it from Mr Dyce's is like looking from Florentine to Bolognese art... As a piece of fresco painting it is the weak point of the set—unsolid in execution, in colour exaggerated, in the flesh tints untrue. 57

The remaining two frescoes, of *Justice* and *Chivalry* (Fig. 18) are by Daniel Maclise. For these, Maclise uses a central Madonna-like figure on a podium, with other figures around her. Maclise's source is modern German, not Italian painting. Indeed a number of the figures were actually derived from German art. 58 Maclise was one of the foremost artists of the time to have been influenced by German painting, principally (as was so often the case) through prints and book illustrations. 59 He had been one of the painters commissioned by Prince Albert to paint one of the lunettes in the Octagon Room in the Garden Pavilion. This had a compositional format similar to that he adopted for his frescoes in the House of Lords. 60

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Maclise did not go to Italy until 1855, that is, some years after he had painted his frescoes in the House of Lords. Two of his acquaintances, the artists Solomon Hart and Richard Redgrave, said that Maclise got very little out of the Old Masters. However Redgrave also told a story which is revealing. Cope once showed Maclise a fresco fragment he had taken from the Arena chapel. Maclise looked at it with childlike veneration; talking of "those grand old fellows", and finally asking Cope for a fragment, which he proposed to set in a ring, as he would do a precious stone, or a sacred relic.

Maclise's other frescoes for the Palace of Westminster, the two big battle pictures in the Royal Gallery, blend German idealism with native realism. They do not have even the distant echoes of Italian painting to be found in Chivalry and Justice. Italian influences on Horsley were even more superficial and temporary. His employment at Westminster was an interlude in a successful career as a painter of historical genre and sentimental anecdotes of modern life. The influence of his detailed study of Italian frescoes in 1845 was very slight. Cope had accompanied him on this journey. He returned to England via Munich, and studied frescoes there. Again, these influences on Cope were hardly less superficial and temporary, unless one finds in his scenes from the Civil War in the Peers' Corridor, more simple and restrained and more tightly painted than E. H. Ward's corresponding series in the Commons corridor.

63. Ibid.
64. Two of these are reproduced in Boase, op.cit., Plates 306 and 307.
echoes of the fifteenth-century frescoes he had admired so greatly in the 1830s and whose technique he had studied in 1845.

It must be concluded that the archaizing features of the frescoes in the House of Lords, such as they are, arose principally from the mediaeval and allegorical subject matter and from Dyce’s fresco which became the model for the others. Certainly the only other frescoes in the Houses of Parliament which can be compared with early Italian painting are Dyce’s scenes from Malory’s Morte d’Arthur in the Queen’s Robing Room, unfinished at the time of his death in 1854. Each of the Arthurian subjects chosen illustrates a different mediaeval virtue: faith, generosity, mercy, courtesy, hospitality. The frescoes blend Victorian sentiment with a style influenced by fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century painting and modern German imitations, but which uses accessories from earlier periods (Figs. 19, 20).

Faith (Religion): The Vision of Sir Galahad and His Company is a simplified version of the upper level of Raphael’s Disputa. However Christ is seated on a Gothic throne.

Enthusiasm about the fresco experiment in the Houses of Parliament was not long lasting, and the scheme began to lose impetus in the 1850s. The artists involved became disenchanted. They found working in fresco to be enormously frustrating, and the well-intentioned but irritating interference of the Commissioners did not make their task any the easier. Completed frescoes began to show signs of decay as early as 1852, the result principally of damp but also of the artists’ imperfect knowledge of fresco (despite the careful
research). Alternative methods were explored. In 1860
Kaehne adopted the water-glass technique, also known as
stereochrome, which had been developed in Germany and which
overcame some of the problems associated with true fresco.
Throughout the 1850s then, the Commission was beset with
the problems of preserving completed frescoes, as well as
of continuing the project and facing the growing indifference,
not to say hostility, of parliament and the public. The
death of Prince Albert in 1861 paralysed the proceedings
of the Commission, only ten of whose original twenty-one
members were still alive. In 1864 a new Commission terminated
all the existing arrangements with the artists involved. 65

On all counts the experiment was a failure. The frescoes
decayed. Most of the artists employed had little understanding
of the medium they were working in, or the style appropriate
to it. Their designs were much too detailed. The setting
was inappropriate, the spaces allotted to frescoes being too
small. Except in the House of Lords and the Queen's Robing
Room, the frescoes did not harmonize with each other, and
nowhere did they fit in with their setting, heavily encrusted
with Pugin's decorations and fittings. In its larger aims
the experiment failed also. English artists were not diverted
from genre painting into high art. They did not abandon
the blandishments of colour and superficial effects. A
national school of monumental painters did not arise.

Yet in the 1840s and even the 1850s hopes were high that
in the not too distant future public buildings all over Britain,

65. The project dragged on however until the 1920s.
schools, courthouses, town halls, railway stations, hospitals and churches, would be covered with frescoes, a record of the achievements of British civilization and a means of national education. When England's glory was over they would survive, witnesses to the glory of the age in which they were created. Ruskin, though scornful of the project at Westminster, looked forward to the decoration of schools and other buildings with fresco. A.H. Layard declared himself one of those who have long hoped to see painting again employed, as it was during the Middle Ages, on truly great and National subjects, and worthily exercising its best and highest mission among us.

Yet if fresco-wise England did not become another Italy, or even another Bavaria, the experiment at Westminster was not without progeny. The quotation from Layard is taken from a letter he wrote to the Times congratulating G.F. Watts on his fresco in the Great Hall at Lincoln's Inn. Watts was an artist filled with the ambition to paint large scale paintings on themes of intellectual and moral significance. The sight of the Sistine chapel inspired him with a scheme for a series of frescoes in a great hall illustrating the history of mankind, which he called the House of Life. This was never

66. He wrote to his father in September, 1845: "It [fresco] is a splendid sea for the strong swimmer, but you might as well throw a covey of chickens into the Atlantic as our R.A.'s into fresco" (Quo. Works, op.cit., vol.iv, p.353).


realized. Watts was employed only in a minor way at Westminster. His offer to paint a fresco at Euston station was refused. But he was allowed to paint in Lincoln's Inn, being reimbursed only for the expense of materials and scaffolding. Stylistically the fresco is an exercise in the manner of the Italian High Renaissance, with particular debts to Raphael's School of Athens.

There was a mural revival of sorts from the 1860s, but its intention was decorative rather than didactic. One sign of the decline of German influence on English art was the decline of interest in using art as a vehicle of ideas and moral truths. There were however exceptions: Ford Madox Brown's murals for Manchester Town Hall, illustrating events in the history of Manchester, which were commissioned in the late 1870s, and Frederic Leighton's two lunettes, part of the scheme for the decoration of the South Kensington Museum. Leighton had studied in Germany under Steinle, and the painting which brought him overnight success in England, Cimabue's Celebrated Madonna is carried in procession through the Streets of Florence, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1855, reveals his German training. However in the late 1850s French and classical influences began to prevail. This change in orientation is reflected in the lunettes for South Kensington, illustrating The Arts of Industry as Applied to Peace and The Arts of Industry as Applied to War. These were designed in the early 1870s, and completed some years later. The setting for the Arts of Peace is classical Greece; the setting for the Arts of War, mediaeval Italy. The architecture of the background of the latter painting is mediaeval, but the
figures themselves have a quattrocento flavour. Nothing
could be farther from the vision of the Middle Ages
promulgated by Lord Lindsay and expressed in painting in
Dyce's frescoes in the Queen's Robing Room. Instead of
holy peace, war-like activity. Leighton himself wrote that
the conduct of arms seemed to him "to find its highest
expression in mediaeval Italy". 69 It is a measure of the
extent to which attitudes had changed since the mid nineteenth
century.

So far we have been discussing only secular art. In the
course of the exchange between Monckton Milnes and Eastlake
during the Select Committee of 1841, Milnes had asked whether
the absence of religious art in England might prove to be an
impediment in the attainment of the highest possible tone
in any great national undertaking. Eastlake replied that he
did not believe religious painting to be "particularly or
exclusively qualified to call forth the powers of the artist
for great historical works". But he did agree that the more
frequent application of art to religious purposes would
tend to elevate the general tone of art in England. 70 For
this and other reasons one finds around the middle of the
century interest in the encouragement of religious art in
Britain, especially murals and altarpieces in churches.

The Art-Union Journal consistently favoured the intro-
duction of figural painting into churches, regretting

69. Mrs. IRussell Barrington, The Life, Letters and Work
of Frederic Leighton, 2 vols (London, 1905), vol.ii,
529.
Protestant prejudice against the use of pictures. The possibility of opening up a whole new area of employment for artists was no doubt the journal's principal though unstated motive in supporting religious art. What is argued is the educational and spiritual benefits bestowed upon a congregation and the elevating effect upon art itself.

Paintings in churches, it was maintained, were not necessarily either Romanist or idolatrous. As Ralph Wornum argued in an article entitled "Romanism and Protestantism in their Relation to Painting" in 1850, Romanism was no more intrinsically favourable to the arts than Protestantism was intrinsically hostile. Protestant Christian art could surpass Catholic art since it would not contain false dogmas and superstitious beliefs. In his conclusion, Wornum exhorted artists:

to dwell in the spirit of their religion, and not in the revival of a dead ceremonial, or the affected resuscitation of the old quatre-cento form of Art, a shell, of which the kernel has been consumed these four hundred years past.\(^71\)

In his rejection of a modern religious art derived from the Primitives Wornum would have had the support of one who would have disagreed with every other word in his article. In an article on "Christian Art" (ostensibly a review of Lord Lindsay), published in the Dublin Review in 1847, Wiseman scoffed at the idea of a Protestant revival of Christian art. However by then he no longer thought as he had in 1834 that the longing to imitate the "old, symbolic, Christian and truly chaste manner of the ancients" was refreshing to the mind.\(^72\)

\(^72\) See above, p.75.
Instead, he writes of the unfortunate admiration and even copying of mediaeval sculpture, painting and drawing, much less advanced than the architecture which was being successfully revived in his own time.

But this is not even the worst: we have almost canonized defects, and sanctified monstrosities. What was the result of ignorance or unskilfulness, we attribute to some mysterious influence, or deep design.73

Contorted limbs and grim features are called "mystical", "symbolical" or "conventional". Wiseman feels no admiration when he is told that some hideous-looking mediaeval crucifix is "more mystical or symbolical. For we cannot see how mysticism should require that which is supremely fair to be set forth as ugly".74 A Christian school of art in England must not only be independent of an architectural school. It must rest on totally different principles. There must be no imitation of the old masters, no returning to their stiff and formal arrangements. A modern Christian art must rest on artistic study, that is, on accurate drawing, studies from nature, and so on. In one respect the old masters were to be copied, however, and that was in their pious lives.

It is evident that Wiseman's strictures were not directed against modern German artists since Overbeck and the Dusseldorf painters are called the regenerators of religious taste all over Europe. The only English artist mentioned is J.R. Herbert, whose Christ subject to His Parents at Nazareth, exhibited that year at the Royal Academy, he cites

74. Ibid., p.492.
as an example of a modern religious painting untainted by
archaism. In fact it is difficult to know who the
archaizing offenders might be, since no names are given.
Perhaps, as was so often the case, Wiseman was simply
reacting against the possibility of a retrogressive movement
arising analogously out of the Gothic revival in architecture.

From the admittedly slight evidence we have of Pugin's
views on the subject it does not appear that he can be
accused of retrograding proclivities as far as painting and
sculpture are concerned. True, in the second edition of
Contrasts, he advised young artists in Italy to follow in the
steps of the "great Overbeck" and "avoiding equally the
taint of its ancient and modern Paganism, confine their
researches to its Christian antiquities". 75 "Italian art
of the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries", he continues, "is the
beau ideal of Christian purity, and its imitation cannot
be too strongly inculcated". 76 This, written before his
first and only visit to Italy in 1847, reflects the influence
of what he has read, Rio especially, rather than what he has
seen. On this visit Pugin showed more interest in altars,
stained glass, reliquaries, and chalices than in paintings,
though he did find the frescoes of Fra Angelico in Florence
"enchainting". 77 In fact, figural painting as church decoration
did not seem to interest him at all. 78 However, had he applied

75. Contrasts, op. cit., p.12 n.
76. Ibid.
77. Letter, May, 1847. Quo. Benjamin Ferrey, Recollections
    of Sir Valpy Pugin and His Father, Augustus Pugin
    Architecture and Their Works (London, 1864), p.120.
78. Although a wall painting is part of the decoration of the
    church interior shown in the frontispiece of The Glossary
    of Ecclesiastical Ornament (London, 1844).
himself to the subject, it is doubtful that he would have recommended a style as close to mediaeval prototypes as the stained glass windows he designed. His views about painting would probably have been nearer what he had to say about sculpture in *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England* (1843). There he wrote that, just as modern methods and materials such as cast iron can be used in Christian architecture, in the same way modern improvements in the treatment of the figure through the study of anatomy and proportion can be grafted onto ancient excellence without loss of Christian feeling.

The Ecclesiologists also showed little interest in painting as a form of church decoration in the first years of the Society. Still, the fresco experiment in the Houses of Parliament was not without its influence, and in 1843 we find The Ecclesiologist expressing the hope that the time is not far distant when the foolish prejudice against fresco paintings in churches shall be entirely removed. Very recently equally strong dislike was felt against stained glass. This has now nearly vanished away, and we trust that its appropriate and necessary accompaniment, painting on walls and roof, will speedily be revived also.

Figural paintings, it said two years later, were not only beautiful but also useful, educating the poor and the ignorant.

We believe that a representation constantly before their eyes of the Great Doom, could not but have the most solemnizing effect on the minds.

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of the poor, while in the House of God.\textsuperscript{81}

It was also clear to the Ecclesiologist that any revival of Christian art in England must be based "upon the stern pure gracefulness of Giotto and Angelico, and the old Cathedral Sculptors, corrected by that better anatomy ...".\textsuperscript{82}

During the 1850s certain prominent Ecclesiologists applied themselves more seriously to the question of paintings in churches, arising in part from the greater interest in continental Gothic. In 1852 the Ecclesiologist published a paper read to the Society by the Rev. John Fuller Russell, entitled "Thoughts on The Revival of Panel Painting, in the style of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in connection with ecclesiastical painting".

What is interesting in Fuller Russell's paper is his argument that sacred pictures, intended for churches, should not be naturalistic. As yet there was no school formed for the revival of panel paintings.

The works of the early Italian masters -- undoubtedly the finest religious paintings in existence, -- are indeed beginning to be admired and appreciated, but any attempt to imitate them, their gilded back grounds, beaming nimbai, symbolic and conventional treatment, and deep spiritual and devotional feeling (which last characteristic is so closely allied to their other features that it seems almost impossible to separate it from them): any attempt, I say, of this kind, is regarded nearly on all hands, as a retrogressive step in art, unreal and ridiculous.\textsuperscript{83}

Yet, he goes on, theirs was the only way in which religious paintings for churches should be designed and executed. From

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., vol.iv (September, 1845), p.203.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.\textsuperscript{2}, vol.xiv (April, 1853), p.94.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.\textsuperscript{2}, vol.xiii (August, 1852), p.220.
as an aesthetic point of view more naturalistic paintings conflict with a Gothic setting. (Fuller Russell would certainly not have accepted Eastlake's arguments as to the appropriateness of a Raphaelesque style in a building of Gothic design). A picture, to be effective in a church enriched with stained glass and polychromy, "must partake, more or less, of the brilliancy around it". From a religious point of view naturalistic pictures could not partake of the symbolical suggestiveness of the churches they adorn. Moreover, since subjects belonging to ecclesiastical painting are allied to the supra-human and divine (and here we have echoes of Ruskin in the second volume of Modern Painters), the artist must represent them conventionally, ideally, mystically -- not sensually: with the pencil of the B. Angelico rather than that of Michael Angelo or Correggio: in a style as unlike that of secular painting, as ecclesiastical differs from domestic architecture, or the plain song of the church from the music of the opera and ball-room.84

Fuller Russell appears to be one of the few who recognized that the "spirit" of the early masters could not be separated from their style and technique. Even so, those artists who are exhorted to devote their energies and prayers to paintings resembling the early Italians in "colouring and design, symbolism, and intense religious expression" are also told to repudiate "a servile archaic imitation of the mechanical defects and shortcomings" which occasionally mar the beauty of the works of those great old men. Still, we can see how in the interests of symbolical and stylistic appropriateness

84. Ibs., p. 221.
Russell can argue in favour of a "mediaeval" style of painting which is in some degree anti-illusionistic.

During the 1850s George Edmund Street, an architect closely associated with the Ecclesiological Society, also became interested in paintings in churches, although in his case it was fresco decoration which concerned him. In 1858 he delivered a paper to the Society, "On the Future of Art in England". He begins by suggesting that the Pre-Raphaelite movement is in fact the mediaeval revival in painting, the equivalent of the Gothic revival in architecture, and I shall return to this view in the next chapter. He then goes on to consider the revival of coloured decoration in architecture, regretting the paucity of the attempts at painting on walls. Wall painting would prove much cheaper than stained glass or carving, yet, as Giotto's chapel at Padua and the church of S. Francesco at Assisi showed, could be just as beautiful and effective as decoration.

Street had not had much to say about frescoes in his *Brick and Marble in the Middle Ages: Notes of a Tour in the North of Italy*, published in 1855, apart from three very enthusiastic pages on the Arena chapel frescoes, "the most perfect example of a series of religious paintings that I have ever seen". However, elsewhere, he notes how mediaeval painting had characteristics which were peculiarly

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65. He believed that fresco was the best method for decorating churches since the constructional method of decoration was too mechanical (*Ibid*, vol.xii, December, 1851, p. 375).
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adapted to its position in connection with architecture, such as the "rigidity of the lines, the hard strong treatment, the absence of attempt at high relief, and of startling pictorial effect", this as well as those other qualities which could be advantageously studied, the earnestness and simple honesty of the story-telling, the modesty of the dress, the nobleness of the sentiment.88 In other words, in addition to the religious and stylistic arguments in favour of a modification of illusionism and the adoption of the practice of the early Italians, there was also this argument which took the ground of decorative function in relation to architecture. Ruskin said much the same sort of thing when he wrote that:

the Arena Chapel is not only the most perfect expressionist work, it is the prettiest piece of wall decoration and fair colour, in North Italy.89

In the Seven Lamps of Architecture he remarked that the noblest examples of architectural painting, such as the mosaic of the Madonna at Torcello and the frescoes in the Arena chapel, owed "their architectural applicability to their archaic manner".90

This "architectural applicability" proved to be one point of contact between Gothic revivalists, like Street and Ruskin, and Matthew Digby Wyatt, architect and design theorist and reformer.91 Wyatt was secretary to the Executive Committee.
for the Great Exhibition of 1851. He was responsible for the design of the fine arts courts of the Crystal Palace, after its re-erection at Sydenham, and was co-author, with John B. Waring of the catalogues to these courts. The account of “polychromatic decoration” in the catalogue of the Mediaeval Court contains a history of fresco in Italy which praises the way in which mediaeval frescoes harmonized with their architectural settings. On Fra Angelico’s frescoes in the Convent S. Marco, for example, one finds:

The definition of form which he obtained, without resorting to extreme light and shade, which becomes decidedly objectionable, when it is desired to keep the wall painted on unobtrusive in appearance, makes his work a valuable study to whoever would revive mural painting satisfactorily.

Even more interesting is the fact that, on one occasion at least, Wyatt came out in favour of a mediaeval style of painting to harmonize with a Gothic setting. This was in 1855 during the opening address for an exhibition of copies of early Italian works, most importantly the Arena Chapel frescoes, organized by the Arundel Society and held in the Crystal Palace. In his conclusion Wyatt argued the practical importance to artists of the study of works of this kind, in particular, for the illustration of the question:

How far it may be possible to unite with truth and sentiment a just sufficient amount of archaism in form to connect itself, without jarring upon our senses, with the mediaeval style which, in modern works of that character, we are bound to preserve and carry out? They show us, that a mode of mural

92. John B. Waring was also an architect interested in design. He wrote The Arts Connected with Architecture, Illustrated by Examples in Early Christian Art of the late century (London, 1852). This is concerned with ornament, not figural painting.
decoration may be used which shall express all needful qualities of thought and feeling, and shall yet assimilate, by its peculiar angularities, to an early style of architecture, without shocking the feelings by any gross want of drawing, or absence of human emotion and character. A very little addition, by way of correction, to the design of these frescoes, is quite as much as the eye can desire, which wants rather to see the subject of the picture and the thought of the painter, than to ascertain whether the work is well executed mechanically, and with what amount of dexterity. It is not by attempting, on all occasions, to put Raffaelle where Raffaelle ought not to be, that we can obtain those effects which neither Raffaelle nor Giotto ever aimed at without realising.

Perhaps Vyatt is here criticizing by implication the frescoes in the Houses of Parliament, which, as has been shown, scarcely harmonized with their Gothic environment. It remains to be seen whether there emerged a mediaeval style of painting for churches, where there were religious as well as historical and architectural influences at work. At the outset it should be said that though painted decorations in churches were not as rare as they had formerly been, they were still uncommon.

Some churches were adorned with copies of early Italian works. The *Ecclesiologist* in its review of Nocchi's engravings after Fra Angelico's paintings of the life of Christ, then in the Accademia in Florence, remarked that the series seemed well adapted for the decorative painting of church interiors. The church of St Mary, Shevioke, did, indeed, have medallions with paintings after Fra Angelico, by G.E. Street, a practical demonstration of his conviction that the architect should be an all round artist. There were also

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copies of Overbeck's scriptural subjects. 96

The work which best exemplified the Ecclesiologist's ideal of a modern church painting was Dyce's reredos in the chancel of All Saints' Margaret Street, the Gothic revival church designed by William Butterfield, for A.J. Beresford Hope, a prominent Ecclesiologist. Dyce had long been anxious to see churches decorated with paintings. 97 He had already painted many religious pictures, and his fresco in the House of Lords was of a religious subject, but the reredos was his first and only church painting (Figs. 21, 22). It was commissioned in 1849.

The painting is in fresco. It is a curious amalgam of fourteenth-, fifteenth-, and sixteenth-century features. It is a combination of an altarpiece (in the two lower registers) and a mural. The overall effect is fourteenth-century. The blue background of the upper level is studded with gold stars. Christ is in a mandorla surrounded by angels (including one on the left in the traditional pose for the Annunciation). Symmetrically disposed on either side are saints and symbols of the apostles. Below, there are formally posed saints in separate niches, extending around the chancel walls, and in

96. Ecclesiologist, vol.xiii (February, 1852), pp.16-17. Some parishioners were opposed to the paintings, but they were a minority. For Street's contribution, see Arthur Edmund Street, Memoir of George Edmund Street, R.A. 1824-1893 (London, 1893), p.13. Street had previously painted a compartment of a vicarage schoolroom roof with subjects copied from Overbeck. He also painted an original design in the spandrel of Soyne Hall Church.

97. When Dyce was in Rome in the 1820s he more than once expressed to VISIANI the desire that a Roman Catholic cathedral be built in London, because of the opportunity this would give him of decorating its walls in fresco (Visiani Papers, co.cit., p.208).
the centre a Crucifixion and a Virgin adoring the infant Child. The background is gold, and the figures are separated by elaborately carved Gothic arches with pinnacles.

The overall scheme has no precedent in Italian painting, but individual figures and groups derive from Italian sources. Christ is from a Fra Angelico Last Judgement, the one now in Berlin, but then in England in the collection of Lord Ward, or, more nearly, from the Last Judgement in the Academia in Florence. The figure is also like the Christ in Raphael's Disputed. The flanking saints are reminiscent of Perugino and Fra Angelico. The motif of the Madonna with the Child sleeping on her lap was popular in north Italian painting of the fifteenth century. However the drawing and modelling of the figures and drapery owe more to the High Renaissance, and the sacred personages protrude rather alarmingly from their gold settings. What we have here is a demonstration of the conviction of the Ecclesiologist and Dyce that it was possible to unite successfully the conventionality and hieratic formality of the Christian art of the Middle Ages to the technical improvements of the sixteenth century.

An Ecclesiologist whose interest in church painting was expressed in a practical way was Thomas Gambier Parry, of Highnam Court Gloucestershire. Gambier Parry is best known for his collection of Italian Primitives. He also made a

careful study of fresco technique and developed a system which he called "spirit fresco" which was more resistant to damp, the besetting problem of English frescoes. He decorated Highham church in this manner, and in 1865 completed the decorations of the roof of Ely cathedral, begun by another Ecclesiologist, H. Le Strange, an old schoolfriend of Gambier Parry's, who had died in 1661. Both were amateur painters. Gambier Parry wrote of his friend that he had no great facility in drawing and execution, but this meant that his work was altogether in keeping with the spirit of mediaeval art. Gambier Parry later decorated the octagon at Ely, and a chapel in Gloucester cathedral.

Another artist who painted in a church was William Cave Thomas, who did an altarpiece for Christ Church, Marylebone. This was in an archaizing style. Other churches were also decorated with paintings. G.F. Watts painted the chancel arch of Street's St James-the-Less, Vauxhall Bridge Road. The Ecclesiologist felt that it exceeded the limit of "modern feeling" desirable in a painting in a Gothic church. Leighton painted a fresco of The Wise and Foolish Virgins, using the Gambier Parry technique, for the church at Lyndhurst in Hampshire. This was completed in 1864. Albert Moore decorated the church of St Alban in Rochdale. But these paintings are even less referable to earlier art than Watts' mural, in regard both to subject matter and to style. Moreover decorative effect prevails over religious

100. Ibid., vol.xxiii (October, 1861), p.326.
content.

The religious revival of the middle of the century did, then, inspire some paintings in churches, both altarpieces and murals. Only Dyce's is a serious attempt at church painting based on earlier Italian models. Nor did the churches of England become, as they had been in Italy in the Middle Ages, the Bible of the unlearned. There was no lack of religious art in England in the nineteenth century, but it appeared in easel paintings and, in particular, bible illustrations. Stained glass was the characteristic mode of figural decoration in churches. Protestant fears of idolatry probably remained the major obstacle in the way of the acceptance and encouragement of other forms of figural art in churches.

The fresco experiment in the Houses of Parliament and the move towards a revival of church art do seem to indicate that the revival of interest in the Primitives did not lead to a Preraphaelite revival in painting. Moreover the Revivalist features that one does find derive more from Nazarene than early Italian sources.

This is not to say that artists were not interested in the early Italians. Apart from obvious examples, such as Dyce and Ford Madox Brown (who will be discussed in the next chapter), one might mention Solomon Hart, G.F. Watts and Richard Redgrave. Solomon Hart was appointed Professor of
Painting at the Royal Academy schools in 1855. His lectures to the students, given in the same year, contained an account of the history of the revival of Italian painting very close to the Purist interpretation. Watts, when in Italy, wrote with great enthusiasm about the Giotto frescoes in the Arena chapel. "There is a majesty of form and largeness of character that no artist since his time has ever produced with equal simplicity". Richard Redgrave, on the other hand, on his visit in 1858 responded to the "simple beauty, with which the stories of the works are told, and the natural attitudes and expressions of many of the figures". He was most enthusiastic about the Gazzoli in the Campo Santo. He was delighted by the "individual character of the heads, the action, ... the natural disposition of the draperies". The frescoes faithfully recorded the "manner, customs, habits and utensils of the period". After seeing such works he could no longer endure the Bolognese. "Had I to begin art and life again, I should ignore much of what I thought it necessary to learn". The different reactions of Watts and Redgrave are interesting for what they reveal of the two artists, the aspirant to monumental art on the one hand, the painter of genre on the other. But it would be difficult to find evidence of the influence of the artists they admired.

104. E.g. H.S. Watts, op.cit., p.146.
106. Ibid., p.194.
107. Ibid., p.195.
108. Ibid., p.197.
in their work.

However despite the lack of evidence of direct influence there was a great deal written on this subject. Artists were exhorted to study carefully the old masters, by Lord Lindsay in his post-scriptum to Sketches of the History of Christian Art,¹⁰⁹ by Charles Heath Wilson in two articles entitled "Suggestions to Students of Art about to visit Italy" in the Art Journal in 1851,¹¹⁰ On the other hand, artists were warned against studying too uncritically the Primitives, because of fears of retrograding influences. C.R. Leslie in his biography of Constable warned of the dangers of the "historical" of early art.¹¹¹ It was a sign of the more controversial atmosphere surrounding the Primitives that biographers of early nineteenth-century admirers of early painting should take it upon themselves to qualify their enthusiasm. Thus George Jones, Keeper of the Royal Academy, in his Life of Sir Francis Chantrey, writes that though Chantrey's respect for the old masters was great, he certainly did not under-estimate their defects or think it desirable to retrace their steps.¹¹² Similarly, Anna Bray in her biography of Thomas Stothard, declared her conviction that he would have greatly disliked the present growing fashion among some of our young artists of imitating the hard style and quaint attitudes and devices of the Gothic ages.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹. Lindsay, op. cit., vol.iii, p.419.
¹¹³. Life of Thomas Stothard, op.cit., pp.73-82.
Fears about the baneful effects on British art fostered a more critical attitude towards the Primitives and their defects. Yet, it must be repeated that it is difficult to find much evidence of actual influence. What this reveals is the literary basis of interest. People were much more familiar with what was said about the Primitives, than what they actually looked like. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the history of the formation of and reaction to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.
CHAPTER VII

The Pre-Raphaelites and the Primitives

One evening in September 1848, seven young men, five of them students at the Royal Academy, formed themselves into a society dedicated to the reformation of modern British art. This they decided to call the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Its leaders were William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. It is a well known fact that although they called themselves Pre-Raphaelites they knew very little about art before Raphael. It would be useful therefore to consider the events leading to the formation of the Brotherhood and the importance of early art within the context of their ideas.

The origins of the Brotherhood seem to lie in conversations between Holman Hunt and Millais, Hunt doing most of the talking. Dissatisfaction was two-fold: the inanity of the subjects of modern paintings, covered up by brilliant-seeming and sloppily painted effects, and dislike of the teaching methods at the Royal Academy schools and the principles on which they were founded, namely the instilling in students of "correct" ideas of beauty, deduced from the Antique and the painters of the High Renaissance and the Bolognese, through the copying of approved models. They resolved, said Hunt, to sweep aside the deadening and artificial conventions of floral making. They would no longer see through the eyes of other painters, but refer to their own experience and the facts of the world around them. Whatever the subject --
religious, historical or literary -- they would try to envisage the scene as it might have happened, not as it might gracefully be arranged. Like scientists they would describe the emotional and physical facts of life, with nature as their guide, not dead tradition. One corollary of these ideas was that scenes set out of doors should be painted out of doors directly onto the canvas, not as studies to be worked upon later in the studio. Hunt had read Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, and in his attack on the academic system on the ground of natural truth was obviously influenced by what he had read. 1

Rossetti became involved when he sought out Hunt for instruction in painting. He had been delighted with his *The Eve of St Agnes* exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1846, a painting illustrating a poem by Keats, much beloved by him, and scarcely known to the reading public. An aspiring poet as well as painter, Rossetti steeped himself in the romantic literature of the Middle Ages and his own century. He was enthusiastic, energetic, bursting with ideas and visions, bored to death with academic routine and conscious of his own technical deficiencies as an artist. He was ready to agree in any attack on the system he hated, especially as he had recently discovered Blake's *Notebooks* with their disparaging remarks on Reynolds' *Discourses*.

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1. He borrowed *Modern Painters* indirectly from Wyseman. It is not clear from his account in his *Pre-Raphaelite* or in the *Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* for what volume he was most aware. One wonders whether this was the first or second volume. He says it was the first, but on the other hand he takes Huskin's remarks about Tintoretto, which appear in the second volume. However by 1846 it appears that he had read both volumes (vol.1, p.95).
Hunt's ideas about painting directly from nature would not have been new to Rossetti. In his quest for help he had previously approached Ford Madox Brown, a painter who became closely associated with the Pre-Raphaelites, but who was never a member of the Brotherhood. Whether or not he was asked to join is uncertain, but he was some six or seven years older than the others and disliked cliques. Brown had trained abroad in Belgium, first in the Neoclassical style, and then under Baron Wappers, a leader in the new Romantic school. But Brown was a very independent painter. In the 1840s he experimented in painting directly from nature. In 1845 he travelled in Italy, where he was deeply impressed by the great Italian fresco masters. In Rome he met Cornelius and Overbeck, whose influence he had earlier felt in his entries for the Cartoon competitions for the Houses of Parliament, unsuccessful but admired by both Rossetti and Benjamin Haydon.

Rossetti was responsible for the expansion of the embryonic society, believing that the new programme was one to be carried out by numbers. He brought in his younger brother, William Michael, a civil servant who had never painted, Thomas Woolner, a sculpture student, and James Collinson, who left the Brotherhood in 1850 to study for the priesthood. Hunt, somewhat alarmed, introduced his friend Frederick Stephens, and set the upper limit at seven.

This very disparate band of young men were bound as much in good fellowship as by common ideals. Their ideals were in fact never clearly established. There was no
manifesto issued. There was no declaration of aims in their short-lived magazine, The Germ, which ran for four issues in the beginning of 1850, unless we accept William Rossetti's incomprehensible sonnet on the cover.

But if there was no ideology, there was a certain imaginativeness of ideas and of style also in the two and a half years that the Brotherhood had real meaning and value. They were agreed in their criticisms of the art of their day, and in their determination to startle the older generation. For a time Hunt's dictum of patient study of nature was adhered to. Even Rossetti, who found it very difficult indeed, finished two paintings in this manner, and half-completed a third.

Another cherished idea of Hunt's, of making art "a handmaid in the cause of justice and truth",² found less general acceptance, although all were agreed on the importance of being sincere, and eschewing subjects of immoral intent and the false representation of sham sentiment.

From the doctrine of faithful submission to nature one might have expected realistic paintings like those of their French contemporary, Courbet. In fact despite the meticulous detail -- and in part because of --, the effect of Pre-Raphaelite paintings is often far from realistic. And this is because, rather paradoxically, while asserting the modern and scientific character of their art reformation, the Pre-Raphaelites claimed inspiration from an spiritual affinity

² *Pre-Raphaelism*, p.137.
with artists of the period before Raphael.

Millais had been away when Rossetti was busy increasing their numbers, and was not pleased to find on his return that now they were seven, particularly as the four new recruits were quite unproved as artists. Deciding that they must be tested, he invited them all around one evening and brought out for their perusal a copy of Lorio's engravings of the Campo Santo at Pisa (Fig. 23).

"Now, look here", said Millais, speaking for himself and Hunt who were both jealous of others joining them without a distinct understanding of their object, "this is what the Pre-Raphaelite clique should follow." However these and other "somewhat archaic" designs being much admired, it was agreed that it might be safe to accept the additional four members on probation.

As for the name, "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood", while it is pretty certain that Rossetti thought of calling their society a "Brotherhood", accounts of the origins of "Pre-Raphaelite" vary. Hunt's version is that when their fellow students heard their heretical ideas on the pernicious influence of Raphael and his followers on the course of art, they called them "Pre-Raphaelites", and they laughingly agreed with this designation. 5 Hadex Brown thought he might have been responsible, as he had told Rossetti about the

1. Giovanni Carlo Lorio, Pintura a fresco del Campo di Santo a Pisa (Firenze, 1862).
German Pre-Raphaelites. While another account suggests that Rossetti might have been attracted to the name when he found out that Keats was also an admirer of early art.

The evening with the Campo Santo engravings, and the name chosen for their clique, indicate that some importance was attached to early art, by some of the members anyway. One doubts whether Woolner was perfectly sincere in his admiration. William Bell Scott, a close friend of the Pre-Raphaelites in their early years, once advised Woolner to study the statues in the porches of Chartres Cathedral, but Woolner repudiated mediaeval influences. And Rossetti, with Brown later recalled, came to him "laughing or more or less joking" about the frescoes, although when Brown told him they were the finest things in the world and Rossetti had thought about this he came to agree.

As the Pre-Raphaelites did not put their ideas down in writing very much, it is difficult to know how important the Primitives were to them. We have an article on early Italian art by Stephens in The Germ. Stephens had the reputation of being the best informed on the subject. In this same journal is Rossetti's short story "Hand and Soul",

10. Written under the pseudonym of "John Seward".
about an imaginary 13th century painter Chiaro dell'Erma, who shows that his knowledge of early Italian painting is very limited indeed. Then there is "A Dialogue on Art", by John Orchard, hardly known to the Brotherhood at all. Some articles by William Rossetti and Stephens who both became art critics in the 1850s are also useful. Otherwise we have to rely on what people thought they thought in remembrance written long after the event. Hunt's book is the most detailed, but he wrote it sixty years later and it is not very objective.

The most succinct summary of Pre-Raphaelite attitudes towards the primitives is in an article on Pre-Raphaelitism by William Rossetti which appeared in *The Spectator* in October 1851:

The painters before Raphael had worked in often more than partial ignorance of the positive rules of art, and utterly unaffected by conventional rules. These were not known of in their days; and they neither invented nor discovered them. It is to the latter fact and not the former, that the adoption of the name 'Preraphaelites' by the artists in question is to be ascribed. Preraphaelites truly they are — but of the nineteenth century. Their aim is the same — truth; and their process the same — exactitude of study from nature: but their practice is different, for their means are enlarged. Nor is it in direction; but in tone, of mind — in earnestness and thoroughness — that they are otherwise identified with their prototypes.
academic conventionalism. At first there was no connection
made between conventionalism and the classical revival, at
least not by the Pre-Raphaelites. But William Rossetti,
writing in The Spectator in 1854, has studied his Ruskin:
the pagan spirit which fostered the Renaissance movement,
though absorbed by the great, was destructive in smaller
res.

What was most impressive in the Primitives was the
close study and faithful depiction of nature. Hunt
remembers that they found the Campo Santo engravings
remarkable "for incident derived from attentive observations
of inexhaustible nature" as well as for the "quaint charms
of invention". This "patient manipulation" Hunt also
found in the great masters of the sixteenth century, though
overlooked by modern artists — in the dandelion clock of
Raphael's St Catherine and in the purple flags of Titian's
Sacchus and Ariadne. Stephens, in his article in The
Spectator, writes of the "patient devotedness" of the early
Italians. Masaccio, stronger and purer than the Caracci,

represents nature with more true feeling and love,
with a deeper insight into her tenderness, he
follows her more humbly, and has produced to us
more of her simplicity; we feel his appeal to be
more earnest: it is the crying out of the man with
none of the strut of the actor.

12. "Epochs of Art as represented in the Crystal Palace", Art, pp.88-9. Published originally in The
14. This., p.54.
15. The Art. Thoughts Towards Nature in Poetry, Literature
He also maintains that the gaunt length and slenderess of their figures was no distortion: they were simply following their models.

Their freedom from academic conventions had been a factor in the revival of the reputation of the Primitives since the late eighteenth century. Their art was more natural than that of the Bolognese in the sense that it was less artificial. They were praised for their sincerity and lack of affectation in their treatment of their subjects, and the subordination of effect to meaning. However, around the middle of the nineteenth century one finds interest in the Primitives as natural painters in the sense of being students of the facts and phenomena of nature. When Dyce was studying Pintericchio in Italy in 1845 he admired him for his truth of local colour. He also commented on "the kind of open daylight reality obtained by the early painters". Ford Madox Brown's interest in natural truth was also stimulated by his study of the early masters.

Ford, in the second volume of Modern Painters and in the third edition of the first volume, drew attention to their faithful transcription of plants and open skies.

Froun's admiration for early painters seems to have stopped at this point: a properly humble and reverent attitude to nature. When he uses the word "purity" it is

16. Froun, p.68.
18. Froun, op.cit., p.5-6.
mostly in an artistic sense; he traces the purity of work in the quattrocentists to the drilling of undeviating manipulation furnished by fresco painting. However Stephens and William Rossetti begin to approach the Purist worship of early art as expressed by Rio, Lord Lindsay, and by Ruskin in the second volume of Modern Painters. They refer to the loftiness of conception, to the predominance of mind over body. The soul is not forgotten for the hand. At the same time they appear to have little sympathy with the religious aspirations of early art. Orchard's article, which maintained that the only chaste art was Christian art and the only acceptable guide mediaeval art, seemed "to out-P.R. the P.R.B." in William Rossetti's opinion.

The only two really religious Brothers were Hunt and Collinson. Of the others, Millais dabbled with High Anglicanism for a while but his feelings did not run very deep, William Rossetti was a sceptic, and Dante attracted to the mystical and ritualistic aspects of religion. Hunt's religious feeling was quite remote from any mediaevalism. He wanted to create a religious art which would speak to his own time, not evoke the past. As for Collinson, such was the conflict he felt between his Catholicism and being a Pre-Raphaelite, that he left the Brotherhood. He could not, he wrote in a very confused letter to Dante, "conscientiously, as a Catholic, assist in spreading the artistic opinions of those who are not". This was of course the most effective

21. Ibid., p. 275.
answer to those who suspected the Pre-Raphaelites of Romanist tendencies.

Of course there was to be no question of the Pre-Raphaelites imitating the style of the early artists. They were as alive to their "defects" as any of their contemporaries. Hunt says that they did not curb their amusement at the technical deficiencies of the Campo Santo frescoes. Probably they did not. But it should be added that in the Pre-Raphaelite circle were expressed ideas which made a virtue of these deficiencies. John Tupper, a sculptor and friend and fellow student of Hunt, wrote in The Germ:

Indeed some specimens of early Christian Art are repulsive rather than beautiful, yet those are in many cases the highest works of Art.22

And William Rossetti wrote in The Spectator in 1854:

The beauty of imperfection, indeed, is among the most human and spiritual excellences of art. It interests the sympathy and inspirits ... (The artist's) mind and head ... would lose evidence of their energy in proportion to the manual freedom.23

To devote so much attention to analysing Pre-Raphaelite ideas and attitudes about their namesakes is perhaps to imply that they were more interested than in fact they were.

Their knowledge of early paintings was, necessarily, limited. None of them had travelled abroad at the time of the formation of the Brotherhood. The National Gallery had six paintings which, according to the definition of the period, could be classified as "early" — a Bellini, a Perugino, two Franches,

van Eyck's Jan Arnolfini and His Wife, and two panels of an altarpiece by Lorenzo Monaco, presented to the Gallery in 1848 by the collector, William Coningham. When Hunt first visited the Gallery in 1841 his disappointment at finding the masterpieces as brown as his grandmother's tea-tray was partly compensated by his pleasure with Francia's Lead Christ. At Hampton Court could be seen Holbein and Mantegna's Triumphs of Caesar.

At the British Museum could be seen illuminated manuscripts, and in the Print Room, drawings, engravings and wood-cuts. They could see Italian drawings dating from the fourteenth century, among them work attributed to the Bellini, Gossoli, Ghirlandajo, Filippo Lippi, Perugino, Pollaiuolo and Perugino. There was also a collection of niello plates (including one — a Pieta — referred to by Stephens in his article in The Germ) and engravings, most of these Florentine and North Italian. More influential were the examples of Northern art, which included the important folio from the Sloane request with 222 drawings attributed to Dürer. There were also other Dürer drawings, and drawings of Holbein and Martin Schongauer. Flemish drawings numbered only a few. There was also a large collection of woodcuts and engravings, Dürer being again very well represented.

From the sources available to them which they made use of, it is clear that the Pre-Raphaelites could form a clearer image of Northern art than of the Italians. Jan Arnolfini was a far better introduction to Northern painting than were any of the Italian works in the National Gallery to that of the North. Also the collection of wood-cuts and engravings
in the Print Room was more important for an understanding of German and Flemish art than for the Italians. 25 On the other hand, it was essential for a study of Italian art to see its frescoes, and the Pre-Raphaelites had not been to Italy.

It seems that the Pre-Raphaelites may not have taken advantage of all the possibilities for seeing the Primitives at the time. The British Institution Old Masters Exhibitions of 1845 and 1847 contained a few early works, including paintings ascribed to Van Eyck and Holbein, and Crivelli's Ascension. In 1848 a whole room was devoted to the Primitives, and in the summer of the same year could be seen the Prince Oettingen-Wallerstein collection of early paintings, mostly Flemish and German. But there is no evidence of any of the Pre-Raphaelites having seen these exhibitions.

A last source of information for them would have been through reproductions of early work in books and journals. Mr. Jameson's Memoirs of Early Italian Painters (1845), illustrated with very crude engravings, appeared first in the Penny Magazine in 1843 and 1844. And we know that Hunt derived much of his information from this journal. 26 Lasinio's illustrations were among the least offensive.

Although none of the Brothers had been abroad at the time of the formation of the Brotherhood, Hunt and Rossetti

25. The early German influences on the Pre-Raphaelites, see John Rae, "Early German Sources for Pre-Raphaelite Design", The Art Quarterly, vol.xxxxvi (Spring/Summer, 1984), pp.29-35.
spent a month in Paris and Belgium in the autumn of 1849.
Hunt was interested chiefly in modern painting, but Rossetti's
tastes ranged much wider. Van Dyck was the painter whose
glory was extended in Hunt's appreciation; Rossetti was
more enthusiastic about the early paintings they saw. They
had gone to Ghent and Bruges at the recommendation of the
painter Augustus Egg. Hunt admired "the exquisite
delicacy of the workmanship and the unpretending character
of the invention" of Van Eyck, but Rossetti's admiration
for the paintings of Van Eyck and Memling went far beyond
this. They were a revelation to him. He wrote to the other
members of the Brotherhood:

I assure you that the perfection of character
and even drawing, the astounding finish, the
glory of colour, and above all the pure religious
sentiment and ecstatic poetry of these works, is
not to be conceived or described.29

Hunt clearly did not approve of Rossetti's enthusiasm for the
"pure religious sentiment and ecstatic poetry". Rossetti,
was "led to love these paintings beyond their real claim
by reason of the mystery of the subjects".30 Hunt says
that they came back with richer minds, but without change
of purpose. This may have been true for him, but what
Rossetti had seen in Belgium had an important influence on
his development of a style more suited to his inclinations
and needs than Hunt's stern naturalism.

27. Iti., p.197.
Rossetti, ed. Gerald B.cdf and John Keats Hunt,
The image of the Primitives as faithful adherents to the facts of nature, which the others came to share with Hunt, seems to have been formed mostly from what they had seen, although Ruskin obviously had some influence. From what the Pre-Raphaelites had seen -- the Flemish paintings, the wood-cuts and etchings of Durer, the illustrations after Gossoli, a painter who took much delight in anecdote and incidental detail, they came to the conclusion that close observation was characteristic of all painting before Raphael. In other words, although they transferred certain preconceptions back to early art, their conclusions were influenced by what they had seen.

Apart from what they had read and seen for themselves, two other influences helped to mould their ideas. The first was Ford Madox Brown. On his way to Italy in 1845 he had passed through Basel, and had seen the Holbeins there. He had travelled quite extensively in Italy and had seen much in the way of early painting. Twenty years afterwards he remembered admiring the frescoes of Giotto, Masaccio, and Fra Angelico. Early Italian and Nazarene influences were clearly discernible in two paintings which were in Brown's studio when Rossetti was working there in the spring and summer of 1843: Wycliffe reading his Translation of the Bible to John of Gaunt, in the Presence of Chaucer and Gower, shown at the Free Exhibition that year, and Chaucer at the Court of Edward III, begun in Rome in 1845 and not completed until 1851. Chaucer had been originally planned as a triptych, but

Kadox Brown abandoned his scheme for painting major English poets in the wings. However the finished painting is shaped like an altarpiece. So is *Wycliffe*, which even has two painted roundels inserted in the frame. The internal construction of these two paintings is based on the sacra conversazione format. Despite Hunt's later denials, Kadox Brown influenced the Pre-Raphaelites. William Rossetti said that *Wycliffe*, "in its bright but rather pale colouring, lightness of surface, and general feeling of quietism, had beyond a doubt served in some respects to mould the ideas and beacon the practice of the P.R.B.'s". And Stephens said much the same thing.  

The other influence came through Millais' friends at Oxford. Oxford was a centre for Purism. Hunt, who spent the Christmas of 1851 there, later recalled the danish love for Aby Scheffer and Overbeck, "examples of whose works were displayed with pride on the walls of the most advanced of art admirers". He had been the guest of the Combes. Thomas Combe was the Director of the Clarendon Press and a practical supporter of the Oxford Movement. Millais, who had first met him in 1848, called him the "Early Christian". Through Millais Combe began forming a collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Millais was also at this time very friendly with Charles Collins, brother of the novelist, a Royal Academy student, and a devout Ritualist. There is no

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doubt that Millais was affected by these contacts. It was he who brought out the Campo Santo engravings, and he toyed with the idea of forming a monastic-like community of artists.

Hunt is very critical of "Early Christian" tendencies in his book. They are damned variously as antiquarianism, mediaevalism, German and quattrocento revivalism. They are characterized -- or rather stigmatized -- as attempts to imitate the actual style of the Primitives, defects and all. The Nazarenes are the ones to blame. They influenced Madox Brown, who in turn influenced Rossetti (although Hunt was able to keep him to the path of nature for a time). This revivalism, he insisted, had nothing to do with true Pre-Raphaelitism. Hunt was rather annoyed with Rossetti, who had picked up from Madox Brown the habit of calling their movement "Early Christian". Clearly he was jealous of claims to leadership of the movement made in the name of Brown and Rossetti.

Yet there is no denying the "Early Christian" influences on the art as well as the ideas of the Pre-Raphaelites. Even Hunt was affected by modern German prints of the Nazaréne school. All the same, there were crucial differences between the Nazarénes and High Anglicanism, see Raymond Redington, Pre-Raphaelite Art and Religion (London, 1970), pp. 88-9; Alan Morice, "The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the Anglican High Church", Burlington Magazine, vol. cxvi., p. 168, p. 168-9.

25. It may be that Millais already had "Early Christian" tendencies. He had painted a small window in his studio with Gothic figures and patterns in imitation of stained glass (Litt., p. 60).


the German and English Pre-Raphaelites, although they both believed that art had strayed from its true path after Raphael, and that the key to its reformation lay with his precursors. But whereas for the Nazarenes the significance of early art was its religious content, for the Pre-Raphaelites it was the intent examination of nature.39

Hunt makes the usual accusation that the Nazarenes initiated the older masters. Although this is not true it is evident that they had studied their works. The Pre-Raphaelites had not studied the Primitives. Therefore one would not expect to find any stylistic resemblance. However their work does reveal features which are referable to their masters: bright clear colours, absence of dramatic chiaroscuro effects, careful attention to detail. In addition, their spatial organization appears to reflect that they had seen in Lasinio's engravings. The action often takes place in a very shallow area at the front, which is cut off from the rest of the picture. Millais also seems to have been influenced by Gozzoli's Marriage of Beatrice and Isma in his composition for Isabella (1849) (Figs. 23, 24). Although the table recedes back sharply it does not create any sense of depth.

There is another quality which early Pre-Raphaelite works have in common, and this is a certain ungainliness and angularity which, for want of a better word, may be described as "erotic". In the case of Rossetti and Stephens this was partly the result of technical incompetence. But for Hunt and especially Millais, it must have been a style deliberately

adopted. It may have been because of their anxiety to avoid conventional and empty graces. Perhaps it also reflected the influence of the idea, popular among devotees of "Early Christian" art, that awkwardness was a sign of sincerity. In early Pre-Raphaelite drawings this archaism is even more pronounced, for instance, if we compare Hunt's drawing for Claudio and Isabella of 1850 with the painting, completed in 1853 (Figs. 25, 27). This awkwardness also bears a suspicious resemblance to Richard Doyle's cartoons, lampooning the fresco experiment in the Palace at Westminster.40 (Fig. 26.).

Another Purist feature of early Pre-Raphaelite art was the predominance of religious and mediaeval subjects. It was not until 1851 that the first subject with a modern setting, Millais' The Woodman's Daughter, was exhibited at the Royal Academy. Lastly, the practice adopted of painting on a wet white ground was influenced by fresco and its revival in the decoration of the Houses of Parliament.

The Pre-Raphaelite assault was to be made on the walls of the Royal Academy, at their annual exhibition, which was the principal market-place for modern art in England. Rossetti balked out at the last minute, however, and sent his Girlhood of Mary Virgin to the Free Exhibition, where anyone who paid could have their picture hung. Hunt and Millais were much

40. A. Cope wrote, with some truth: "The frequent caricatures in Punch were perhaps more influential in spreading the "German" style than the originalists themselves", Early Victorian England, p.150.
annoyed at this, for they justifiably felt that the impact of the Brotherhood would be diminished by this separation. As the Free Exhibition opened before the Royal Academy, Rossetti's work was the first reviewed. At least seven of the reviews compared it with the Primitives — two are recalled of the "early school", two of the "early Florentines", one of the early Italians, one of "the old missal style", and the last calls the painting "early Christian". The aspects of the painting which are seen as revivalist are: the design, "partaking of the hard manner of the period", absence of shade, the elaboration of details and high finish. There were also the mental qualities revealed, the sincerity, earnestness, with "much of that sacred mysticism inseparable from the works of early masters". Hadox Brown's Cordelia at the bedside of Lear in the same exhibition, was similarly identified, though not as well received as Rossetti's picture. The Athenæum and the Art Journal are particularly warm in their praise.

Hunt and Millais could also be satisfied with their reviews. Brown is assuredly a work of a man of genius, writes the Art Journal, and Millais' Lorenzo and Isabella is in example of "rare excellence and learning". Both works are linked with early painting, though not as consistently as

41. W. G. are the Builder, vol.vii (31 March, 1849); Evening Chronicle (26 March, 1849); Art Journal (May, 1849); Examiner (17 April, 1849); Contemporary Review (4-5 April, 1849); Literary Gleanings and Other Literary Journal (21 March, 1849); Examiner's Annual, vol.xi (July, 1849).
42. Examiner, op.cit., p.1.
43. Examiner, op.cit., p.168.
44. Art Journal (1 June, 1849), p.171.
had occurred with Rossetti. There is a word of warning from the *Athenaeum* about the dangers of imitating what is obsolete and dead in practice. 45

It is clear that most critics recognized these paintings as adhering to a style already familiar to them. They belonged to the "Early Christian" revival, already seen in its paintings of J.R. Herbert, Daniel Maclise and William Dyce, and in the work of a newcomer, Ford Madox Brown.

Although the Pre-Raphaelites were pleased that their paintings were approved of, they must have been a little disappointed to find them classified as belonging to an existing style, and the originality of their art reformation misunderstood.

If this should have happened is not surprising since it was dressed up in mediæval costume. But as an attempt to awaken English art out of its complacency, their first assault was rather a fizzle.

The situation was reversed in 1850, when the Pre-Raphaelites were not just well-known, but notorious. Rossetti and Walter Deverell (a close associate) sent their paintings to the Free Exhibition, Rossetti, Ecce Ancilla Maria, and Deverell, Twelfth Night. At the Royal Academy were *Hunt's Druid picture, Collinson's Answering the Messenger* and Charles Collins' The Pedlar. Millais' most important contributions were Christ in the House of His Parents and Ferdinand Lured by Ariel.

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12. The title of this painting is *A Converted British Family* and *A Christian Priest with his People*. On *the latter*.
13. Also known as *The Carpenter's Shop*. It was exhibited without a title.
By the beginning of May the meaning of the secret initials "P.R.B." had been leaked, and was brought to the notice of the public in a snide paragraph in the Illustrated London News. There, the journalist Angus Reach, told his readers of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, who professed themselves practitioners of Early Christian art, and devoted their energies "to the reproduction of saints squeezed out perfectly flat ... -- their appearance being further improved by their limbs being stuck akimbo; so as to produce a most interesting series of angles and finely-developed elbows".

The press threw itself into the attack. The idea of a Brotherhood (the word alone was suspect) of artists, and bel-society students at that, dedicated to the overthrow of the academic tradition and preaching a return to the imitation of art in its infancy and a literal transcription of nature, was a heresy to be stamped out very quickly. It, as it seems, their choice of the name "Pre-Raphaelite" had been partly a joke, in adolescent defiance against the most secret name in Art, the joke had been turned against them.

Rossini got off quite lightly. The most severe criticism came from Frank Stone in the Athenaeum, and then...

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49 The Pre-Raphaelite apparently appealed to the young students at the R.A., who liked the "anarchy" of it; the older academicians to be vexed; and what a concept we had for the sleepy old conventional school, so content in its narrow ways, so respectable in its entire absence of virile enthusiasm," Thus recalled William Holman, A.M.C. Stirling, The Aesthetic in Art, Correspondence and Memoirs of William Holman Hunt, (London, 1869), p. 93.
his painting was attacked more as an example of a particular school. Notwithstanding, he resolved never to exhibit in public again. Ecce Ancilla Domini, though a little awkward and inexpert, did not offend critics in the way that Hunt's picture and Millais' The Carpenter's Shon did. They were shocked by their ugliness—the clumsy poses of the figures and their repulsive faces. Millais' painting was especially reviled, for it committed the additional sin of irreverent treatment of a sacred subject. It was a "pictorial blasphemy" as well as a study in human deformity, dirt and disease. It was a field day for popular journalism. Dickens made his scurrilous attack on the picture in Household Words. Punch analysed it as a faithful study of a disease it called "the sordid or strumous diathesis". Frank Stee, although more measured in his criticism of the P.R.B., was no less damning. "Abruptness, singularity, uncouthness, are the counters with which they play for fame". Ralph Vernon in the Art Journal described how this new school

breathe in the spirit of its works the miserable absurdism of the darkest middle ages; and exhibit in their execution quite the extreme worst littleness of style that ever disfigured the works of any of the early middle-age masters.

The intensity of the assault can be exaggerated. A number of reviewers acknowledged a certain power and originality, though misdirected. The Builder agreed there was need for reform, although its expression had been unfortunate. The Guardian reviewer was very sympathetic,

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and praised the intensity of expression and faithful transcription of nature. 54 William Rossetti, who had been appointed art critic for the Critic was able to defend his brethren in its pages, and suggest that there were not imitators of early art. 55 But he was alone in this.

In 1851 the Hanging Committee of the Royal Academy accepted Pre-Raphaelite works again. Millais was represented by The Return of the Dove to the Ark, Mariana of the Noated Graces, and The Woodman's Daughter, Hunt by Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus, and Charles Collins by Convent Thoughts. The attack was resumed. The Times declared that these "offensive jests" 56 must no longer be allowed to disgrace the walls of the Academy. Sir Charles Eastlake was reported to have said privately that it was the last year that P.R.B. painting would be admitted. 57

The Brethren were worried. Coventry Patmore, at the instigation of either Millais or Woolner, went to ask Ruskin if he could help them. Ruskin had not really taken much notice of Pre-Raphaelite work (although the previous year Eyre had made him take a second look at Millais' The Gerhardt Hop). He found a group of painters practising acts or lines what he had preached. In two letters to The

57. The source of this story appears to be Mary Howitt, "An Involuntary Eulogy," Margaret Howitt, A Voice (London, 1856), p.72. The Royal Academy was in no manner united against the Pre-Raphaelites, and they had many friends and supporters there: Augustus Egg, Sir, Harcourt, Lear, Ward, Leslie, Herbert, etc., etc.
After, published on the 13th and the 30th May, he cleared
them of the charges of technical inaccuracy. Furthermore
he declared that "they intend to return to early days in this
one point only -- that as far as in them lies, they will
draw either what they see, or what they suppose might have
been the actual facts of the scene they desire to represent".58
In short, they were returning not to archaic art, but to
archaic honesty. Ruskin had some doubts, expressed in his
first letter, about Romanist and tractarian tendencies
revealed in their work. However, being reassured on this
score, he is able to repudiate these suspicions in the
second letter. Ruskin continued to defend the Pre-Raphaelites,
in a pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelitism (1851) and his lectures at
Edinburgh (1853). They do not add anything new, and are
in fact mostly devoted to demonstrating that the aims of
Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites are basically the same. It
has been argued that Ruskin distorted Pre-Raphaelite ideas
to suit his own theories. It is true that he attributed
his coherent artistic programme to them, but on the whole
is described fairly what they were trying to do. This is
not surprising since Hunt's ideas had been influenced by
Johann Peter von Miller. Ruskin was by no means the only one to
come to the defence of the Pre-Raphaelites, but his voice
carried the most weight. Ruskin did not silence criticism.
Indeed the base of the attack was broadened to include
Ruskinism as well as Pre-Raphaelitism, but his support does
still to have helped to end the campaign against the P.R.A.
Ruskin's defence of the Pre-Raphaelites is important in
three regards. Firstly, there is the denial in his second letter to the _Times_ of Romanist tendencies. Secondly, he attempted to clear them of charges of antiquarianism. Thirdly, he maintained that the aims of the Pre-Raphaelites and their namesakes were identical: unswerving devotion to the portrayal of nature.

Given the subject matter of some of the paintings shown in 1850 and 1851 and the general hysteria about popish plots, it is surprising that more was not made of possible Romanist tendencies in Pre-Raphaelite art. Worrall certainly referred to torrid and unhealthy asceticism, but he had in mind more the positive ugliness of their pictures. The only suggestions I could find that the Pre-Raphaelites might return to the religion of the Middle Ages as well as its art are by John Bellantyne and the Rev. Edward Young, who suspected that, despite what Ruskin had written, the Pre-Raphaelites might follow the Nazarenes into the papal fold, and that their work was a serious attempt to bring back popish principles into art. Cardinal Wiseman did not seem to recognize them as potential members of his flock. The school clearly wanted those religious influences which might enable it become 'the germ of a truly Christian school of art. At present, with some exceptions, it stands to real Christian art, as the work of Duccio di Buonincontro do to those of Beato Angelico.'

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30. _Art Journal_ (July, 1851), p.156.
31. Edward Young, _Pre-Raffaellitiain, or a Popular Exposition of the Peculiar Principles and Object of the English Art Movement_ (London, 1850).
32. Sermon on Various Subjects, _C.S.C._, pp.585-590, that has a reference to the article on Christian art, originally published in 1847.
Suspicion of Romanism may have been more general. After all, Rossetti did change the title of Ecce Ancilla Domini to The Annunciation, to avoid the imputation of Romanism associated with familiarity with the Latin tongue. Perhaps the Pre-Raphaelites were linked more with Tractarianism than Catholicism as such. The British Quarterly Review expressed its dislike for the "Puseyite-type mediaevalism" and "paltry affection" for the Middle Age ecclesiasticism found in some of their works. Probably any incipient campaign against papist sympathies was nipped in the bud by the support of the arch-Protestant, Ruskin. There was nothing in their subjects after 1851, apart from Millais' Isle of Hate in 1859, to lend credence to such suspicions.

Ruskin's defence of the Pre-Raphaelites shifted the direction of criticism away from revivalism to naturalism. This is most evident in reviews of particular paintings, where the Pre-Raphaelites are attacked for their unselective and indiscriminate imitation of nature. All the same, the extent to which antiquarianism remained an issue throughout the 1850s is surprising, particularly in general discussions in articles, pamphlets, and lectures. It is all the more surprising when one remembers that both Millais and Hunt had moved away from that archaism which gave a certain unity to the early works of the Pre-Raphaelites. The work of the followers they were beginning to attract had no connection at all with the Primitives. And Rossetti, who was developing a very personal kind of mediaevalism, was not exhibiting. Not as late as 1851 one finds Frank Stone's criticisms in...
1850 being repeated. Stone had written that the Pre-Raphaelites, "professing to look only to Nature in its truth and simplicity are the slavish imitators of artistic inefficiency". In 1861, one finds in the Dublin University Magazine:

Under the guise of deep devotion to the teaching of natural facts, painters of the new school would win public favour by utterly ignoring the great achievements of modern art, and galvanizing into a moment's life, the long-buried monsters of a comparatively barbarous age.

The commonest accusation was that the Pre-Raphaelites imitated the defects of an age which painting had advanced far beyond, ignoring aerial and mathematical perspective, chiaroscuro, beauty of the human face, form and gesture, and perversely adopting a crude colouring and a cramped style. The defects of early art sometimes indeed gave it a quaint charm, but in the hands of imitators this became affectation and mannerism. Moreover these defects were exaggerated by the imitators.

What really angered critics was that the Pre-Raphaelites defied all the progress art had made in the previous four and a half centuries, and returned to the faltering steps and childish babblings of art in its infancy. "As reasonably sight we, in an age of steam-ships and steam-guns, traverse the Bosphorus in a galleon and assault Sebastopol with the trebuchet", declared Hart in his inaugural lecture as Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy in 1855. The

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53. Athenaeum (20 April, 1850), p.484.
Crimson war could not be won by such methods, nor could art advance. C.R. Leslie, Hart's predecessor at the Royal Academy, argued along similar lines. In his *A Hand-Book for Young Painters* (1855), a book largely intended as a corrective against the spreading influence of Ruskinism and Pre-Raphaelitism, he wrote:

A system of imitation that rejects what such men as Titian, Correggio, Rembrandt, Rubens, and Reynolds, have revealed to the world of the beauties of Nature, is based on a mistake as great as it would be in an astronomer to rest satisfied with the state in which Astronomy was left by Copernicus.66

Even granted, as some did, that there were qualities in early art that one could learn from, it was unintelligent to devote oneself exclusively to one school, ignoring the full cycle of Art's history and development.67

The Pre-Raphaelites were also inconsistent in their imitation, since they effected "to treat the human form in the primitive and artless manner of the Middle Ages, while finer accessories are elaborated to a refinement of imitation which belongs to the latest days of executive art".68

Yet the defects which the Pre-Raphaelites copied were not essential characteristics of the art of that era, but accidental accompaniments, resulting from the ignorance of the laws of art. The Primitives were not retrogressive like their modern imitators. They strove to attain beauty of form

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67. e.g., *Edinrgh Review*, vol. x (December, 1855), p.644;
68. Hart, *op.cit.*
and expression, and master the science of their art.

Leslie argued:

In regarding early Italian art, to which attention has of late years been so much attracted, it is of great consequence that we consider this distance from Nature not as a departure from her, but as the nearest approach poets could make to her, — a distance they laboured to shorten with a remarkable steadiness of advance to the consummation of Art in the hands of Michael Angelo and Raphael. 69

John Ballantyne, author of What is Pre-Raphaelitism? (1856), felt sure that Cimabue, Giotto, Masaccio and all the other painters of that time would not have painted as they did had they had the good fortune to be born after Raphael. They would have been the first to recognize and imitate his truth, elegance and beauty.

Dr Waagen lent the weight of his authority in a letter to The Times on the 17th July, 1854. He argued in the first place that it was not possible to revive the spirit of the art of an age long since past. Moreover, it was not because of their defects that the early masters were admired, but in spite of them. Yet it was the defects which the Pre-Raphaelites were imitating. 70

Even accepting Ruskin's assertion that the old masters were faithful students of nature's appearances, it could still be argued that they were defective artists. Their literal transcriptions were an indication of their inability to interpret aright what nature had revealed to them. 71 It was not until the era of Raphael that artists learned to

depict nature properly, both in the sense of achieving a harmonious balance between the parts and the whole, between effects and exact description, and in the sense of the creation of ideal types which eliminated the imperfections which marred the face of nature. In other words, we see here a conflict between a realist and a more academically-influenced view of nature in relation to art. The Pre-Raphaelite dictum of exact imitation of nature, without recourse to the models of later art, could be seen as retrogressive.

In connecting the Pre-Raphaelites with early art some writers attempted to specify artists and periods. The Art Journal was fond of comparing them with the "Giotteschi", that is, with a period of decline after the achievements of Giotto and before the advances of Masaccio. There were also those who thought the name a misnomer, and in the detail and distortion the Pre-Raphaelites were to be compared rather with the early German and Flemish painters, "not calling them Pre-remeneses however, since they are nothing in that glorious direction, but from their remarkable inferiority in all that constitutes pure and harmonious painting, Pre-Remeneses and Pre-Van Eycks".72

There were also those who argued that the Pre-Raphaelites, as well as imitating the imperfections of early art, failed completely to capture its essential spirit. John Dicks in an essay on Pre-Raphaelitism in his book, Things Not Generally Known (1906), very useful as a short summary of prevailing

prejudices, observes that the mediaeval qualities of "grace, purity, beauty and expression they almost entirely miss". According to the Art Journal in 1851:

The true Pre-Raphaelites are distinguished by the simplicity, the ideality, and abstract grandeur of their conceptions, the frequently elegant forms, and the graceful actions of their figures, the sweetness and serenity of their expression, and their abstemious style of colouring. The pseudo Pre-Raphaelites, on the contrary, are remarkable for the affectation and meanness of their conception — their stark, starveling forms, constrained actions, repulsive expression, and gaudy colouring.

Those who defended the Pre-Raphaelites played down the so-called mediaeval aspects of their work, asserting that for them being the revivers of a dead art they were strictly modernists, realistic and scientific in their approach. The appearance of archaism was a species of "baldness" arising out of their desire to be sternly true to nature. They had the same earnestness and sincerity as the early painters, and their detail was in some respects like that of Van Eyck. But this comparison was a way of praising their achievements.

William Bell Scott, for example, looked upon Hunt and Rossetti, when he met them in 1848, as

following their lights and imitating the early manner so well known and much beloved by me in the early performances of the Low Countries I had then lately seen in the Belgian Galleries.

It is interesting that French critics when they first saw Pre-Raphaelite paintings at the International Exhibition

75. Art-Philosophical Notes, op.cit., vol.1, pp.245-9.
in Paris in 1855 were impressed first and foremost with their realism, not with any antiquarianism, although they all compared their work with the Flemish painters, Van Eyck and Van Haelen. They saw hardly any resemblance between the Pre-Raphaelites and their namesakes or the Nazarenes.76

The apologists of the Pre-Raphaelites followed Ruskin also in asserting that the Primitives were more true to nature than their successors:

In all early painters there will be found rigid adherence to the truth of nature. It does not conflict with this assertion, that there is much in nature which they do not represent at all, and much in what they do represent which stops far short of reality. Their works indeed are imperfect, but they are always true. They painted what they saw around them, and where they are unable to do that fully, they give with the utmost accuracy what they can, and use a conventional formula for that which is beyond their power of execution, so that their imperfections and shortcomings shall not defeat the value of that which they do represent.77

What is being maintained is that painting before Raphael is different from painting after Raphael, and not a feeble stepping towards the art of Raphael. In other words, there is a difference in kind, not degree. Humohr, Rio and Lindsey had already maintained that early art was different in kind from the Renaissance, with the opposition of Christian purity and pagan sensuality. But their discussion embraces


77. Theological and Ecclesiastical, vol. xxi (January, 1856).
poreal and religious values only, not artistic ones. In this discussion, however, it is implied that early painters are in some respects superior to their successors as artists, in that in intention, and often in practice, they represented more truthfully the facts of the world around them. It was even claimed that the invention of photography had confirmed that the early masters had struggled earnestly, though sometimes feebly no doubt, to execute their works on the principle that truth is one of the most essential qualities in art.\footnote{78. William Fortescue Johnstone, North British Review, \textit{vol.\textit{nix}} (August, 1858), pp.iii-5.}

The debate about Pre-Raphaelitism, realism and mediaevalism had interesting echoes in Ecclesiological circles. G.E. Street, a friend of Rossetti, Holman Hunt and Madox Brown, gave a paper on "The Future of Art in England" at the anniversary meeting of the Society in 1858. He argued that the Pre-Raphaelite movement in painting was identical with the Gothic movement in architecture. Both advocated the rejection of "false laws and idle traditions" and a return to "natural laws".\footnote{79. Pre-Raphaelite, \textit{vol.nix} (June, 1858), p.234.} Neither were imitators of mediaeval art, but rather wished to work in the spirit of the mediaeval masters.

The arguments were repeated at the anniversary meeting two years later in a general discussion on "The Pedigree of Pre-Raphaelitism, and its connection with the Gothic movement". Two other architects, J.P. Seddon, brother of the Pre-Raphaelite painter Thomas Seddon, and William...
Borges shared his attitudes. But Beresford Hope took a
different line in the short speech opening the debate.
Although mysticism had been one of the principles of the
Pre-Raphaelite movement at its beginning, it was a second
very different principle which had become dominant, "a most
strong and determined realism". The essence of Gothic
architecture, he went on, was the expression of the idea of
infinity in a limited space. "How then could the minute
realism of Pre-Raphaelitism accord with that architecture
which was essentially imaginative and spiritual?" Moreover,
in their treatment of the figure, the Pre-Raphaelites
had none of the "beauty of purity and religious expression"
of the medieval artist. As a believer in the "spiritualism
of Gothic art" he looked to the works of Dyce, Herbert and
Overbeck as its expression in modern painting.

Beresford Hope, although he had reservations about the
Pre-Raphaelites, said that he did not wish to deprecate them.
Yet clearly he was much less enthusiastic than Street: hence
his desire to dissociate the movement from the Gothic revival.

What else emerges from the debate is that there is no
connection between liking the Pre-Raphaelites and liking the
Primitives. Both Beresford Hope and Street appreciate the
eyear masters, Street making a proper feeling for Pre
Raphaelite a test of his own moral state. Ruskin and Dyce
had a high regard for both the early Italians and the Pre-

38. Tait.
40. Tait., p. 249.
raphaelites. Dyce had helped them out in their early years.

On the other hand, A.H. Layard, while applauding their aims criticized their actual achievements. Layard was becoming an authority on early Italian art in the 1850s, and was very active in the Arundel Society. He argued that the Pre-Raphaelites had nothing at all to do with their forerunners. In the first place, the Pre-Raphaelites lacked their innate feeling for grace and beauty. The early masters were always selective in their imitation, seeking the most elevated, refined and dignified in nature. The Pre-Raphaelites too often imitated that which was ugly and degraded. Moreover the early masters, unlike the Pre-Raphaelites, never made their principal purpose subservient to insignificant and meaningless detail.

From the foregoing analysis of reactions to the Pre-Raphaelites, it is apparent that by claiming affinity with painters of the era before Raphael they did themselves more harm than good. They were criticized for imitating the early masters; they were criticized for failing to capture the true spirit of the early masters. As for the effects of the Pre-Raphaelites on attitudes towards the Primitives, this is more complicated. On the positive side, the movement stimulated discussion about the modern relevance of the older

[1] For Layard's attitudes to the Pre-Raphaelites, see his articles on the Manchester Exhibition, Quarterly Review, vol.cxxi (July, 1857), pp.157-161; Esquisses, pp.62-63; and his lectures at the Royal Academy in 1859, Layard Papers, vol.cclxxii, p.141. 1860, 12. 52-5.
sters, not simply in terms of spiritual content but also in relation to their so-called realism. On the negative side, it inspired a good deal of polemic about the defects and deficiencies of the Primitives. Some of the notoriety the Pre-Raphaelites won for themselves rubbed off on their contemporaries, and as a result the Primitives were better known if not better understood. We find critics exhorting the public to go and judge for themselves the similarities and differences between the Pre-Raphaelites and their prototypes, when the opportunities arose for making such a comparison. These opportunities occurred in 1852, when art lovers could go from the Royal Academy exhibition to the Old Masters Exhibition at the British Institution, which contained a number of Primitives. Better still from this point of view was the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857.

The desire that the public should be familiarized with the works of the Primitives, in good reproductions and in originals purchased for the National Gallery, was increased by the controversy over the Pre-Raphaelites. It is high time, declared James Dennistoun in an article on the National Gallery, "that the public should be enabled to see in our National Collection the wide difference between their prototypes and their performances". J.B. Atkinson took a broader view in a review of some Arundel Society reproductions. At a time when the most vital questions concerning art were in doubtful agitation, when Goth was opposed to Classic, Christian to Pagan, when "Pre-Raphaelism" was used as a watchword, and naturalism, spiritualism and...
other pretentious phrases" were bandied about without definite meaning, it was certainly important that the public should see and judge for themselves the works about which such controversies had arisen.

By the middle of the 1850s Millais and Hunt had grown out of their "mediaeval" phase. When Hunt at last came to look at the Primitives he was not very impressed. The Aragones, the Francias, the Botticellis he found disgusting. "The earlier works too, the Orcagnas, the Benozzo Gonzolis, etc. etc. are beyond all patience except as historical studies". Millais was more appreciative. Layard saw him when he was in Florence in 1865, and wrote how delighted he was with Botticelli.

The one original Pre-Raphaelite who was influenced by the Primitives was Rossetti, although he went abroad very seldom and did not ever visit Italy. In 1855 he spent some time with Robert Browning in the Louvre, and was deeply impressed with his knowledge of early Italian art. In the following year he was writing to the poet William Allingham for assistance in a search for an old German print in the Print Room of the British Museum. Earlier this
This year he had seen copies of Italian frescoes by Layard and his assistant Mrs Bigford Burr. They gave "one one's first real chance of forming a congruous idea of early art without going there", he wrote. "Benozzo Gozzoli was a God". He also went to see the exhibition of Arundel Society copies, which included tracings and woodcuts of the Arena chapel frescoes, at the Crystal Palace in Sydenham. He thought the Giottos were "a most glorious treat".

Rossetti's interest in mediaeval art was reflected in small densely-stippled water-colours which he did in the 1850s. In no way did he attempt to imitate earlier art, but he used images and motifs, principally from Flemish painting and illuminated manuscripts, in a very personal way, creating a private symbolic vocabulary. There is no stylistic resemblance with the art he drew inspiration from. It is in the work of his disciple, Edward Burne-Jones, that one finds distinct echoes of earlier art.

When Burne-Jones began painting in the 1850s he worked in a style close to that of Rossetti. From about 1863 he began developing his own personal style, which remained substantially unchanged for the rest of his life. It owed a lot to early Renaissance art, especially quattrocento painting and sculpture.

In 1879 Burne-Jones had gone on a walking tour of northern

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1. Letter, April, 1866. Ibid., p.298.
2. Ibid.
3. Letter, 1 April, 1866. Ibid., p.299.
France, to look at Gothic cathedrals, with William Morris and another friend. In the Louvre,

Morris made Edward shut his eyes and so led him up to Angelico's picture of "The Coronation of the Virgin" before he allowed him to look, and then he was transported with delight.94

But it was not Fra Angelico, but the painters of the next generation, who were to affect him most profoundly. On his first tour to Italy in 1859 and the visits that followed, the painters who delighted him were Carpaccio, Mantegna, Signorelli and Botticelli. These painters did not appeal to him either for their religious content or for their careful observation of nature, but for their beauty, a beauty which to Burne-Jones seemed to be as much the result of the time in which they lived as of their individual sensibilities. This worship of the beauty of quattrocento art and the world it seemed to record was combined with an intense nostalgia for a more lovely past, a pre-industrial Golden Age. He wrote to a friend:

If I could travel backwards I think my heart's desire would take me to Florence in the time of Botticelli. I do real cut of time and place, and think you should let me go on crumbling and mouldering on, for I am not fit for much else but a museum.95

In Burne-Jones' paintings we find reflected late nineteenth-century attitudes to earlier Italian art, attitudes which he in fact helped to mould. There is nothing either of Purism or Realism in this response. Aestheticism had become the determining influence.

CHAPTER VIII

The Arundel Society

Throughout the 1840s and the early 1850s, although it was possible to read a good deal about the Italian Primitives, it was still fairly difficult for the untravelled English man and woman to know just what their art looked like. The debate about the Pre-Raphaelites revealed the extent of the ignorance of their nemesacet. Hence reproductions had an important role to play in the dissemination of knowledge. As was said in the Art-Union review of Seroux d'Agincourt, "all that can be said, and all that has been printed, is at once impressed upon the mind in forms less fugitive than the questionable ideal we derive from the most accurately written description". Undoubtedly the most important work in this area in England were the publications of the Arundel Society, founded in 1848. However, it will be useful to begin with a brief examination of the British contribution to reproductions of the Primitives until the mid nineteenth century.

It comes as no surprise to find that this contribution is as strong as the contribution to art literature. The only series to Thomas Patch's pioneering engravings after frescoes in the church of the Carmine in Florence were the ten volumes and Augustus Callcott's "recollections" of a life of the Arena chapel frescoes. Meanwhile, on the Continent,

as well as the generously illustrated general histories, such as L'Ettruria pittrice, Seroux d'Agincourt's *Histoire de l'art* and Rosini's *Storia della nittura italiana*, there were the illustrated monographs on individual painters and cycles of painting, and books of engravings after collections in galleries. With the growing fashion for the Primitives such works were finding a market in England, as were the single prints after their paintings which were being imported and sold by book and print sellers specializing in Christian art, such as Ryman at Oxford, Dr Phelps in Portman Square and Hering and Bedington in Regent Street. The well-known print seller, Colnaghi, found it worthwhile buying up the unsold copies of Otley's *Schools of Design* and *Early Florentine School*, and offering them at prices much below the twelve guineas originally asked — this early prohibitive cost being an indication of how the public love of art was then more exclusively the luxury of the wealthy, comments the *Art Journal* in its report of this purchase.

Certainly well within the reach of the purse of the

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3. One of the most important of these publications was after the *Accademia in Firenze* (Galleria dell’Accademia Belli, 1850; p.273).
average art lover were the illustrates histories which appeared from the 1840s. The first edition of Mrs Jameson's Recollections of Early Italian Painters was illustrated. She did most of the illustrations for her Sacred and Legendary Art series, no mean labour. The first two volumes, for example, contained 187 woodcuts and nineteen full-page etchings. Although "trifling as illustrations", her little sketches she felt would "assist the memory and fancy of the reader". Usefull they may have been as aide-memoires, but their value as a stimulus to the fancy is more dubious.

It need hardly be said that, before the advent of photographic reproductions, copies of paintings were of necessity interpretations rather than transcriptions. It was simply impossible for the copyist to exclude himself or his time from the copy he was making. Moreover, copies intended for multiple reproduction underwent further modification when being prepared for printing.

With the Primitives however, there were further problems, which made it very difficult for the copyist to achieve a "likeness", not simply of the style of an individual artist, but of a whole period also. The fundamental problem was one of copying: paintings whose pictorial conventions were mistaken, or, to use the parlance of the time, whose imitation was faulty.

Ruskin put his finger on this problem:

"Slight[s] knowledge of the human figure is deficient; and this, the necessary drawback in all works of the period, occasions an extreme
difficulty in rendering them faithfully in an engraving. For wherever there is good and legitimate drawing, the ordinary education of a modern draughtsman enables him to copy it with tolerable accuracy; but when once the true forms of nature are departed from, it is by no means easy to express exactly the error, and no more than the error, of his original. In most cases modern copyists try to modify or hide the weaknesses of the old art, — by which procedure they very often wholly lose its spirit, and only half redeem its defects; the results being, of course, at once false as representations, and intrinsically valueless. ... It requires at once the utmost skill in a copyist to trace faithfully the failures of an imperfect master, in the front of modern criticism, and against the inborn instincts of his own hand and eye.6

As Ruskin says, most copyists succumbed to the temptation to modify the original. In copies of the more naturalistic art of the late fifteenth century, where there was less need for "corrections", one finds fair approximations in, for example, the Brancacci chapel engravings of Thomas Patch (if we leave aside the fact that the image has been reversed) (Fig.1). Copies of painters of the first half of the fifteenth century are less convincing. For example, Thomas Piroli's copies after Uccello and Fra Angelico, made in the late eighteenth century and published in Ottley's Early Florentine School, reveal the influence of Neo-classicism in the way that features and the folds of drapery have been classicized. Forms which were considered "meagre" have been rounded and filled out (Figs. 6,7).

6. Gombrich and His Work in Padua, Venes, vol. XXIV, p. 39. Gombrich, Layard, in the Burlington Review vol. clix (October, 1927), p. 104. "It requires no special qualifications to draw without exaggeration the works of these early masters: to preserve their real feeling, without either overdoing or giving too much prominence to defects or pecularities of manner."
With paintings of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries the copyist was quite at sea. Thomas Patch's copies after the frescoes in the Manetti Chapel are much less successful than his copies after Masaccio and Filippino Lippi (Fig. 2). Ottley, for all his regard for Cimabue and Giotto, produces stiff and wooden versions of their art (Figs. 3,4), although this is partly a reflection of his limitations as a draughtsman. A sensitive and skilled copyist could in fact make a copy that gives a fair idea of the original, or at least of the period (Fig. 5). But this is very unusual. Generally one finds images where the "corrections" have been so radical that all resemblance to the original has been lost (Fig. 28). Alternately, the copies are grotesque parodies displaying the hardness, stiffness and awkwardness presumed to characterize the art of that time.

Returning now to the illustrations to Mrs Jameson's Sacred and Legendary Art we find that, though all the representations are pretty crude, those of pre sixteenth-century art are as a rule the most unsatisfactory. This can be seen by comparing a representation of Raphael with one from the last Judgement in the Campo Santo (Figs. 29,30). Images after painters like Francia, Bellini and Perugino, convey a certain sweetness and grace, but Fra Angelico appears the complete primitive (Fig. 32).

The Madonna after Archangels Michael and Raphael, it will be noticed, has been based on the engraving in Ottley's Holy Monastic School. In the process the image has been altered. Although some of Mrs Jameson's illustrations seem to have been copied from the original, a good many of
they would have been taken from existing prints. This seems to have been the general practice. Illustrations for books and journals were based on other copies. For example, the reproductions in Kugler's Handbook were culled from Seroux d'Agincourt, Lastri, Lasinio, Ottley, Rosini and Selvatico. Fra Angelico's Coronation of the Virgin has been transposed from A.W. Schlegel's book on the painting; Fra Angelico's press panels from S. Annunziata are from Ricchi's engravings. Doubtless, the illustrations to the other Handbooks are similarly derivative. Kugler was published in England by John Murray. Murray must have kept a stock of prints, for we find the same illustrations appearing in Crowe and Cecellassi's histories of art, which he also published.

What this meant was that the illustration studied by the reader had undergone further distortion, was even further removed from the original. The two sources for copies of the Luccei Madonna in England were Seroux d'Agincourt and Lastri. With some of the English progeny of these first copies, the links with the original have been pretty well severed (Fig. 31, 33, 34).

Thus the situation when the Arundel Society embarked on its career was that, although quite a number of the works of the early Italians had been reproduced abroad, nothing was being done in England. Students of the older masters were dependent on imported volumes, which were expensive, single prints, which were limited, and on the poor and derivative reproductions in local publications.
According to a later member of the Council, Sir W.H. Gregory, the originator of the Arundel Society was Henry Pelham Ker, who decided that the arts were in need of a society similar to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, in which he was very active. He proposed bringing together various experts to issue literary and graphic publications on art, especially early Italian art. The first meeting was held at his friend Eastlake's house. Others there included Edmund Oldfield, in the Department of Antiquities in the British Museum, and Aubrey Bezzi, a Piedmontese refugee and Eastlake's assistant on the Fine Arts Commission, who had won renown as the co-discoverer, with SeymourKirchup, of the Dante portrait in the Bargello, Florence. Bezzi was to be the Society's first honorary secretary.

The Council of the Society consisted, in the first place, of a few heavyweights who lent their name: the Marquis of Lansdowne and Lord Colborne, both members of the Fine Arts Commission, Earl Compton, noted for his "taste in literature and art, and his devotion to science", Sir Sidney Herbert (afterwards Lord Herbert of Lea), and Samuel Rogers. Archaeology was represented by Edmund Oldfield, whom Sir W.H. Gregory was to call "the life and soul of the Arundel Society", and Charles Newton, also in the Department of Antiquities in the British Museum.
Antiquities at the British Museum, and by Major-General Charles
Fox who owned an outstanding collection of ancient Greek
coins. Then there was Sir John Hippisley, well-known as a
connoisseur of old engravings. Two specialists in early
Italian art were invited to join the Council, Lord Lindsay
and John Ruskin, who had been at Oxford with Oldfield and
Eaton. Another of Ruskin's Oxford friends was also a
liner, Henry Middell, who had been his tutor at Christ
Church and had first directed his attention to the older
Italian masters. Eastlake, who had been involved at the
beginning and who had given the Society its name, did not
join the Council, presumably because of the pressure of his
other duties.

In 1849 the Society issued its prospectus. In return
for one guinea per annum subscribers would receive such
publications as the Council decided to issue. From the
start there seems to have been some confusion over the aims
of the Society, and the type of person it wished to reach.
It saw its function as didactic. Its alternative title was
the "Society for Promoting the Knowledge of Art" (this no
doubt reflecting Bellenden Ker's influence). The prospectus
speaks of the current general feeling for art, often ignorant
and misdirected, and sees the Society as supplying deficiencies
of public knowledge and taste. Yet alongside these suggestions
of a broadly educational purpose we find more narrow views
of the Society's function. The Arundel Society is compared
with the Burlington and Garden Societies, that is, with highly
specialized bodies of restricted appeal. It admits that the

projects it has in mind, such as engravings from early Italian frescoes, whose beauty is "that of conception rather than execution", presented "little of popular attractiveness". It was the specialist approach that was to dominate during the first eight years of the Society's existence.

The list of projected publications indicates that the society was interested principally in medieval art. It proposed publishing studies of manuscripts and stained glass windows, and engravings after early Italian sculpture, paintings, and frescoes, as well as some early Flemish works. The frescoes of San Rocco in the Scuola S. Rocco were also included, contrasted with Ruskin's instigation. The archaeologists would have been responsible for the project for a history of Greek art, from Greek coins. Thus the concerns of the Society were not entirely medieval.

Over engravings after works of art the Council took an uncompromising stand. In choosing these attention will be directed rather to their apparent instructiveness, than their immediate popularity; neglect in their execution that manner will be preferred which most truthfully expresses the original, rather than that which presents the greatest attractions to the eye."

Although the Society saw its role principally as educational, a second function was hinted at in the Prospectus that was later to become just as important. This second function was conservationist. The frescoes of Giotto, Uccello, Filippino Lippi, and the other early masters were "rapidly
perishing", and it was crucial that a record be made of it before it was too late. The Council here is expressing the particular anxiety of Ruskin and Lord Lindsay. Ruskin had been horrified by the condition of the frescoes he studied on his tour of 1845, and his letters home were full of rage against the Italians for their neglect, and worse, their ignorant restoration, of their treasures. In the second volume of Modern Painters he inserted a catalogue of the destruction of works of art and monuments in Europe. 13

Lord Lindsay, in a postscriptum to the Sketches of the History of Christian Art, made an appeal to the rulers of Italy

in behalf of the grand old frescoes which are either perishing unheeded before their eyes, or that lie entombed beneath the whitewash of barbarian, longing for resuscitation, pinning for the light of day.14

The Arundel Society began its career quietly enough. For such mention was made of it in the press. Mrs Jameson referred to it in passing in the Art Journal. 15 Matthew Wyse hoped that the Society would not lower its principles and try to appeal to general public opinion. 16

Ruskin had hoped that it would act as a wholesome corrective to the taste of artist and amateur, too much under the influence of the lower schools of more imitative and mechanical art. 17 The Ecclesiologist recommended the Society to all its readers with an interest in Christian

The longest piece on the new Society was a letter published in the *Art Journal* in April 1849 signed "G.A.B.", i.e., Giovanni Aubrey Bezzi, the Society's secretary. Believing with the attitudes of the organ he had written to mind, Bezzi stressed the relevance of the Society to alien English art. By bringing the best examples of art before hundreds of English minds, otherwise untouched by stimulating influences, a better appreciation of works of art and of the true end of art as the "most efficient means of social and individual education" would come about, and this would exert a beneficial influence on the English school of painting. 19

Through the private exertions of those closely associated with the Society about five hundred people were persuaded to join in the first few years. In 1850 the first publication was issued, an illustrated translation of Vasari's *Life of Fra Angelico* by Bezzi. The notes on the text were from recent French and Italian editions of Vasari, and there was also a catalogue of *Fra Angelico's Paintings from Marchese's Memorie dei più insigni Pittori, Pittori et Architetti Romanianni* (1845-6).

For the illustrations it seems that the Society had the assistance of Lewis Gruner, a well-known engraver with a great knowledge of Italian art. He was Prince Albert's adviser in the purchase of art works. 20 The twenty small engravings were by George Scharf. Some, if not all, of the illustrations

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20. *Vasari, Memoires*, *pp. 1-14."
seen to have been taken from existing prints, and so we find variations in the style of the copy, reflecting the intervention of the copyist. In sum, although this first attempt of the Arundel Society was useful in that it brought together some information about, and reproductions of, an artist coming to be revered as the chief of Christian painters, it could hardly be said to be breaking new ground, to be rescuing forgotten works.

The same can be said of its second undertaking, a series of engravings after the frescoes of Fra Angelico in the chapel of Nicholas V in the Vatican. These had been published, in whole and in part, at least three previous occasions. The Arundel Society copies were taken from engravings by two German artists, Kupelwieser and Tunner, which had been made in the 1620s. Some of the engravings were by Cruizer.
By far the most important of the early projects of the Arundel Society were the thirty-eight large wood engravings after Giotto's frescoes in the Arena Chapel Padua (Figs. 36 and 37), which were published between 1853 and 1860, along with a biographical introduction and comments on the plates by Ruskin. Here, for the first time, the Society showed real initiative, for the frescoes had never been reproduced in full before. That they should be published was indicative of the growing importance being attached to the cycle.

The first evidence of serious interest in the Arena Chapel is to be found in the 1820s, when it was discovered by a number of English artists, Wilkie, Thomas Hilton, Eastlake, Callcott. The Callcotts printed their little volume on the Chapel in 1835. In the following year, Selvatico in his Sulla Cappellina degli Scrovegni nell'Arca di Padova, drew attention to the significance of the frescoes there. Francis Palgrave in the Murray Handbook to Northern Italy, gave three pages to the chapel. Although Kugler had neglected these frescoes in the first edition of his Handbook, he made up for this omission in the second edition. And Lord Lindsay wrote a detailed description of the frescoes in the Arena Chapel, which he recommended to his readers' "ardent admiration and love", declaring that the "heart must indeed be cold to the charms of youthful art that can enter this little sanctuary without a glow of delight". The frescoes were "a most important document in the history of

Indeed it is likely that it was Lindsay, rather than Ruskin who had spent only a couple of days in Padua, who conceived the idea of publishing a full set of prints after the cycle.

Be that as it may, it was Ruskin who provided the accompanying text, although Lord Lindsay was far better qualified to do this. Ruskin had made no special study of Giotto's life, and in fact took his historical data from Lord Lindsay. He had seen Giotto's paintings at Florence and Padua, but not elsewhere, and as he had not studied the Arena chapel frescoes very closely he had to rely on the engravings.

Ruskin acknowledged his debt to Lord Lindsay's account of Giotto, referring his reader to Lindsay's "very beautiful sketch of his character and art". Although Ruskin was beginning to re-think his views on the relationship between art and religion, in this context he re-affirms the "early Christian" belief in the necessary connection between great art and religion. He sees Giotto's faith as sincere, but literalistic and unreflecting. Giotto was no mystic, and Ruskin praises his "rational and human view of all subjects". His view is compared with Lindsay's description of Giotto's religion as "practical, manly and healthy", with no taint of the cistercian about it. There is nothing particularly

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26. _ibid.,_ p.197.
27. See above, pp.213, 215.
29. _ibid._, pp.28-9.
30. _ibid._, p.100.
31. Lindsay, _op.cit._, p.264.
radical in Lindsay's and Ruskin's overall assessment of Giotto's significance as an innovator. However, because neither of them shared the usual prejudice against the Byzantine tradition they were in a position to treat in a more balanced and sympathetic manner Giotto's relationship with the past, although still seeing him as a liberator.

Ruskin's interpretation of Giotto, however, also reflected certain of his other interests at the time. He sees him as the serene labourer, who regarded himself as "merely a travelling decorator of walls at so much a day". We have the idealization of the mediaeval craftsman who erected and carved the stones of Venice. Emphasis is also given to Giotto's realism: he is a painter of fact. Here, of course, we have an echo of Ruskin's absorption in the Pre-Raphaelites. Indeed, he wrote that "Giotto was to his contemporaries precisely what Millais is to his contemporaries, -- a daring naturalist, in defiance of tradition, idealism, and formalism".

The comments on the individual frescoes were based on Lord Lindsay's notes. The principal interest is the narrative content, the appropriateness of gesture and expression, and traditional and innovative elements in composition. Lord Lindsay's descriptions are interspersed with occasional critical comment, such as "a most dramatic and touching composition" or "an admirable fresco, full of dramatic expression". Ruskin's descriptions, as one
would expect, are much more vivid, the analyses of Giotto's artistic methods more acute; and the interpretation of the meanings of the frescoes more involved and subjective.

Rather or not a scene or figure is interpreted symbolically or naturalistically seems a purely arbitrary decision on Ruskin's part. For example, Lord Lindsay criticized the Virgin in the Presentation of the Virgin for being more like a "dwarf woman" than a child.\(^{35}\) Ruskin defended Giotto by saying that he probably intended her womanly form to be typical of her advanced mind rather than an actual representation of her person.\(^{36}\) His explication of the symbolism of a picture tended to be fanciful rather than true, as when he interpreted the two figures beside Lazarus in The Raising of Lazarus as symbols of the Christian and Jewish churches.\(^{37}\) But he was not wrong in believing that there were symbolic meanings to be read.

The precision of Ruskin's criticism is in contrast with Lindsay's rather vague and generalized critical comments. Lord Lindsay characterizes Giotto's drapery as "noble, majestic and statuesque",\(^{38}\) Ruskin analyzes the way he uses broad masses of colour instead of breaking up his drapery into small folds.\(^{39}\) Lindsay, in common with most other critics, did not think much of Giotto's colouring, it being "false and weak".\(^{40}\) But Ruskin writes of the "serene brilliancy"
of Giotto's colours, of his "invariably massing his hues in large fields, limiting them firmly, and filling them with subtle gradation". Yet Ruskin's estimation of Giotto's artistic power is characteristically ambiguous. His arguments about the relevance of Giotto's works to the present were on moral, not artistic grounds. Giotto was not "one of the most accomplished painters, but he was one of the greatest men that ever lived". One finds a few analyses of Giotto's formal means which are quite unique for their time. He comments, for example, on the seriousness and dignity of The Virgin Mary Returning to Her House, and the stiffness of the movement resulting chiefly from the excessive simplicity of all its terminal lines. Observe, for instance, the pure wave from the back of the Virgin's head to the ground; and again, the delicate swelling line along her shoulder and left arm, opposed to the nearly unbroken fall of the drapery of the figure in front.

On the subject of the actual woodcuts, Ruskin warned his readers that they would hear them severely criticized. It is easy to produce an agreeable engravings by graceful infidelities; but the entire endeavour of the enterprise was to obtain exactly the character of the original..."

The artist employed to make the copies was W. Oliver Williams, and the engravings were made by the Dalziel

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brothers. The use of woodcuts represented a reaction against
the line engravings which had been so popular since the late
eighteenth century. The Society itself had used line
enggravings for the illustrations to the life of Fra
Angelico, while the engravings after the Fra Angelicos in
the Vatican had only some rudimentary shading. Ruskin
himself had become critical of outline engravings.

The true appreciation of art has been retarded
for many years by the habit of trusting to
outlines as a sufficient expression of the sentiment
of compositions; whereas in all truly great designs,
of whatever age, it is never the outline, but the
disposition of the masses, whether of shade or
colour, on which the real power of the work depends.46

Given the limitations of the medium, the Arundel Society
copies are reasonably faithful translations of the original
frescoes. This is made plain by a comparison with earlier
copies (Figs. 8, 9, 35). Without denying a certain crudity
and meeklessness in the Arundel Society copies, no doubt
arising from the artist's anxiety to follow the instructions
of the Council and not falsify, it will be seen that these
copies are "likenesses" where those of Calcott and
Salvati are not.

The publications after Fra Angelico and Giotto were not,
however, attracting members, and in 1855 the Society
attempted to reach a wider public by organizing an
exhibition of the work it had done to date in the Crystal
Palace at London. There were the drawings and engravings
from the Fra Angelicos in the Vatican, the woodcuts of the

46. Ruskin, Efflorescence, p. 38.
Arena chapel frescoes, together with full-size tracings and some coloured copies, and a copy of Ghirlandaio's fresco of The Death of St Francis in S. Trinità, Florence. There were also small models of the Elgin marbles, and a series of clay copies of ivory carvings from the second to the sixteenth centuries. 47

Matthew Digby Wyatt gave the introductory address, in place of Ruskin, who was originally to have spoken. The lecture was an explanation of the contents of the exhibition, most of it being on the Arena chapel frescoes, in an effort to give the public some guide to works of an archaeological nature. In conclusion he listed the practical value of such works to the artist and the decorator. 48

The exhibition created some interest. Madox Brown, violent with Rossetti, did not share his enthusiasm. He thought the tracings "very bad", but then he had seen the originals. 49 Some notice was taken of the exhibition in the press, but not much. The fortunes of the Society did not improve.

The problem was that the Society, especially in its publications after Giotto, was being too specialized, too archaeological and antiquarian. Such works were only curiosities.

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47. See Annual (1 December, 1855), p.318; Athenæum (20 Oct., 1855), p.1217. The exhibition seems to have been there for some years. At least, the Arena tracings were still there in 1859. See Thomas John Bick and John Tink, Painting Simplified, or Historical Sketches of the Progress of Painting (London, 1859), p.29.

48. See times delivered in the Crystal Palace, 1851.

The Art Journal was particularly sharp about the series on Giotto, asking, "What possible benefit, either to artists or the public, can arise from the circulation of these prints?" And the Society itself came under attack. "In this age one is led to expect some public benefit from the proceedings of all associated bodies ..." Sir Edmund Head was later to state that the publication of the Arena Chapel frescoes was the most commendable of the Society's undertakings. At the time there was some praise for the series. But generally the venture was questioned for both its wisdom and utility. The Society was too far ahead of public taste, even educated public taste. Despite the assistance of Ruskin's comments on the plates, and of Matthew Nycty Nyatt's lecture, it was clear that the woodcuts were not then people could stomach, and J.R. Atkinson was not exaggerating when he said that the series was a threat to the Society's existence. Nonetheless the woodcuts continued to appear until the series was completed in 1860, and in the following year the Saturday Review congratulated the Society in having at last escaped out of the Arena chapel. In the meantime, however, the Society had undergone a transformation.

38. Id. (January, 1855), p. 34.
40. The Saturday Review praised the woodcuts for preserving "the primitive character of the original frescoes", and the efforts of the Society to render Giotto's works familiar to the untravelled (25 March, 1854, p. 378).
and a change of direction. In the first place, it
successfully broadened its appeal to reach many more people
than hitherto. Secondly, while not losing sight of its
original didactic aims, the conservationist side of its
activities assumed much greater significance. The agent
of this change was Austen Henry Layard, the instrument,
the chromolithographic copy.

Layard’s interest in early Italian art, it will be
remembered, developed during his childhood years in Florence.66
Since then he had won universal fame for his excavations in
Mesopotamia, made known in his Nineveh and its Remains
(1853),67 his discoveries laying the foundation for the great
Egyptian and Mesopotamian collection in the British Museum.
On his return to England in 1851, Layard embarked on a
tour in politics. But visits to Italy revived his boyhood
interest in Italian painting. He travelled around central
and northern Italy, Vasari in hand, increasingly concerned
over the decay and disappearance of so many frescoes
described in the Lives. He made tracings of paintings. By
1855 he had, he believed, a pretty complete illustration of
the history of painting from Giotto to Fra Bartolomeo, and
had serious thoughts about publishing a selection of his
tracings.68 His companions on many of these excursions were

66. See above, pp.68-9.
67. It was not in fact Nineveh that Layard uncovered, but
Ur, the Sumerian capital, Kalkhu.
68. Layard, op.cit., vol.11, p.234, 16 December, 1855. Layard, op.cit., vol.11,
Mrs Higford Burr, an artist, about thirty-two, nearly beautiful, energetic withal to an extraordinary degree in Ruskin's style, but quite mild and feminine59 was Layard's assistant, making coloured copies of compositions while he did the tracings.

The condition of Italian frescoes of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had become a matter of grave concern. Palgrave, in the Murray Hand-Book to northern Italy, berated the Tuscan government for its neglect of national monuments.60 Ruskin's rage and Lord Lindsay's pleas have already been referred to. Lady Eastlake in 1855 complained of Italian indifference about the preservation of works of art,61 and in the same year Browning protested practically on behalf of ancient masters in "Old Pictures in Florence":

Wherever a fresco peels and drops,
Wherever an outline weakens and wanes
Till the latest life in the painting stops,
Stand One whom each fainter pulse-tick pains:
One, wishful each scrap should clutch the brick,
Each tinge not wholly escape the plaster,
--- A lion who dies of an ass's kick;
The wronged great soul of an ancient Master.62

How justified was this anxiety over the frescoes and what against the Italians? Certainly, there were concerned individuals, like Carlo Lasinio, years before the English

59. This is how Rossetti described her in a letter in April, 1856. Letters, op.cit., vol.1, p.293.
60. Letter, p.433.
began bothering. Still, the Church and the governments of the various states could be rightly charged with neglect, or, after the recognition of the value of monuments of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, with too ruthless restoration. Layard witnessed three men on top of scaffolding with pails and mop-sized brushes, "refreshing" a Filippino Lippi. 63 Both Ruskin and Layard felt that the army of restorers visited a plague, more terrible than anything suffered before, upon the old frescoes. Yet the Italians were only following what was then accepted practice (though no doubt in many instances in an ignorant and heavy-handed manner). Restoration was a pretty drastic affair in the nineteenth century. It meant, so far as was possible, restoring the work to its appearance when first completed. One has only to think of the architectural restorations of Viollet-le-Duc in France, or Gilbert Scott in England. Ruskin's conviction that there should be no restoration, that one should simply preserve what remained, was not a popular one.

It should be remembered also that the nineteenth century was a pretty traumatic period in Italian history, from the French occupation at the opening of the century, through revolutions and wars until independence and unification in 1870. Layard cited instances of the Austrians not only housing troops in churches, but also stabling horses there. 64 The Italians could hardly be blamed if their peninsula was yet again a battleground, particularly if the battle was in

64. "The church of S. Cecilia in Bologna was used as a stable." See *Stambecco* (27 June, 1857), P. 928.
the cause of their own freedom.

Until Layard came onto the scene British anxiety over the remains of early Italian painting had been limited to protests and pleas, though both Modern Painters II and Sketches of the History of Christian Art, 65 were partly intended to preserve a written record of these relics. Ruskin in a lecture at Manchester, at the time of the Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857, called upon his audience as protectors of the "great Christian community of Europe" to save decaying treasures through purchase and preservation. 66 His tight-fisted audience was hardly likely to respond to such a plea, however eloquently delivered. They would, and did, give up a guinea for the attractively coloured etchings after Italian frescoes which the Society was to issue from 1858.

Layard had already shown a flair for publicity and popularization over his discoveries in Mesopotamia. He now sought a way of publicizing the condition of early frescoes, doing something practical in the way of preserving a record of these, and educating the public to appreciate them. At the same time he rescued the Arundel Society from the colours in which it had been languishing since its inception.

Soon after his return to England from the Near East

65. The Kenneth Perkins, in its review of Lindsay's History of Christian Art, commented on the importance of the plea for preserving the memory of art which were fast perishing (Vol. xvi, p. 314).
66. Ibid., vol. xvi, p. 75.
Layard had become involved in the affairs of the Society, joining the Council. He presented his tracings to the society. He also persuaded the Council to undertake chromolithographic reproductions, and as a further inducement, offered to add at his own expense a second chromolithograph to that decided on by the Council in 1856. In the following year Layard wrote of the great plans he had for the Society.

We ought to be able to give to the public, at very moderate prices, a perfect series of the finest Italian frescoes, which are incomparably the greatest monuments of Italian art, and are the least known to the British public.

Although developed a few years earlier, coloured lithography did not begin producing technically perfect results until the late 1830s. It may seem a little surprising that lithography rather than photography was chosen by the Arundel Society, given the conservationist function of their reproductions. Photography was being used for art reproduction in the 1850s. Prince Albert and the Royal librarian, Dr Ruland, were building up a collection of photographs of Raphael's works. The Alinari brothers were just beginning to dedicate themselves to research into processes for photographing art works. In 1855 they

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71. *Alinari's Lithographs of Italy* (Roma, 1858), vol.ii.
published a series of photographs of the Campo Santo frescoes, and these were followed by photographs of the frescoes in S. Maria Novella, the Brancacci chapel and the Sistine chapel. However there were enormous difficulties in photographing "artpieces and frescoes in the dim conditions in which they actually resided, and details of backgrounds were often lost in the process. Moreover, photographs reproduced the precise physical condition of a painting, the scratches, the fading, the rising patches, which, as we shall see the early Amundel Society chromes did not. And, of course, the photograph did not give the colour of the original. For this reason photographs of paintings, which were coming onto the market from the late 1850s, did not really compete with the older methods of reproduction until later in the century. The Amundel Society did itself issue series of photographs, after Tintoretto in the Scuola S. Rocco, published in 1857, and after Italian sepulchral monuments and feudal ecclesiastical metalwork. But these activities were very much of secondary importance.

The first two chromolithographs decided on by Layard and the Council for 1857 were an interior view of the Arena chapel, after a watercolour copy by Mrs Higford Burr, and a Katharina of S. Sebastian by Perugino from the chapel of the convent at Panicale. To give additional interest to the first subject Mrs Higford Burr had included the figure of Giotto.

painting there, with Dante by his side. This could not fail to appeal. Giotto's association with the poet had for a long time been one of the principal reasons for interest in him. The discovery of the Dante portrait in the Bargello, then thought to be by Giotto, had fed this interest. The apocryphal story of Dante inspiring Giotto while he worked in the Arena chapel was a popular one.

It is not difficult (wrote Lori Lindsay) gazing on these silent but eloquent walls, to repose your gaze for a moment on the group once, as we know -- five hundred years ago -- assembled within then,-- Giotto intent upon his work, his wife Cluta admiring his progress, and Dante, with abstracted eye, alternately conversing with his friend and watching the gambols of the children -- playing on the grass before the door.73

This was the scene depicted by Mrs Higford Burr (except that the children are indoors). What we have is a genre scene of the popular lives-of-great-artists variety, and it is little wonder that its representation of the union of genius and intensity should prove more appealing than the reproductions of the frescoes themselves.74 As for the second chromolithograph, Peruzzi was one of the more approachable of the earlier masters, a painter of the much loved Umbrian school, with the additional bonus of having been the master of Michael.

Lloyd did not neglect publicizing the Society's new

73. Lindsay, On cit., p.109. This was quoted by Ruskin at the end of his introductory essay on "Giotto and His Work in Padua" (Walke, On cit., p.45).
74. C.F. Robinson thought that this chromolithograph formed somewhat the unpigment Arena chapel series. Art Journal (October, 1859), p.112.
ventures. At a meeting at the Society's rooms in Old Bond
street on the 29th May, 1857, he spoke about his visits to
Italy, about his anxiety over the frescoes there, and his
actions to preserve a record of them. Ruskin spoke at the
same meeting of his own despair at the destruction that had
taken place. The Arundel Society was only now beginning to
see its true vocation, he said. "It had talked of teaching
art. It would act, perhaps, more wisely in only trying to
conserve it."

Layard also had a long article on Italian frescoes and
in the enlargement of the Society's sphere of action
published in the Quarterly Review in October, 1858. He
stressed the value of the coloured copies of Italian frescoes

"as comprising the greatest works of the greatest
masters nursed in that cradle of Christian art,
and more especially, as illustrating the highest
object and aim of painting, when forming, as in
its best period, an essential part of architectural
decoration".

Such publications will enable

"those who lack the advantage of seeing the frescoes
themselves, to understand their character and merits.
It is hoped also that these copies may help in giving a
right direction to that
better feeling for art which is gradually, but
surely, springing up in England."

This again we have the argument that knowledge of Italian art
would elevate public taste and the standard of art. But
Layard also emphasized the condition of frescoes and the need
to preserve a record of their remains. As the Athenaeum

73. For a report of this meeting, see the Saturday Review
75. Ibid.
put it, "Mr Layard has been intelligent and indefatigable in putting off in the Arundel life-boat and rescuing very old ravers, fast sinking into oozing Lethe". 78

The new Department of Science and Art became interested in the Society's activities. It undertook to buy for £100 an hundred copies of the Perugino and Arena chapel chromolithographs, along with the outline engravings of Layard's tracings after heads in the Perugino fresco and his text which accompanied the issue. It believed that it was in the public interest that these productions should have a wide circulation. 79

As a result of Layard's innovations the Arundel Society's fortunes changed radically and for the better. There were delays with the early chromolithographs, the 1859 publications not being issued until the spring of 1860. 80 By 1862, however, publications were appearing in the year they were due. Thereafter, year after year until the end of Society in 1877, subscribers received their chromolithographic copies, as many as eight in a year, often with engravings of tracings of details as well.

Despite the early delays membership jumped almost immediately. By 1859 the number of subscribers had gone up
from 600 to 800. By 1863 there were 1600 members. This increase was proving an embarrassment to the Society, especially since the quality of the lithographic stone deteriorated after 1500 prints. Membership was therefore allowed to fall back to this number, new members being admitted as Associates and put on a waiting list. Three years later however there were 330 Associates, and the waiting period was two years. In 1860 the Society had initiated a series of "Occasional Publications", which were additional to the regular issues and available to the general public. In 1866 it was decided to form a second class of annual subscribers, so that henceforward there would be two sets of annual publications. In two years there were over a thousand second subscribers.

Interest in the publications of the Society was reflected in the press. In contrast with the occasional reference before 1857, its activities were now regularly reported, its publications reviewed at length. When the Saturday Review wrote about the Arundel Society in 1857, it assumed its readers to be ignorant of its existence. Ten years later the Society established a place for itself in English cultural life. Knowledge of the Society reached Italy, where by 1860 the prospectus and annual reports were being translated into Italian.

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82. Ibid. (30 May, 1867), p. 720.
83. Ibid. (10 March, 1866), pp. 341-2.
Despite the rapid growth in popularity of the Society, found this was not enough. More had to be done if its conservationist aims were to be achieved. On his visits to Italy, he had employed a Roman artist, Mariannecci, to take watercolour copies of frescoes. In 1860 he appealed to members of the Society for money for a "Special Copying Fund" which would enable the Council to commission copies, which might or might not be published as chromolithographs, and which would be exhibited to the public in the Society's rooms in Old Bond Street. Again he spoke of the urgency of the situation. The response of subscribers was lukewarm, since at the Annual General Meeting in the following year it was announced that the copying funds were not keeping pace with the other efforts of the Society. More forceful action was taken in 1863, when it was decided that new members admitted as Associates would be required to contribute to the Copying Fund. The problem was, of course, that people joined the Society not because of any concern over the decayed state of early Italian art, but for the chromolithographs that they received in return for their annual subscription.

The first thing one notices with the earlier chromolithographs issued by the Society is the absence of reproductions of paintings before the fifteenth century, with the exception of the Dante portrait in the Bargello. Having almost come

67. Mari annecci.
to grief over its Arena chapel series, the Council seems to have been avoiding artists too offensive to public taste. But until the 1870s, when they published some copies after the Assisi frescoes, did it venture into the more "antiquarian" regions of Italian art again.

What is also interesting in the first few years is the preeminence of Umbrian paintings: the Perugino at Panicale, the frescoes of Pintoricchio at Spello, Ottaviano Nelli's Figures and Panels in Cubbio, and Giovanni Santi's fresco of the same subject at Cagli. It was a measure of the value attached to Umbrian painting. James Dennistoun, for example, in the Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino, had written of the Giovanni Santi that there was perhaps no contemporary painting superior to this in grandeur of composition and stability of the figures; nor is it less admirable for novelty of composition and variety and ease of movement. The design is at once correct and flowing, and the expression, though servile, oversteps not truth and nature.

Rather is the home of Christian art of the nursery of Perugino genius, Umbria and its artists were held in reverence.

The two non-Umbrian chronolithographs up until 1860 were of Luci and Ghirlandaio. Layard had studied the paintings

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19. [Dennistoun, 1845].
21. There was in fact another central Italian painting among the early chronolithographic publications, a Virgin and Child done from S. Maria in Rome, then attributed to Santi, but now considered to be a work of the school of Pintoricchio.
of Luini in 1856, and had made a tracing of the Burial of St
Francesca in the Brera, which was the painting chromolitho-
graphed in 1860. Luini was becoming very popular with
devotees of Italian art. "Luini we love as one of the
tenderest of painters", enthused J.B. Atkinson.94 The
taste for Luini is an example of the interest that had
developed in painters of the early sixteenth century,
contemporaries of Raphael, such as Fra Bartolommeo, Andrea
del Sarto, Andrea Ferrari, and Il Sodoma, artists who, it
was felt, had succeeded in uniting the technical advances
of the sixteenth century to the sentiment of an earlier age.

The publication of Chirlandaio's Death of St Francis
in S. Trinità in Florence exemplified the other side of
the mid-nineteenth-century taste for the earlier painters.
Chirlandaio was one of the most esteemed of these, for the
interest of his narratives, for the revelation of Florentine
life, for the individuality of his figures, and for the
realism and dignified realism of his treatment of his
subjects.

If Florentine art prevailed during the 1850s, the
collection of the 1860s were dominated by Florentine art,
with the copies on the frescoes in the Brancacci chapel, the
first chromolithographs of paintings of unquestionable value
of significance. The importance of the paintings in the
Brancacci chapel and of Masaccio as the creator of the
modern style had been stressed by Vasari, and Masaccio's
reputation was the first to be re-established in the earliest

days of the revival of the Primitives in the eighteenth century. The frescoes in the Brancacci chapel were considered to be the most important of the remains of early art, along with the works in the Campo Santo.

One of the main difficulties with the Brancacci chapel was assigning the paintings to the three artists whom Vasari said had worked there. Vasari himself had not been clear on this. In the eighteenth century Masaccio had commonly been given those portions now attributed to Filippino Lippi, while The Tribute Money often went to Masolino. English writers in the nineteenth century generally followed Vasari in assigning The Tribute Money to Masaccio, but it was thought to be an early and immature work. The mature Masaccio was to be seen in frescoes like The Raising of the Son of Theophilus, St Peter and St Paul before the Proconsul, and St Paul visitating St Peter in Prison. In other words the image of Masaccio was based on paintings of the late fifteenth century. Hence the emphasis on the individuality of his figures, an individuality criticized by Ottley with his neo-classical prejudices, but praised by critics of the following generation.

Masaccio's reputation suffered something of a setback in England when Rusler made known the results of recent German research which established the extent and nature of Filippino's contribution. In any case, Masaccio was a painter who was
desired rather than loved. He was held in suspicion by early Christians for initiating the naturalism which was in the end to destroy Christian art. His art was too austere, lacking the charming details of Gozzoli or the sweet faces of Francia, to have much general appeal.

The Francacci chapel series was something of a coup for the British Society, for it was apparently difficult to get permission to copy them.95 Layard, in his pamphlet on the chapel, which appeared at the end of the series in 1868, stressed the artistic and historical significance of the frescoes.96 The chromolithographs after the frescoes came out thick and fast, seven in 1861, five in 1862, five more in 1867. Patrons, and one suspects, subscribers, grew tired of the series. The Saturday Review in 1864 criticized its lack of variety and limited appeal. Society members had a right to complain, particularly when the extra publications were not interesting.98 These consisted of chromolithographs after Fra Angelico, Gozzoli, Mantegna, Pintoricchio, Francia, Andrea del Sarto and Raphael. Subscribers would have been more satisfied in 1864, for then they received reproductions of Loddi's frescoes in Sarzana, and from then until 1870 there were copies of Ghirlandaio, II Sodoma, Fra Angelico, Fra Bartolommeo, the Penitent triptych in the Hospital of St John at Bruges and van Eyck's Ghent altarpiece. Although most of the chromolithographs were of Italian frescoes, there were a few publications after northern European painters.

However the technique was less successful with oil than with fresco. In the mean-time second subscribers received examples of the work of Ghirlandaio, Raphael, Filippino Lippi, Andrea del Sarto, Perugino, Fra Angelico and Dürer.

As far as the selection of frescoes to be copied and chronolithographed went, Layard's influence prevailed, at least until his appointment as English ambassador to Spain in 1859. The works chosen were those he had studied himself. It was he who made the arrangements to have them copied. He applied various criteria. In the first place, he concerned himself with paintings which were not easily accessible or which were comparatively unknown, either because they had not been mentioned by Vasari (as with the frescoes of Pintoricchio at Spello), or because they had only recently been re-discovered (as with the Masolino frescoes at Castiglione d'Olona). Secondly, he was interested only in paintings whose authenticity could be documented. Apart from these considerations, paintings were chosen for their historical significance, as representative of a particular school (as in the case of the copies of Umbrian painters), or as illustrating the progress of painting (as in the case of the Brera sacch chapel series). All works chosen were also

99. He maintained his interest in the Society's affairs even in Spain (where he felt himself an exile), offering suggestions for paintings that might be copied.
100. Layard had studied the Masolinos in 1856, about twelve years after their recovery from whitewash (Layard, 2nd ed., vol.14, p.210). They were later copied for the Society, although never chronolithographed.
believed to have some intrinsic merit as well as historical value.

The earliest chronolihographs published by the Arundel Society had accompanying notices, which provided explanations and interpretations of the paintings reproduced. With the exception of W.H.J. Weale's scholarly piece on Menling, these were contributed by Layard. Together with the various articles on subjects connected with the arts which he contributed to the Quarterly Review, and his lectures on the history of art given at the Royal Institution in 1859, they give a good idea of his attitudes towards the early Italians. Although influenced by certain personal prejudices, they are fairly representative of the views entertained by sympathizers, without being too narrowly Purist.

Layard was one of the best informed on the subject at that time. Not only had he travelled extensively in Italy and read widely, but he also had the benefit of the expertise of friends like Eastlake and Giovanni Morelli.

101. HENRY WARDE: "A Notice of His Life and Works" (London, 1865). Layard was one of the leading English authorities on early Netherlandish painting.

102. For "Veneration of Saint Sebastian, painted in fresco in the church of the Saint at Pisa" (London, 1859); "The Madona and Saints, painted in fresco by O. Betti, in the Church of S. Maria delle Grazie" (London, 1857); "The Graces by Verri, in the Collegiate Church of S. Maria della Consolazione, in the Province of Cremona" (London, 1859); "Lavatino Antiquities, Nave and the Ambassadors' Chapel, etc.".
Layard comes near Ruskin and Lindsay in his appreciation of painting of the fourteenth as well as the fifteenth centuries. Among the "excellences" he cites are a natural feeling for pure and harmonious colouring, symmetrical and pleasing composition, and an innocence and unaffected simplicity in the treatment of the human countenance. However, Layard's regard for the trecentists is principally due to his admiration for the society which produced them, not only for its deeply felt piety but also for its love of freedom. The arts were employed for the highest of all aims, in "the expression of earnest religious and political convictions, in the representation of deeply felt truths and in the advocacy of the principles of human freedom." Layard was a staunch liberal and an ardent supporter of the Italian independence movement. If his love of Italian culture encouraged his interest in the Risorgimento, his political sympathies drew him to a period of Italian history then, it seemed to him, the Italians, firm in character and noble, fought for and maintained their freedom.

Art drew strength from its identification with the feelings and aspirations of the people, and we find Layard expressing the view that art flourished then because it was...
useful, painters working for "the edification of men in
general, and not for the gratification of individuals." 106
Nor was there any artificial distinction between "fine"
and "useful" arts, the painters of the finest pictures
being also designers of articles in everyday use. 107
Therefore, as regards intention and object, Layard believed
the art attained its highest development in this period.
Thereafter there was no improvement in this sphere, and
eventually, decline.

Art changed at the beginning of the fifteenth century,
in response to a change in the spirit of the age.

The conventional art of the fourteenth century,
with its poetry and deep religious sentiment, was
no longer in harmony with the feelings and beliefs
of the age. The earnest faith, the mysticism and
superstitions of that century, had been gradually
fading away before the more profound study of
philosophy and the spread of material civilization.
A new phase of human life requires new exponents
in art as in literature. 108

The fifteenth century was still Christian, but it was
infused with a new spirit, first evident in Florence.
Painting gradually ceased to serve the religious and
political needs of the community as a whole, but instead
served the pride and ambitions of powerful individuals
and their families. One reflection of this shift was the
increase in easel paintings. In the second place, in
response to the appearance of a more rational and matter-of-
fact to man, painting became more realistic and secular in

107 ibid., loc. cit., ff. 9-6.
108 ibid., loc. cit., p. 6.
Its outlook. It was this change of outlook which aided the technical progress of painting towards the correct imitation of nature.

Leyard esteems those painters who were still infused with the old religious spirit, Fra Angelico and the Umbrian school. But he is even more attracted to the painters expressing the new secular spirit. There is certainly no lessening the decline and fall of Christian art through the spread of Florentine naturalism. Of Ghirlandaio's introduction of portraits of eminent Florentines into his religious subjects, he writes:

By their rich costume, by the calm dignity of their expression and attitude, and by the grave and solemn part they appear to play in the scene depicted, he admirably portrays the great men of his day, to whom he thus dedicates a worthy monument...109

The fifteenth century is seen as a period transitional between the Gothic age and the Renaissance, "founded upon the classical antique",110 which came about at the beginning of the sixteenth century.Yet his actual description of the fifteenth century emphasizes qualities which Burckhardt was soon to classify as belonging to the Renaissance, namely, individualism and secularism.

It is clear from Leyard's descriptions and evaluations that some of the painters of the late fifteenth century came very near to being complete masters in a technical as well as a moral and spiritual sense. Only once does he mention the

"hardness" of the quattrocento manner. Nonetheless the cli-rx is still the first twenty-five years of the sixteenth century, when there was

the union of the highest idealisation of form, action, and expression with the most truthful representation of nature, and the most intimate knowledge of the laws of composition and colour, and the most consummate technical skill.

However this age was short-lived. And the reasons for the decline of painting lay in the political and social situation. The perfection of art could endure only as long as it was representative of and influenced by some earnest faith, whether political or religious. The loss of faith and freedom meant the moral and political decline of the Italian people and the decay of their art.

the painters in fresco, with few exceptions, no longer painted for the people. They no longer looked upon teaching as their first and paramount duty; we shall find them henceforth decorating chapels for the gratification of popes, palaces for the noble or wealthy, and churches for the mere sake of ornamentation, without any exterior or more elevated object.

Layard is not anti-classicist, but he did believe that the introduction of classical forms and allegories into Christian art aided its corruption and destruction, on the grounds that Antique art represented alien ideas and

111. When he says that Filippino Lippi's Badia altarpiece was still under the influence of the hard, conventional manner of the quattrocentisti. But it is apparent from the context that he is referring to painters of the first half of the fifteenth century. The Francacci illustrated, p.35.
112. Ibid., p.49.
convictions. In general, in the middle of the nineteenth century, much less emphasis was given to Antiquity than to nature, in accounts of the revival of art. It is true that the influence of Antique remains on the Pisani and Giotto is often referred to. But after that almost the only section of classical influences before the end of the fifteenth century is in the context of Squarcione and Mantegna.

Layard's interpretation of the advance of Florentine painting in the fifteenth century relegates Antiquity to a very subordinate place. Nature is all. This is not to say, as we have seen from his remarks about the Pre-Raphaelites and their semeases, that he believed the imitation of nature in the fifteenth century to be unselective. Artists chose what was best in nature. But what Layard seems to suggest, in contrast with Ralph Vornum and earlier writers, is that attainment of this ideal beauty was independent of the knowledge of the principles of classical art. Vornum, on the other hand, adhered to the more traditional view, that the imitation of the fifteenth-century masters was unselective and there are not ideal. 114

That Layard did not care for too much realism is evident from his attitudes towards the earlier Flemish and German masters. In the North there was "an absence of almost all attempt to portray noble and elevated sentiment or calm dignity," 115 its art being marred by the "coarsest realistic treatment", by "disguising depravity of forms", and "vulgar

curseness of expression”. Occasionally one might find elevated conceptions and beautiful types, approaching the Italian schools, but no Northern painter could match his Italian counterparts. And Layard voices the old traditional prejudice against the painters of the North when he said of Holbein: “Had he been an Italian, and not a German, he would have been in the very first rank of historical painters”.

Layard’s preference was thus very clearly for the Italian painters of the early sixteenth century and their predecessors. Within this area a further preference operated, and that was for fresco over easel painting. From Italy in 1556 he had written that frescoes were “after all, by far the most interesting and most beautiful of the works of the great Italian painters”. Invariably he rates the frescoes of the Italian masters above their altarpieces and easel pictures. The reasons for Layard’s preference, which was largely shared at the time, are not difficult to discover. Firstly, there was the prestige of a demanding technique of painting, whose reputation for difficulty was borne out by the troubles besetting painters decorating the new Houses of Parliament. Secondly, it was through frescoes that the didactic purposes of the art of the time were seen to be best realized. Fresco paintings were intended for public instruction, easel pictures for private enjoyment. Lastly, given the interest in narrative content, it is not surprising that the big fresco cycles should have greater

days of the revival of the Primitives in the eighteenth century. The frescoes in the Brancacci chapel were considered to be the most important of the remains of early art, along with the works in the Campo Santo.

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55. E.g., "The results of recent criticism have, however, considerably diminished the glory of Masaccio, in definitely regarding the various frescoes of this celebrated chapel ... to their respective masters". [Maria Farquhar], *Iconographical Catalogue*, op.cit., P.99.
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97. A.H. Layard, The Brancacci Chapel and Masolino, Francia,
Pintoricchio (London, 1863).
However the technique was less successful with oil than with fresco. In the near-time second subscribers received examples of the work of Ghirlandaio, Raphael, Filippino Lippi, Andrea del Sarto, Perugino, Fra Angelico and Dürer.

As far as the selection of frescoes to be copied and chronolithographed went, Layard's influence prevailed, at least until his appointment as English ambassador to Spain in 1869. The works chosen were those he had studied himself. It was he who made the arrangements to have them copied. He applied various criteria. In the first place, he concerned himself with paintings which were not easily accessible or which were comparatively unknown, either because they had not been mentioned by Vesari (as with the frescoes of Pintoricchio at Spello), or because they had only recently been re-discovered (as with the Masolino frescoes at Certosina d'Olona). Secondly, he was interested only in paintings whose authenticity could be documented. Apart from these considerations, paintings were chosen for their historical significance, as representative of a particular school (as in the case of the copies of Umbrian painters), or as illustrating the progress of painting (as in the case of the Brera real chapel series). All works chosen were also

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99. He retained his interest in the Society's affairs even in Spain (where he felt himself an exile), offering suggestions for paintings that might be copied.

100. Layard had studied the Masolinos in 1856, about twelve years after their recovery from whitewash (Layard, ... vol.11, p.210). They were later copied for the Society, although never chronolithographed.
believed to have some intrinsic merit as well as historical value.

The earliest chromolithographs published by the Arundel Society had accompanying notices, which provided explanations and interpretations of the paintings reproduced. With the exception of W.H.J. Weale's scholarly piece on Memling, these were contributed by Layard. Together with the various articles on subjects connected with the arts which he contributed to the Quarterly Review, and his lectures on the history of art given at the Royal Institution in 1859, they give a good idea of his attitudes towards the early Italians. Although influenced by certain personal prejudices, they are fairly representative of the views entertained by sympathizers, without being too narrowly Purist.

Layard was one of the best informed on the subject at that time. Not only had he travelled extensively in Italy and read widely, but he also had the benefit of the expertise of friends like Eastlake and Giovanni Morelli.

101. W.H.J. Weale: Memling: a Notice of His Life and Works (London, 1855). Layard was one of the leading English authorities on early Netherlandish painting.

102. Extract from a letter of Albert Morley, painted in fresco in the oratory of the Saint at Frascati (London, 1855); The oratory and Saints, painted in fresco by O. Hell, in the Ulten at Aosta above the Padis (London, 1855); The frescoes by Berli

...
Layard comes near Ruskin and Lindsay in his appreciation of painting of the fourteenth as well as the fifteenth centuries. Among the "excellences" he cites are a natural feeling for pure and harmonious colouring, symmetrical and pleasing composition, and an innocence and unaffected simplicity in the treatment of the human countenance. 103 However, Layard's regard for the trecentists is principally due to his admiration for the society which produced them, not only for its deeply felt piety but also for its love of freedom. The arts were employed for the highest of all ends, in "the expression of earnest religious and political convictions, in the representation of deeply felt truths and in the advocacy of the principles of human freedom". 104 Layard was a staunch liberal and an ardent supporter of the Italian independence movement. 105 If his love of Italian culture encouraged his interest in the Risorgimento, his political sympathies drew him to a period of Italian history when, it seemed to him, the Italians, firm in character and morals, fought for and maintained their freedom.

Art drew strength from its identification with the feelings and aspirations of the people, and we find Layard expressing the view that art flourished then because it was

104. Letters from Italy, vol.67, B.M. Add. MSS. 15072, c. 70.
105. Layard was from Rome on the 17th October, 1859: "I really believe that if the Italians are only allowed to govern themselves, and the Austrians prevented from distressing, a very high state of prosperity and national independance is open to them." (Layard, op. cit., vol.xi, p.350.)
useful, painters working for "the edification of men in
general, and not for the gratification of individuals". 106

There was any artificial distinction between "fine"
and "useful" arts, the painters of the finest pictures
being also designers of articles in everyday use. 107

Therefore, as regards intention and object, Layard believed
that art attained its highest development in this period.
Thereafter there was no improvement in this sphere, and
eventually, decline.

Art changed at the beginning of the fifteenth century,
in response to a change in the spirit of the age.

The conventional art of the fourteenth century,
with its poetry and deep religious sentiment, was
no longer in harmony with the feelings and beliefs
of the age. The earnest faith, the mysticism and
superstitions of that century, had been gradually
fading away before the more profound study of
philosophy and the spread of material civilisation.
A new phase of human life requires new exponents
in art as in literature. 103

The fifteenth century was still Christian, but it was
inspired with a new spirit, first evident in Florence.
Painting gradually ceased to serve the religious and
political needs of the community as a whole, but instead
entered into the pride and ambitions of powerful individuals
and their families. One reflection of this shift was the
increase in easel paintings. In the second place, in
response to the appearance of a more rational and matter-of-
fact manner, painting became more realistic and secular in

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Its outlook. It was this change of outlook which aided the technical progress of painting towards the correct imitation of nature.

Layard esteems those painters who were still infused with the old religious spirit, Fra Angelico and the Umbrian school. But he is even more attracted to the painters expressing the new secular spirit. There is certainly no lessening the decline and fall of Christian art through the spread of Florentine naturalism. Of Ghirlandaio's introduction of portraits of eminent Florentines into his religious subjects, he writes:

By their rich costume, by the calm dignity of their expression and attitude, and by the grave and solemn part they appear to play in the scene depicted, he admirably portrays the great men of his day, to whom he thus dedicates a worthy monument. 109

The fifteenth century is seen as a period transitional between the Gothic age and the Renaissance, "founded upon the classical antique", 110 which came about at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Yet his actual description of the fifteenth century emphasizes qualities which Burckhardt was soon to classify as belonging to the Renaissance, namely, individualism and secularism.

It is clear from Layard's descriptions and evaluations that none of the painters of the late fifteenth century come very near to being complete masters in a technical as well as a moral and spiritual sense. Only once does he mention the

"Hardness" of the quattrocento manner. Nonetheless the climax is still the first twenty-five years of the sixteenth century, when there was

the union of the highest idealisation of form, action, and expression with the most truthful representation of nature, and the most intimate knowledge of the laws of composition and colour, and the most consummate technical skill.

However this age was short-lived. And the reasons for the decline of painting lay in the political and social situation. The perfection of art could endure only as long as it was representative of and influenced by some earnest faith, whether political or religious. The loss of faith and freedom meant the moral and political decline of the Italian people and the decay of their art.

the painters in fresco, with few exceptions, no longer painted for the people. They no longer looked upon teaching as their first and paramount duty: we shall find henceforth decorating chapels for the gratification of popes, palaces for the noble or wealthy, and churches for the mere sake of ornamentation, without any ulterior or more elevated object.

Lippi is not anti-classicist, but he did believe that the introduction of classical forms and allegories into Christian art aided its corruption and destruction, on the grounds that antique art represented alien ideas and

II, he says that Filippino Lippi's Badia altarpiece was still under the influence of the hard, conventional manner of the quattrocentisti. But it is apparent from his context that he is referring to painters of the first half of the fifteenth century. The Renaissance Revival, p. 58.

ibid., p. 49.

convictions. In general, in the middle of the nineteenth century, much less emphasis was given to Antiquity than to nature, in accounts of the revival of art. It is true that the influence of Antique remains on the Pisani and Giotto is often referred to. But after that almost the only mention of classical influences before the end of the fifteenth century is in the context of Squarcione and Mantegna.

Layard's interpretation of the advance of Florentine painting in the fifteenth century relegates Antiquity to a very subordinate place. Nature is all. This is not to say, as we have seen from his remarks about the Pre-Raphaelites and their namesakes, that he believed the imitation of nature in the fifteenth century to be unselective. Artists chose that was best in nature. But what Layard seems to suggest, in contrast with Ralph Vormun and earlier writers, is that attainment of this ideal beauty was independent of the knowledge of the principles of classical art. Vormun, on the other hand, adhered to the more traditional view, that the imitation of the fifteenth-century masters was unselective and there are not ideal. 114

That Layard did not care for too much realism is evident from his attitudes towards the earlier Flemish and German masters. In the North there was "an absence of almost all attempt to portray noble and elevated sentiment or calm dignity", 115 its art being "marked by the 'coarsest realistic treatment', by "disgusting depravity of forms", and "vulgar

115, Quarterly Review, vol.six (April, 1851), p.469.
caldness of expression". Occasionally one might find elevated conceptions and beautiful types, approaching the Italian schools, but no Northern painter could match his Italian counterparts. And Layard voices the old traditional prejudice against the painters of the North when he said of Holbein: "Had he been an Italian, and not a German, he would have been in the very first rank of historical painters".116

Layard's preference was thus very clearly for the Italian painters of the early sixteenth century and their predecessors. Within this area a further preference operated, and that was for fresco over easel painting. From Italy in 1855 he had written that frescoes were "after all, by far the most interesting and most beautiful of the works of the great Italian painters".117 Invariably he rates the frescoes of the Italian masters above their altarpieces and easel pictures. The reasons for Layard's preference, which was wisely shared at the time, are not difficult to discover. Firstly, there was the prestige of a demanding technical of painting, whose reputation for difficulty was born out by the troubles besetting painters decorating the new House of Parliament. Secondly, it was through frescoes that the didactic purposes of the art of the time were seen to be best realized. Fresco paintings were intended for public adoration, easel pictures for private enjoyment. Lastly, when the interest in narrative content, it is not surprising that the big fresco cycles should have greater

116. LAYARD, p.481.
117. LAYARD, 16 December, 1855. LAYARD, op.cit., vol.ii, p.175.
appeal than altarpieces. Thus the overwhelming preponderance of frescoes in the Arundel Society chromolithographs was not just because they were in the greatest danger.

At first the Society's chromolithographs were warmly welcomed by critics. The Art Journal remarked that, whereas in the earlier years of its existence the Society appealed only to the initiated few, it "now, however, claims in a new career, a wider usefulness and a more extended popularity". 118

J.R. Atkinson waxed lyrical about the Society:

It selects for publication the choicest and rarest works of the early Christian artists; it rescues from impending destruction frescoes fast fading from the crumbling and tottering churches and convents of Italy. And these pure and elevated creations — a kind of painted revelation, as it were, of a nation's steadfast faith and glowing hope, placed upon record for the edification of all succeeding time — are now brought within the easy reach of the people of this country, in a form and style at once accurate and attractive.

The chromolithographs,

executed with so much care, so attractive to the popular eye, and yet so instructive to the initiated few, who may be anxious to know how historical art was in the middle ages made subservient to religious uses, and to general architectural effect; constitute, we cannot but think, a new and important epoch in illustrative art. 119

However, later reviewers were more critical, and this criticism became more insistent during the 1860s. Whereas Atkinson praised the chromolithographs as both accurate and attractive, there were others who argued that the attractiveness had been

119. Ibid. (October, 1857), pp.299-300.
achieved at the expense of accuracy, and others still who felt that they were neither accurate nor attractive. Johnson also suggested that the chromolithographs could have both popular and specialized appeal. But, again, there were those who believed that the Society, in its efforts to broaden its appeal, had compromised itself, preferring, for example, to publish miscellaneous and disconnected works rather than a whole cycle of frescoes, as it had done with the Arena and Brancacci chapel series. There was also criticism of the use of the chromolithographic process, and criticism of the actual copies from which the chronos were taken. This dissatisfaction one finds expressed by reviewers reflected the discontent of a group of dissidents within the Society itself. Their spokesman in the press was F.C. Stephens, art critic for the Athenaeum from 1860. Stephens wrote regularly about the activities and publications of the Society throughout the 1860s. Initially he was very enthusiastic, praising the chromolithographs for their quality and fidelity to the original. But towards the end of 1860 he had an about turn, and thereafter became increasingly critical of both the watercolour copies and the chromolithographic reproductions.

His objections to the Society's methods of transcription and publication were listed in an article published in the Athenaeum on the 30th May, 1863. First, he said, the publications were "of the nature of restorations".

was perfectly true. The copyists attempted to present an image of the painting as it might have looked when newly completed. All evidence of the effects of time and ill-usage was suppressed. Missing sections were restored, surfaces made smooth and unscratched, colours were bright, clean and new. Not only that, copyists, perhaps unconsciously, were prone to make minor "corrections", to adjust errors of anatomy, to make figures and, especially, faces more appealing.

An obvious example is Ottaviano Nelli's Madonna and Saints, which had been copied by Mrs Higford Burr (Fig. 38 ), and of which George Walter Thornbury wrote:

Nelli's Madonna and Saints have, we should be afraid, been rather idealized into prettiness by Mrs Burr. The angel's noses are so exquisitely and pertly retroussé and Roxolanish; their garments are of such neat trim colours; and their eyebrows are arched and cosmetized, we could almost guess.

The Society's regular copyist for a number of years was Mariennecci, who according to Layard had made a special study of the Umbrian school, and who was first employed by him in 1855 to make a copy of the Perugino at Panicale. He was kept busy by the Society through the 1860s.

123. Most of the Arundel Society watercolour copies are now at the University of Leeds. Some of Mariennecci's copies are also in the Print Room of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

124. Sir Matthew of St Sebastian, op.cit., p.3.

125. F.T. Stephens reported some of his activities in the Cambridge (4 August, 1660), pp.154-5. He had copied Lippi's Disputation of St Thomas Aquinas in S. Maria sopra Minerva in Rome. He then returned to Rome to complete the frescoes of Pintoricchio. From Rome he proceeded to S. Gimignano to copy two of the Crucifix frescoes in S. Agostino, and thence to Florence to copy Cimabue's Death of St Prota in S. Trinita and Gentile da Fabriano's Last Judgement in the Carafa Chapel. Next he went to Perugia, and copied two frescoes by Fra Angelico in the church of S. Cecilia.
Periannacchi was a persistent "restorer" and "improver" (Figs. 19, 40, 41, 42). Although the differentiation between painters is quite obvious there is not attempt to convey their manner of painting. Colours vary little from copy to copy, and surfaces are uniformly smooth and flat.

This brings us to Stephens' second main criticism, namely, that the Society's publications were "to a certain extent mechanical". Here he had in mind the actual chromolithographs, as well as the copies from which they were taken. But that he was also criticizing the copies is apparent from his third contention, that the publications exhibited "less of the artistic vitality than they might and should do". There was too little differentiation of compositions, too little variety in the textures of objects, the rendering of colouring was often crude, and the quality of the pigments used neglected.

The deficiencies of the copyist were exaggerated in the chromolithographic copy. The Society had great difficulties with its early chromolithographs, because of the inexperience of the local firm it first employed. This was the principal reason for the delay in the issuing of the first publications. The results were not particularly happy, the colouring of the Passion - Deposition of St Sebastian being quite pale and washed-out, while Pintoricchio's Christ among the Doctors was quite startlingly bright. Therefore, at the suggestion of Mr, the Society commissioned the Berlin firm, Storch and Kramer, who together with C. Schultz were to do
rest of the Society's publications. Certainly, the Germans were able to maintain a consistency in their colouring which Vincent Brooks had been unable to achieve. However, Stephens' complaints about the "curry-powder" tints were quite justified as were his remarks about "leather-like" surfaces, identical for all paintings. The chromolithographs, while following fairly closely the watercolour copies, have harder outlines, and sharper transitions of colour. Colours tend, if anything, to be gaudier, and greens and yellows are dominant.

Thus there was criticism of both the copy and the chromolithograph. Within the Society itself the first recorded attack came at the Annual General Meeting of 1863. The leader was G.F. Street who deprecated the notion apparently held by some of the Council members, that the Society's object was to encourage the production of popular pictures to be hung on the walls of houses, rather than faithful transcripts of the works in their actual state. 129 Street, a High Churchman, Gothic revival architect, and Ecclesiologist, had urged his readers in The Ecclesiologist in 1851 to join the Society. 130 His views on the Council's policy for copying reflect his attitude over the question of conservation in general, with the emphasis more on preservation than restoration. 131 What Street drew attention to was that ambiguity over the basic purpose of

129. Ecclesiologist (13 June, 1863), p.784.
130. Ecclesiologist, vol.xix (June, 1851), p.239.
the Arundel Society. On the one hand, this was seen as didactic. The public were to be educated to appreciate the core austere beauties of the early masters through the publication of the most attractive specimens of their work in a form that would have popular appeal. On the other hand, it was a specialized body whose purpose was to preserve an accurate record of Italian painting of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Layard tried to combine the didactic and conservationist functions. Through enlarging the membership of the Society, the scope of its activities could be extended and the number of art works recorded be increased. Yet obviously Layard believed that a copy which restored the work to its condition when new was an accurate record, since it was the first employed Mariannecci. Mariannecci’s copies must have been made to his directions or at least with his approval.

The criticisms of the Society had results, and at the Annual General Meeting of 1864 it was decided that no more “Restorations” of old frescoes would be issued. However, it was some years before the effects of this change of attitude could be seen, since there was already a stock of watercolor copies. Mariannecci in any case did not mend his ways, for in 1867 he was instructed to make his copies more faithful. By then Street was on the Council of the Society and was able to exert greater influence. One wonders

132. Athenaeum (23 July, 1864), p.120.
133. Street was still complaining about the “Restorations” in 1857. Athenaeum (27 June, 1857), p.699.
what role Ruskin played in this controversy, as he was still a member of the Council. Certainly, in view of his opposition to restoration, as opposed to preservation, he could not have approved of the way frescoes were made to look like new, even in copies. Yet there is no evidence of his involving himself in the dispute.

Probably because he had fallen into disfavour Mariannecci was less employed from around the mid 1860s, and by the end of the decade appears to have ceased working for the Society altogether. The work of the other artists, such as C. Schultz, whose first commission was the Nerling, Edouard Feler, and Emilio Constantini, are altogether more faithful, though lacking that charm which Mariannecci's work undoubtedly has (Figs.41,42,44). The later chromolithographs are easily distinguished from those published in the 1850s and 1860s. Cracks and blank patches are recorded, and colours are more sombre.

Not everyone approved of this change. J.R. Atkinson for one opposed the transcription of the blemishes of age, preferring Mariannecci's attractive versions. It may be that the members of the Society felt the same way, for in 1870 the Council reported slightly reduced receipts. The poor

135. C. Schultz chromolithographed his own copies, which is one reason for their superior accuracy.
136. Mariannecci's most important commissions were the series after frescoes in S. Francesco, Assisi, executed in 1875 and 1876. Only three of these were chromolithographed, probably because their appeal was thought to be too pedestrian.
of popularity had in fact been reached. By the end of the
1970s the Society had entered into its long period of decline.
Although the chronolithographs continued to be issued
regularly to subscribers, membership and receipts declined
fairly continuously through the 1890s and 1890s. No longer
was there a general interest in the affairs of the Society.
P.C. Stephens' references in the Athenaeum after 1870 are
brief and cursory.

Initially, the waning of the Society's fortunes may have
been due to dissatisfaction with the less attractive
"unrestored" chronolithographs. It may have been also that
some members felt that they had accumulated a representative
collection. A first subscriber would have received over
fifty chronolithographs by 1870, apart from any of the
Classical Publications he might have been tempted to purchase.
Back in 1863 the Saturday Review had reported that some
people were leaving the Society for they had no space left
to hang their prints. And a year later:

The portfolios of members are already overflowing
with chronolithographs, and country parsonages are
covered with framed and glazed copies of the
Arundel pictures. We have even heard of their
being used as panels in a sideboard in order to
dispose of them.

New members continued to join, but there came a point when
these were insufficient to make up for the loss of older
members through death or retirement.

The heyday of the Society was the period of Layard's
closer involvement, that is, from 1855 until 1859. Various

claims concerning its value and influence were made then.
Leaving aside those claims which were exaggerated (e.g., that
the Society was saving early Italian frescoes from extinction),
or difficult to substantiate (e.g., that it was responsible
for "the elevation of the public taste, and the advancement
of our native schools of sculpture, and of painting"), the
Society can be given credit for its role in disseminating
knowledge of the earlier masters and in creating a taste
at least for painters of the fifteenth century.

The names of some of the first subscribers, published
in 1865, might lead one to suppose that the Society was
addressing itself to the converted. There we find the
collector, Alexander Barker; the publisher Henry Sohn,
responsible for the publication in English of many German
works; "R. Bozart, who was Eastlake's successor at the
National Gallery; the Chevalier von Rumsen; William Butterfield;
Thomas Coxe, Millais' "Early Christian" friend; Ambrose
Phillips de Lisle; Didron, one of the French pioneers
in the field of Christian iconography; Lord Ward, another
collector of Primitives; Gladstone; Sir Edmund Head; Beresford
Hope; Lord Houghton (formerly Richard Konstam Milnes);
Holman Hunt (who despite his disappointment in Italian art
was a member of the Society and on the Council); Thomas
Gambier Parry; George Richmond; W.B. Spence; C.E. Street;
John Foster Russell; Benjamin Webb. Yet many of the two and
a half thousand members, not all of them clergymen despite
the Spectator Review's jokes about country parsons, must

142. List of subscribers, connected to August, 1856. (London, 1866).
have had their first introduction to the earlier Italians through the Arundel Society chromolithographs. "Into many a house must they have brought refined and devotional conceptions of art, and have replaced upon the walls the unworthy productions of a lower grade".143

It was a measure of the importance attached to the art of the Revival that there was no criticism of the Society's preference for "those early and purely Christian painters, till late long neglected, but now fortunately exerting so salutary influence upon the Arts of Modern Europe",144 provided of course it did not delve back too far. The texts associated with the Society's publications, of Ruskin and Layard, all emphasized the moral and spiritual superiority of the art of the period from Cimabue to Raphael. The Society's two most consistent reviewers in the press, J.B. Atkinson and P.C. Stephens supported this view.

Lastly, the story of the Arundel Society in these years is instructive for the way it illustrates that persistent feature of the mid-nineteenth-century interest in the Italian primitives, namely the attempt to popularize a taste which in its origins was confined to the connoisseur and antiquary and which in many respects remained so.

CHAPTEIR IX

The National Gallery and Sir Charles Eastlake

Undoubtedly the most valuable tangible result of the mid-nineteenth-century interest in the Primitives was the purchase of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century paintings for the National Gallery by its first Director, Sir Charles Eastlake, between 1855 and 1865. Although the Gallery had been in existence for over thirty years very few earlier works had been acquired before Eastlake's appointment. The concentration on Primitives during the decade of his Directorship was the result of a change in the purchasing policy of the Gallery, which was the result of a complete re-organization of its administration. This re-organization was the outcome of the findings of a parliamentary committee set up in 1853 to "Inquire into the Management of the National Gallery", which in its turn was the culmination of years of complaint and agitation over almost everything concerning that institution: the site, the building itself, the admission of the public, the administration, and the purchasing, arrangement and care of the collection.

Eastlake himself had been one of the earliest advocates of the inclusion of the works of earlier painters in the National Gallery. In 1828 he visited Berlin and inspected

the Solly collection, rich in early Italian, Flemish and German works, the nucleus of the Royal Gallery of Berlin which was to be opened to the public two years later. The example of the Berlin Gallery was one frequently referred to in the debates about the National Gallery in Britain in the following years. It was seen as a model of a national collection, founded on art-historical principles, and properly housed and catalogued. Two years after viewing the Berlin pictures Eastlake wrote in a letter:

I am afraid there is too little interest in England for early pictures which throw often so much light on the leading characteristics of schools of art. A most valuable collection was formed by an Englishman some years since in Italy (the Solly collection) and since sold to the King of Prussia. I saw the pictures at Berlin, and very curious and interesting they are. I hope the historical view of art will not be ultimately overlooked in our National Gallery. 2

Dr. Veergen, Director of the Berlin Gallery, whom Eastlake had met in his visit in 1826, was one of the first to express publicly the view that the National Gallery should contain specimens of earlier masters, in his evidence before the Select Committee on Arts and Manufacture in 1835. Before this same Committee, when it met again the following year, Edward Solly and James Matthew Leigh, an artist who had knowledge of a number of Continental galleries, made similar recommendations. 4 As a result the Committee in its report recommended that the pictures particularly sought for in our national collection should be those of the era of

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4. Ibid. (1836), vol. ix, pp. 505, 995.
Raphael, or of the times just antecedent to it; such works being of a purer or more elevated style than the eminent works of the Caracci. 3

It was about this time that public criticism of the National Gallery for its neglect of older masters became vocal. George Darley argued for the addition of a small department of "real Antique Masterpieces" to the national collection in 1839. 6 Mrs Jameson in her Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in and near London (1842) regretted the Gallery's deficiency in early Italian works. 7 A contributor to the Art-Union in 1844 ardently hoped that the Gallery would buy some early Italian examples. 8 And so the concern continued to be expressed, by James Dennistoun in 1845, 9 by Edmund Head and Ruskin in 1847. 10

That this concern largely failed to elicit a response was due both to the inadequacies inherent in the system of management for the Gallery and the personal prejudices of the Trustees, who to all intents and purposes were in control. In 1831 there were eight Trustees, by 1842 there were sixteen, and in 1842 there were seventeen. Meetings were infrequent and attendance irregular, the business of the Gallery often being transacted by as few as two. 11 The day to day

5. Ibid., p.10.
7. Ibid., p.10.
8. Art-Union (September, 1844), p.287.
administration of the Gallery was in the care of a Keeper, whose duties were fairly clearly stated but whose responsibilities were ill-defined, particularly as regards the negotiation of purchases for the collection. In the case of the Gallery's first Keeper, William Seguier, this confusion did not matter so much since his taste and connoisseurship were the same as the Trustees'. But for his successor, Charles Eastlake, it led to personal frustration and disappointment and public misunderstanding.

Additions to the collection were haphazard and infrequent. Nothing was bought between 1825 and 1834 and again between 1847 and 1851. By the beginning of 1853, only thirty-three paintings had been bought after the initial Angerstein purchase. The expansion of the collection was principally through gifts and bequests of public-spirited individuals, desirous of a safe asylum for their paintings, which outnumbered purchases by four to one.

The slow growth of the Gallery was not simply due to inertia. The Gallery had no fixed sum to spend on paintings. Purchases were debated and justified in the House of Commons. This system of financing discouraged the acquisition of paintings by artists who were unfamiliar, even though their

12. The Select Committee of 1853 had the following to say about duties and responsibilities of the Keeper:

"The duty or responsibility of picture purchasing, attached by the original Minute of Treasury to the office of Keeper, but from an early date the Trustees appear to have recommended pictures for purchase.

"Of a more recent instruction from the Treasury, of date 14 August 1849, the Keeper is understood to have been relieved from all responsibility whatever in regard to the purchase of pictures." Parliamentary Papers (1852-3), vol. ccxcv, p. 5.
work could be had more cheaply than paintings of better
painters. Moreover, the Trustees would refrain from
recommending purchases if the Government of the day wanted
to economize on expenditure.13

As was revealed during the enquiries of the Select
Committee of 1853, the Trustees had no plan for the overall
acquisition of a national, public collection of paintings.
In the words of the Earl of Aberdeen, one of the surviving
original Trustees: "The collection has been made in the same
way as collections of private gentlemen are made, without
reference to any system".14

However, although there was no plan governing purchases,
there was certainly a principle, and this was that only the
"best works of the best masters" be bought for the National
Gallery. This effectively excluded the acquisition of large
collections. It was also another reason for the slow
expansion of the collection, since acknowledged masterpieces
did not often come onto the market. A gallery with nothing
but works of the highest class, it was believed, would help
to raise public taste (thereby improving the standard of
design), give pleasure to the connoisseur, inspire the artist,
and instruct the student. Artists and students in fact had
exclusive access to the collection on Fridays and Saturdays.
The Royal Academy, which occupied the east wing of Wilkins'

13. On this point, see Eastlake's evidence before the Select
Committee of 1853. Ibid., p.472. For an excellent summary
of the deficiencies of the system then in operation, see
James Dennistoun's article on the National Gallery in the
Gallery building in Trafalgar Square, was indeed accused of treating the collection as an adjunct to its school. The connection between the two institutions was very close. Not only did they share the same quarters, but the President of the Royal Academy was an *ex officio* Trustee of the National Gallery.

The purchasing policy of the Trustees was highly selective because of narrowness of their definition of the "best masters". As Eastlake said in 1853 this meant in effect "well-known masters". The Trustees were gentlemen of taste, certainly, but they were without any extensive knowledge of the history of art. Edward Solly, contrasting them with the men responsible for purchasing pictures for the Berlin Gallery, told the Select Committee of 1874 that they were not "experts" (a French word only then coming into English usage).

They bought examples of artists to be found in their own collections, collections which were inherited or already formed: Raphael, Correggio, Titian, the Bolognese, Claude, Poussin, Rembrandt and Rubens. In sum, to quote William Dyce's *Palæa* on the National Gallery, published in 1853, it would appear that they have simply considered it to be their duty to purchase for the gallery from time to time, as opportunity permitted, such pictures of merit by masters whose works they were more or less familiar with, as they conceived would be desirable acquisitions under any circumstances; and that, in fact, they have never come to any resolution at all on the question, what the collection ought, as a whole, to be.

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15. *Ziti, p.47*.
All the same, the Trustees could not have been entirely unresponsive to criticism, for in 1841 a Francia altarpiece with its lunette, a Pietà, and a Perugino were acquired, followed by van Eyck's Jan Arnolfini and His Wife in 1842 and the Bellini portrait of Doge Loredan in 1844. The van Eyck and the Bellini were the first fifteenth-century paintings to enter the collection. In 1847 the early Raphael Vision of a Knight was purchased. In 1848 the Trustees accepted the donation of two panels of an altarpiece by Lorenzo Monaco (then attributed to Taddeo Gaddi) from the collection of William Coningham. Such acquisitions were, however, little more than token gestures. Gallery critics were quick to point out opportunities lost for building up a collection of earlier paintings: the sales of the Pesch collection in Rome, the Gallo collection sale of 1844, the Ottley and Solly sales of 1847, the Coningham sale of 1849.

Select of these opportunities appeared at the time the more surprising since Charles Eastlake, well known for his interest in the early Italians, was Keeper of the Gallery between 1843 and 1847. Eastlake was just what the Trustees were not: an expert. He probably knew more about Italian art than anyone else in England, as his review of Passavant's biography of Raphael in the Quarterly Review in 1840 showed. He was familiar with the more rigorous method of German

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12. The Perugino (181) and the Bellini (189) were purchased from William Beckford. The Francia (178/80) came from the collection of the Duke of Lucca which had been brought to London for sale.
art historians and with the new connoisseurship, based as such on investigation of documentary material as on visual analysis and comparison.

George Darley had high hopes that Eastlake's appointment would lead to a change in the Gallery's purchasing policies, hopes which were encouraged by the purchase of the Bellini portrait in 1844. But these hopes were disappointed in the following year when the Gallery failed to secure a Filippino Lippi from the Callcott collection.

Many amateurs besides ourselves lament Mr Eastlake's inexplicable conduct on this occasion—explanable because he is a well-known partisan of the Grandiose Antique style, and appears desirous to give the Collection under his care a scientific character, by the acquisition of works that would illustrate different epochs, and hence the continued progress of Art, from its dawn to its decline, without which the Collection better deserves the name of a jumble.

Dyce was another whose hopes were doomed to disappointment. However he admitted that the Keeper's office restricted Eastlake's scope for action, which was perfectly true.

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19. 1841 Eastlake's advice, along with that of three other artists, had been sought concerning an unfinished family, thought to be by Raphael, which the Gallery were considering for the National Gallery. Eastlake was able to demonstrate conclusively that the painting was not by Raphael. See Gregory Martin, Burlington Magazine, vol.100 (December, 1974), p.225.

20. The painting in question, a fragment showing an adoring angel, was bought by Wynn Ellis. He bequeathed it to the National Gallery, and it entered the collection in 1846 (207).


22. National Gallery, ed.C.I., p.4: Dyce had planned to devote a paper, defining the purposes of a national gallery and setting out a scheme for its formation, but had abandoned the task on Eastlake's appointment, in the belief that the principles he proposed would be adopted and developed systematically under the new management (ibid., p.5-6).
Eastlake's successor, Thomas Uwins, saw himself simply as the servant of the Trustees. Possibly a personality more forceful and assertive than Eastlake's might have had a greater sway over the Trustees. Possibly someone less timid and retiring might have been able to use public opinion or friends in Parliament as a lever. As it was, Eastlake appears to have seen the limit of his powers of initiative to be the introduction to the notice of Trustees of sales of works, which he believed to be valuable additions to the Gallery. His own evidence in 1853 and the records of the minutes of meetings of Trustees at the time show him to have been as conscientious as he always was. He told the Select Committee that, a week after his appointment, he suggested the purchase of pictures from the Heath collection — without success. And the same lack of success met his other efforts. When the dealer, Samuel woodburn, offered to sell the Gallery seventy of the paintings from his collection, principally of earlier works, the Trustees were prepared to buy only two. Sir Robert Peel, who was a Trustee, was decidedly against the deal. Peel, who had considerable influence over the other

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23. You know, perhaps, that I am keeper of the National Gallery, or in other words, I am servant to the Trustees, and I must obey their orders'. Letter, 7 May, 1852, Memoir of Thomas Uwins, p. 129.
24. Minutes of the meetings for 1845-6 are printed in Parliamentary Papers (1847), vol.liv, pp.99-111.
26. One of his keenest disappointments was over the "Giaangelo Polo Family", then thought to be by Raphael, which could have been bought for £250 in 1844 (ibid., pp.451-6).
27. Ibid., p.484.
trustees, was opposed to the purchase of early Italians, which he regarded as "curiosities". This must have made Eastlake's position doubly awkward since Peel was a close personal friend. It had been he who had persuaded a reluctant Eastlake to accept the position in the first place. Altogether his years as Keeper could not have been too happy, what with the "Holbein" fiasco, the frustrations over the conservatism of the taste of the trustees, and finally the scandal over the cleaning of the pictures which led to his resignation in 1847.

The one truly constructive achievement in these years was the publication of a properly researched and documented catalogue of the collection in 1847, a marked advance on earlier catalogues. This was the result of the joint effort of Ralph Wornum, originally given the commission by Peel after he had criticized the existing official catalogue, and Eastlake. It included a list of the different schools of painting, and individual entries contained biographical notices and provenances. Moves towards an improvement of the arrangement of the collection, according to schools, had been made before Eastlake's appointment.

26. 1846, p.472.
27. 1861, p.469.
28. The Gallery bought a painting thought to be by Holbein, but which was soon afterwards shown to be a forgery.
29. Eastlake, who was unwilling to give an opinion on non-Italian pictures, consulted a German critic, who believed the picture to be genuine. The picture was then purchased. See Sir Charles Holmes and G.H. Collins Under, the Rector of the National Gallery, 1824-1854 (London, 1914), p.31.
Eastlake became re-involved in the affairs of the Gallery as a Trustee in 1850, after his election as President of the Royal Academy. But once again he met with frustration and disappointment, in contacting other Trustees where speedy decisions were necessary, in attempting to persuade them to give up their opposition to the en bloc purchase of a collection or the acquisition of paintings from abroad. 33

The criticism of the Gallery's purchasing policy in the 1830s and 1840s was really a rehearsal for the exhaustive debate at the time of the Select Committee of 1853. However it might be useful to summarize the argument at this stage. It was the opinion of Sir Robert Peel and other Trustees that a Gallery should contain only masterpieces, as defined by fairly narrow taste criteria. This view was becoming old-fashioned, although it was still not without support. For example, in 1847, when the purchase of the Woodburn collection was being considered, an Art-Union contributor declared:

"We do not need antiquities and curiosities of the early Italian painters: they would only infect our school with a retrograding mania of disfiguring art, and returning to decrepit littleness of a period warped by Ronald legends and prejudices." 34

However, in its stead, we find the view that a gallery should be founded on more comprehensive principles, exhibiting a greater catholicity of taste. The Trustees,

whose taste had been formed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, assumed that their taste and good taste were one and the same. Such an assumption was now being challenged. It was seen that what one generation approved, the next rejected. Taste fluctuated, affected by whims of fashion. Indeed, a good number of those paintings bought by the Trustees as works of the highest class were thought to be examples of a period when art was in decline. It was therefore vitally important that a national collection should be formed on surer principles than the taste of individuals. It should aim at comprehensiveness.

It should exhibit, as much as possible, an illustrative history of painting; it should contain at least one good specimen of every artist of merit and celebrity, both foreign and native; it should comprise all styles, all schools, all subjects. The humblest subjects, if ably treated, should find a place, as well as the most elevated. Such early specimens as might enable the visitor to trace the progress and improvement of the art, should also be included; in short, it should be a collection which, although containing much that failed to satisfy the fastidious critic, might tend to imbue the visitor with an extensive knowledge of painting -- might display to him the wide domain of art, its capabilities and varieties -- might correct a narrow and exclusive taste, and a slavish veneration for great names ... -- might give extensive exercise to the faculty of comparison, and a liberal and quick appreciation of excellence, under however a humble form it may appear before him.

35. In this point, see e.g., Edward Solly's evidence before the Select Committee of 1856. Parliamentary Papers (1856), vol.lix, pp.206-205.
36. [No specific citation given.
broad though this approach is, it still confined its 
sights to the domain of art itself. One finds a more 
philosophical attitude as well in the 1840s. Mrs
Jameson argued that the history of manners, morals, 
government and religion could be exemplified visibly by 
collecting specimens tracing the history of the progress 
of painting. 39 In other words, paintings could be 
valuable as records of human thought and endeavour.
It is frequently within the context of the debate about 
the composition of the National Gallery that one finds 
ideas about "relative merit", discussed in an earlier 
chapter, being put forward.

The essence of the argument for an historically 
comprehensive collection of paintings in a national gallery 
was the conviction that it was for the instruction and 
benefit of the community at large. Ordinary members of 
the public, who were flocking into the Gallery in ever 
increasing numbers, might not have a developed taste, but they 
would be able to follow the history of painting and disting-
uish between different schools in a gallery properly formed 
and arranged. They were capable of taking pleasure in 
the associations aroused by a particular painter or subject.

Arguments in favour of catholicity of taste and 
adherence to historical principles do not of themselves 
explain the concern with the acquisition of earlier 
paintings, particularly of the Italians. After all, the

Gallery's collection was deficient in other areas also, for example, in seventeenth-century Spanish painting which was then being discovered. This particular concern is, of course, to be explained by the growing interest in the Primitives. Waagen, Solly and James Leigh had, in their evidence before the Select Committee of 1835-6, maintained that the period of Raphael and his contemporaries, such as Luini and Gaudenzio Ferrari, marked the perfection of art. But in order to fully comprehend masters of this time those painters leading up to art's perfection should also be acquired. The Committee in its Report, echoing the language of these witnesses, referred to the paintings of the time of Raphael and his immediate predecessors as being of a "purer" style. Both Solly and James Leigh had agreed with their questioner, Philip Fussay, that the study of these masters would chaste and purify the taste of English artists. For George Barley, the refinement of the taste of the public as well as of artists was a more pressing reason for the purchase of early pictures than the historical one. Barley did not stop with Raphael's immediate precursors, since Fra Angelico, Hemling and van Eyck are listed among the painters the Gallery should contain. 40

Other reasons are the sentiment of these old painters, particularly their religious sentiment.

It is some few specimens of this early sentimental school, that we should wish to see on the walls of our National Gallery. ... There is a sentiment and truthfulness in these early works which are but

badly supplied by the technical dexterity, and conventionalism of later generations. Thus wrote "Cul tor" in the Art-Union in 1848. Not surprisingly, the Christian Remembrancer set high religious value on these works. It strongly condemned theories which ignored the influence of the fine arts on the heart. How many a gazer at the Francia Pietà would be profoundly moved by the beautiful treatment of the subject, even if utterly ignorant of the work's scientific merit or denier.

That mother's grief, those angels' wondering sorrow, the Sacred Body itself — all represented with the indescribable feeling of a true Christian artist — arrest every thoughtful mind, and draw tears from a penitent. 'Rude, hard, out of drawing', says the dilettante meanwhile, turning away to admire the scandalous Correggio on one side.

The enthusiasm for the Francias in the National Gallery reflects the very high reputation this painter enjoyed among those who had made a study of the earlier Italians. Ralph Wornum thought his paintings "the most perfect specimen of the antico-moderno (cuattrocento) or intermediate style of painting". And Mrs Jameson in her Hand book to the Public Galleries of Art enthused:

As a painter of purely devotional subjects in what is called the mystic school of art, Francia

42. Christian Remembrancer, vol.xvi (October, 1843), p.266. Wornum took the opposite view, his estimate was not more conservative and more accurate. He remarks on the mediocrity of the Francias, inferior to Correggio as much in holy sentiment as in color. Wornum for Young Artists, 1836, pp.75-9.
remains unsurpassed. He was a better workman with his tools, a more correct designer, than "the blessed" Fra Giovanni Angelico, and equal to Perugino and Gian Bellini in the spiritual beauty of his types, and the simple, solemn grandeur of his composition. It was for all these reasons then, reasons of history, taste, sentiment and religion, that the agitation for the exclusion of the early Italians to the Gallery continued.

Things came to a head on the 8th March, 1853, when Colonel Kure moved in the House of Commons for a Committee to inquire into the management of the National Gallery. The motion was seconded by William Ewart, who had been the mover for the Select Committee on Arts and Manufacture in 1835 and had since sat on most of the committees concerned with the arts. Among the supporters of the motion was Lord John Russell, a government minister. The committee, he said, should enquire into the arrangement of pictures and the desirability of works illustrating the progress of painting.

I mean the obtaining of a collection of the works of the early Italian masters, many of which are indeed very beautiful in themselves, but which have a further value, as showing the progress which led afterwards to the perfect creations of Rafaelle and Da Vinci.

The Select Committee on the National Gallery, under the chairmanship of Colonel Kure, had its first meeting on the 1st April. Few institutions have had their affairs

44. *Select*, p.168.
investigated with such searching thoroughness. In thirty-five meetings, the last on the 2nd August, some sixty witnesses were cross-examined. The final Report, together with the Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, runs to nearly a thousand pages. Here we are concerned only with the enquiries into the Gallery's purchasing policy.

Attitudes had changed since 1835. Ideas and tastes which were new then had become more widespread. It was now generally accepted that a Gallery was primarily an educational institution, and that it must be a "speaking history of art" if its didactic purposes were to be realized. These ideas were expressed yet again in the year of the Select Committee, by James Dennistoun in the Edinburgh Review, by Dr Waagen in the Art Journal, by William Dyce in his Maphlet on the National Gallery. Moreover, the earlier painters had become better known and appreciated, as some of the witnesses informed the Committee.47 Not that the Committee needed this information. After all, Richard Nunckton Lines was a member, and four other members -- C. Earing We., G.E. Vernon, Henry Labouchere (afterwards Lord Taunton), and Francis Chartris (who became Lord Elcho while the Committee was meeting) -- all had at least

47. The situation was not the same as it had been in 1835. The auctioneer, George Christie, stated that the early painters were "much better appreciated than they used to be". James Dennistoun, in reply to a question by Harcourt Vernon about the shift of public taste "to the severe and earlier school of art", agreed that "a very great change has taken place in that direction". Parliamentary Papers (1852-3), vol.xxxxv, pp.440, 454.
one example of early art in their possession. Given also the fact that the witnesses questioned on the composition of the collection included James Dennistoun, William Dyce, Sir Charles Eastlake, and William Coningham (who had owned an outstanding collection of Primitives, sold in 1849), and given the fact that Prince Albert forwarded to the Committee a "PLAN for a COLLECTION of PAINTINGS, illustrative of the HISTORY the ART", the conclusions reached as regards the formation of the collection in the past and the recommendations for future policy might be considered foregone.

Thus in its Report the Committee observed:

It has been alleged by numerous witnesses, and admitted by members of the Trust, that the additions to the Collection have not been made on any definite principle; whether with a view of imparting to it completeness, of illustrating the history of art, or of raising the standard of national taste.

Opportunities had been lost for making valuable additions of

48. Beving Wall had a Coronation of the Virgin, attributed to Toscode Gaddi, which was shown at the British Institution in 1849. G.E. Vernon had a small panel attributed to Veronese, lent to the British Institution in 1848. He also lent paintings to the Manchester Exhibition of 1857, attributed to Spinello Aretino, Orcagna and Granacci. The "Orcagna" is now in the National Gallery (1694). Francis Charteris (Lord Elcho) owned a Holy Family, attributed to Ghirlandaio, which he lent to the British Institution in 1848. Henry Labouchere lent paintings attributed to Perugino, Crivelli and Francia to the British Institution in 1842, 1847 and 1852, respectively. The Crivelli altarpiece he presented to the National Gallery in 1864 (739).


the class of pictures specially adapted to those important objects, namely, "the pictures of Raffaello, and of the time antecedent", as had been recommended by the Committee of 1835-6.

The conclusions might have been foregone, but the evidence on which they were based is nonetheless worth looking at. What is interesting is the tendency to make a sharp distinction between the archaeological and artistic components of a national collection. The more conservative view was that earlier pictures were purely of archaeological value. The Prime Minister, Lord Aberdeen, who gave evidence as one of the Trustees, though admitting that a Gallery should contain earlier works, also argued that the first object was to get good pictures, "and after that the collection might be extended to antiquarian and mediaeval pictures with advantage". Another of the Trustees, William Russell, was opposed to a strictly chronological arrangement of pictures. People with limited time, he argued, ought to be able to see things that would give them pleasure, without having to go through a long chronological series, "which might seem to them to sacrifice rather more of the pedantry of art than would probably be agreeable". Even William Coningham, who was in favour of a collection of "the early works of the Italian school", expressed fears about the conversion of the National Gallery "into a mere archaeological museum for

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11. P. 636.
13. P. 626.
literary antiquarians” through concentrating the older works together.

Coningham certainly believed that such works had a merit other than the purely antiquarian. William Dyce, though he spoke only generally on the subject to the Committee, in his pamphlet vigorously attacked the view which put the remains of art into two classes, “the one hard, dry, meagre, Gothic, tasteless, childish, of which we knew and wanted to know nothing; and the other adorned with every grace and perfection of art!” Art had its adolescence as well as its infancy and manhood, and its “progress towards maturity had not always been identical with progress towards excellence in all respects”. It followed from this that these paintings might be instructive in more than the simple history of art. That one of the Committee members, G.E. Vernon, felt this is evident from a question he asked of James Dennistoun:

Do you consider that in many of those early works, although the execution may be inferior, the feeling and intention of the painter, in some cases, is more plain than in works of a later day, and that great instruction may be obtained by the best artist, as well as by the public, from the sight of such pictures?

Dennistoun, who placed the best age of art between 1450 and 1540, that is, extending it back into a region which the Earl of Aberdeen would probably have regarded as antiquarian,

55. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
believed that this was the period to be concentrated on in the enlargement of the collection. Earlier paintings were of very great importance "owing to their intrinsic merits, as well as to their being illustrative of the history of those schools". The purchase of paintings of an earlier period still is however justified on historical grounds rather, and their acquisition is of secondary importance.

There was, however, more said about the deteriorating effects on public taste of later paintings than on the beneficial effects of earlier works. This was the hobby-horse of Colonel Mure, who habitually referred to the later schools as inferior and mechanical and the earlier schools as superior, purer and more refined. It is doubtful, however, whether Colonel Mure's conception of "earlier schools" extended far back into the fifteenth century. Colonel Mure had taken particular exception to the recent purchase of an Adoration of the Shepherds thought to be by Velasquez. Lord Overstone, another Trustee, was questioned long and hard by Colonel Mure over this purchase.

Are you not of opinion that the taste of the mass of the people, who frequent the National Gallery, and who are not used, or but little used to see objects of that kind treated in the way in which it ought to be treated, is likely to be deteriorated by having placed before them a very large picture treating a very sublime and very sacred object in a very low and undignified manner?

To which Lord Overstone replied with ill-disguised irritation:

As I said before, everything connected with the National Gallery is dependent on your clearly setting down what you are going to aim at; if you merely aim...
at presenting before an uninstructed public a collection of a few pictures, which either from the sentiment and feeling and devotion thrown into them shall excite the moral feelings, and exercise a moral influence upon the public, that is one thing, and if that be the only great object you aim at, it should be distinctly understood. If it is to be a great school of art, in which the public mind of all orders and classes is to be trained up; that is to say, artistic taste, the knowledge of amateurs, and the knowledge of professional artists, then you must purchase on different principles.61

There was one other reason brought forward for the inclusion of earlier paintings in the National Gallery, which reflected the current controversy over the Pre-Raphaelites. At one point we find Vernon asking: "Is it not very desirable, both for artists and the public generally, that when we talk of pre-Raphaelites, we should really know what the word means?"62

Eastlake's views have been left until last, because of their significance for the future history of the Gallery. He was examined four times by the Committee, on the 14th, 17th, 20th, and 24th June. He had also compiled the Italian section of Prince Albert's catalogue, while the other schools had been worked out by Ralph Wornum under his supervision. Additionally, on his own account, he had submitted a paper entitled "Suggestions respecting the Future Management of the National Gallery"63 for the consideration of the Committee. As a former Keeper, and as a Trustee, Eastlake's evidence was of course a vital source of information on the management of the National Gallery and the difficulties and

61. Ibid., p.418.
62. Ibid., p.454.
63. Published as Appendix xvi to the Report. Ibid., pp.543-7.
moralities of the existing system. Eastlake's performance here is creditable. While not trying to avoid responsibility for his own mistakes — such as the Holbein fiasco — he showed that the failure to build up a collection of the older masters during his Keepership was not due to any want of zeal on his part.

In view of his reputation as a "Partizan of the Grandiose Antique style" Eastlake's remarks about their importance in a national collection were temperate and restrained, indeed cautious. This was partly a matter of temperament. Certainly, while opting for a comprehensive collection, he advocated a concentration on those schools which had the greatest influence on the progress and ultimate excellence of the art of painting; and in which the earlier specimens best exemplify the foundation of that excellence. The Schools of Tuscany and Venice, and the Early Flemish School, are the most remarkable in this point of view. Examples of the decline of art need not be so numerous.64

Indeed he told the Committee that he would "omit the Spanish and Bolonese Schools with very few exceptions".65

On the other hand, he refused to be drawn on questions asking his opinion as to the effects on the taste of artists and the public of earlier paintings. In part, this was because he did not share the faith, so evident in the utterances of Committee members and other witnesses, in the magical effect on popular taste of mere exposure to works of art. The practical benefits of a national gallery, whether

64. Ibid., p. 843.
65. Ibid., p. 505.
in terms of elevating taste (and thereby improving design), or spreading civilization (and thereby improving morals and reducing the risks of social disturbance), were at this time the principal arguments justifying an increased government expenditure on the institution. Eastlake, however, did not play the game. When asked by Lord Seymour whether he thought the National Gallery had improved modern art or taste, he answered no to the first, and for the second, he was not prepared to say that he was convinced "that any such effects had been produced by the National Gallery exclusively", since (and this is entirely characteristic of the man) there were no facts on which he could found his opinion. Lord Seymour did not like this. So the government is being asked to spend £10,000 a year on increasing the collection although Sir Charles Eastlake cannot offer any opinion as to the efficacy of the Gallery in improving public taste? However Eastlake is quick to reassure him that the public at large has been instructed by it. Two questions later he completely contradicts himself and states that the improvement of public taste "is mainly owing to the National Gallery". Yet further on again he declines to give his opinion as to what should be done for the formation or improvement of public taste. Eastlake had a reputation for not speaking out plainly, and here we find him sliding between what was politically acceptable and what he really thought.

Eastlake's reticence on the public benefit accruing from the purchase of Primitives was also, however, linked with the fashion for their works which had grown up over

66 Ibid., p.524.
67 Ibid., p.525.
the previous decade. One senses a desire on his part to
dissociate himself from its more extreme manifestations,
as exemplified in the pronouncements of Ruskin or the
paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites. His own interest had
developed when Ruskin was but a babe, and the Pre-
Raphaelites not even born. And it is not fanciful to
imagine a certain testiness in his voice in his answer to
a question from Vernon about the new taste.

Mr Vernon: We have now acquired a much more
accurate knowledge of the works, say of the
early Italian masters in Italy, and know their
beauties more accurately than we did before, and
consequently we feel more the want of them in
our own gallery, do we not?

Sir C. Eastlake: Yes; but there was no lack of
opportunities of obtaining such knowledge, if
English travellers had been disposed, to look
for it, any time within the last 40 years.63

There was, he said, at present "a rage for very early works
of art", often cultivated by people "without any taste
whatever". He predicted, accurately enough, that it would
not endure as it existed then.

I think there is a great deal of fashion in it;
a large proportion of those early pictures are
full of affectation and grimace; and many persons
who have, or fancy they have, a taste for those
pictures are insensible to the essential elements
of painting, such as beauty of arrangement, harmony
of colouring, and natural action and expression.69

Yet, if for these reasons Eastlake was not prepared to make
a blanket statement about the beneficial effects of the
Primitives on taste, neither was he prepared to deny their

63. Ibid.
69. Ibid., pp. 505-6.
value. This can be seen in the following exchange:

Mr R. Currie: I understood you, in answer to a question from the Chairman, to give an opinion, that however much we might all admire the early Italian painters as expressing in their pictures religious sentiment, and as appealing to religious feelings, you do not consider them so valuable with a view to artistic education and for improvement in art itself, as the Venetian and some of the later schools; I mean that however we may admire Francia and the early painters of religious subjects, and however admirably they may address our religious sentiments, you would not look upon them as so valuable with reference to artistic improvement as works of some later painters?

Sir C. Eastlake: I think it is most desirable to collect works of the early Italian masters, but I think it should be done with discretion and discrimination. I have said that I have seen many works of those painters full of affectation and grimace, such as would not be tolerated in a modern artist, nor should they be admired in any artist; therefore, to form a collection blindly and indiscriminately, without taste, and even an artist's taste, would not, I think, be judicious. 70

What Eastlake seems to be arguing is that taste can be educated only by paintings that have some artistic merit, and that even earlier paintings are susceptible of artistic judgments.

The Committee, in setting out its recommendations for future purchasing, sensibly avoided tricky questions of taste. It did not, as had the earlier Committee, recommend the purchase of earlier paintings because they were of a later style than later works.

The intelligent public of this country are daily becoming more alive to the truth, which has long been recognized by other enlightened nations, that the arts of design cannot be properly studied or rightly appreciated by means of insulated specimens alone; that in order to

70 Ibid., p. 506.
understand or profit by the great works, either of the ancient or modern schools of art, it is necessary to contemplate the genius which produced them, not merely in its final results, but in the mode of its operation, its rise and progress as well as in its perfection. A just appreciation of Italian painting can as little be obtained from an exclusive study of the works of Raphael, Titian, or Correggio, as a critical knowledge of English poetry from the perusal of its master pieces. What Chaucer and Spenser are to Shakespeare and Milton, Giotto and Masaccio are to the great masters of the Florentine school; and a National Gallery would be as defective without adequate specimens of both styles of painting, as a National Library without specimens of both styles of poetry. In order, therefore, to render the British National Gallery worthy of the name it bears, Your Committee think that the funds appropriated to the enlargement of the collection should be expended with a view, not merely of exhibiting to the public beautiful works of art, but of instructing the people in the history of that art, and of the age in which, and the men by whom, those works were produced.\footnote{Ibid., p.16.}\footnote{Re-printed in \textit{Parliamentary Papers (1867)}, vol.liv, pp.55-62.}

The Committee also made recommendations about the re-organization of the management of the Gallery. The Treasury Minute, dated 27th March, 1865,\footnote{Vacancies were not to be filled until numbers were reduced to four; thereafter, they should not at any time exceed six. There were to be no ex-officio trustees. Finally, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the First Lord of the Treasury and the President of the Royal Academy were automatic members of the Court. In the case of disputes over a purchase, the decision of the Director was final with regard to purchases proposed.} reconstituting the management of the Gallery accepted some of these recommendations, but the system adopted was closer to that suggested by Gladstone in his submission to the Select Committee. There was to be a salaried Director, responsible for purchases. The Trustee system was retained, with its powers and duties much reduced,\footnote{Ibid., p.16.} as a link between the Gallery and
the government on the one hand, and with cultivated art lovers on the other. There was also to be a Keeper, responsible for the day to day management of the Gallery, and a travelling agent. This last position and its first occupant, Otto Mündler, a German, aroused considerable opposition, and both were soon dispensed with. Ralph Wornum was appointed Keeper. Wornum had made a successful career for himself in the new fields of art education and administration. He had been a lecturer at the Government Schools of Design, and had won a prize in 1851 for the best essay on "The Exhibition of 1851 as a Lesson in Taste" in a competition organized by the Athenaeum. In 1856 the first edition of his very successful Analysis of Ornament was to be published. Wornum was no scholar but he had a good, broad knowledge of the history of art. He had contributed articles to the Supplement to the Penny Encyclopaedia, written articles for the Art-Union/Journal. His Leeches of Painting was published in 1847, with further editions in 1859 and 1864. In an article on the National Gallery for the Art Journal in 1851 he had argued for catholicity of taste. His involvement with the Gallery dates from the work he did for the catalogue published in

by the Trustees or of offers made to them directly, although they could record their protest in a minute. With regard to purchases proposed by the Director, the Trustees' dissent, and reasons, together with the Director's proposal, would be submitted to Parliament with the Annual Report of the Gallery. In cases where the Director may have completed a purchase before a meeting of the Board, then the disapproval of the Trustees would simply be recorded.

74. Art Journal (February, 1851), 76.
1847. He had also assisted Eastlake on the Prince Consort's list of painters.

Eastlake reacted to the offer of the Directorship with customary diffidence, hesitating for two months before accepting the position in October 1854. He had not been the only candidate considered. James Dennistoun had been another possibility, but Lord Aberdeen wrote to Prince Albert that he thought his knowledge of art "not sufficiently general" and "confined to a particular school". The principal objection to Eastlake was that he was already President of the Royal Academy and Secretary to the Fine Arts Commission. His appointment to a third important and onerous post in the art establishment smacked of pluralism. There was also some concern that these other responsibilities would leave him insufficient time for his new duties.

Yet in every other way he was eminently suitable. He had already been involved in the affairs of the Gallery (though for his critics this was simply proof of his incompetence). At least in the field of Italian painting, he was near to fulfilling the formidable qualifications for connoisseurship, which he had outlined for the Committee of 1853 and which revealed the changes that had taken place since the word had come into use in the eighteenth century.

75. According to Lady Eastlake, he accepted the Directorship only after learning that both the Queen and Prince Albert were most anxious he should do so (Letters and Correspondence, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 121-7). The Royal couple had already had a part in his election as President of the Royal Academy (Winston Aches, op. cit., p.153).
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The qualifications Eastlake listed were: an artist's knowledge of pictorial merit, independent of associations; a thorough acquaintance with the history of the different schools and their artists; an extensive knowledge of the works of the Masters and their history, and of copies and the works of imitators. 77

The extent of Eastlake's scholarship is very imperfectly reflected in his published writings and reports. The contents of his library 78 provide one kind of evidence of the foundation of his knowledge. His notes on paintings seen in galleries, churches, and collections abroad provide another kind of evidence. 79 They are the raw material on which his connoisseurship is founded, containing detailed analyses of works: their physical condition, the medium used, the colouring, peculiarities of style and handling, and mannerisms in the drawing of eyes, mouths, etc. The conception of connoisseurship presupposed by this activity, as much concerned with accurate attribution as with discrimination of excellence, was new in England, although it had appeared on the continent a generation earlier. A practitioner of this new connoisseurship who was well-known in England was Eastlake's German counterpart and friend, Dr Waagen. Eastlake was also acquainted with the experts of the next generation, Morelli and Cavalcaselle.

In other more personal ways Eastlake was the ideal person for the job. He had a very strong sense of duty.

78. See the Catalogue of the Eastlake Library in the National Gallery (1851-2), vol.i.
79. There are in the National Gallery archives.
and was industrious and conscientious. He had tact, patience and discretion. His critics said he was cowardly, sly and sneaky. They were hardly being just. Eastlake was timid rather than cowardly, and circumspect rather than sly. And circumspection was a valuable asset in the delicate and difficult negotiations which often preceded a purchase for the National Gallery.

It is often said that Lady Eastlake had a great influence over her husband, and that the two formed a partnership. In a recent article Cecil Gould has questioned this assumption, and rightly so. There is no doubt that Elizabeth Rigby, who became Eastlake’s wife in 1849, was a highly intelligent and capable woman, a notable blue-stocking and forceful contributor to the Quarterly Review. Her interest in art precedes her marriage. She had, for example, written an article on the modern Germans which appeared early in 1846. It is interesting for its rather critical and sceptical tone, at a time of increasing appreciation of their art. But there is no evidence of Elizabeth Rigby having a taste for the primitives, although she was obviously aware of the interest in their art that had developed in Germany and was now spreading to England. She herself had lived in Germany. Her article on German painters of course referred

to the old masters to whom they had returned for inspiration, and she had the usual things to say about their imitation of the dry and stiff manner of ancient art. Sir Francis Palgrave was a relative, and Mrs Jameson a friend. A clue to her attitudes is to be found in her reflections on dinner conversation she had with Dr Wordsworth, Canon of Westminster, on the Raphael cartoons.

Dr Wordsworth seems to think that he died in good time for his excellence, that he had already lost his purity. Yes, he had lost youth, and was gaining manhood. 'Tis not his purity but his timidity which the Doctor means — a charm certainly, but only for its time.83

It was not Miss Rigby but Lady Eastlake who became enamoured of the early masters, and this must have been largely because of her husband, who knew so much more than she did and whose taste was far more highly trained. Thus we find her writing from Dresden in 1852:

I feel that the early Italian pictures in the Berlin Gallery have almost spoilt my eye for the late masters; their forte was expression, every element beautiful as contributing to that, but none claiming attention for itself. I had no idea that the Pre-Raphaelites could have given me such intense pleasure.84

In later years we find her declaring herself "fairly bitten with all the true Pre-Raphaelites" and so in love with then that she could copy their paintings all day long.85 As a last point it is worth noting that Lady Eastlake's

84. Letter, 2 December, 1852. Ibid., p.285.
85. Letter, 13 October, 1855. Ibid., vol.1, p.76.
86. Letter, 7 September, 1855. Ibid., p.102.
principal contributions to art literature — her completion of Mrs Jameson's *History of Our Lord*, her edition of Kugler's *The Italian Schools*, her articles on major Renaissance painters, — were written after her marriage.

Before discussing Eastlake's purchases for the National Gallery I want to look briefly at the question of Ruskin's influence on the change in the Gallery's purchasing policy after 1853. It was anxiety over the welfare of the treasures of early painting in Italy which first interested Ruskin in the National Gallery. Back in 1844 he was in a "desperate rage" over the buying of more Rubenses and more Guidos, and the neglect of the older masters. 87 Their works, he wrote in 1847, would have to be rescued from the grasping apathy of the Italians "who hold them in fact, as a dead man holds what was once near his heart, though it is of no use to him now". 88 Needless to say, Ruskin's editors, Cook and Wedderburn, attributed the improvements in the National Gallery in large measure to Ruskin's influence.

At the time of the cleaning controversy of 1847 Ruskin had written two letters to *The Times* on the subject, and had also then criticized the neglect of the older masters. 89

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"Let agents be sent to all the cities of Italy; let noble pictures which are perishing there be rescued from the invisibility and ill-treatment which their position to commonly implies". In 1852 he wrote two more letters to The Times about the National Gallery.

Ruskin and his wife, Effie, had met the Eastlakes two years earlier in 1850, and a close friendship was formed between Effie and Lady Eastlake. When Ruskin was in Venice in 1852, he was asking his father to send the Eastlakes flowers and vegetables from the garden.

Eastlake made some complimentary remarks about Ruskin at the Royal Academy dinner in the same year. However the relations between the two men must have become strained when Ruskin failed to persuade the Trustees to buy two Tintoretto's in Venice. And the break came when Lady Eastlake became Effie's confidante before and during the divorce. Ruskin's highly critical notes on Eastlake's painting, Beatrice, in 1855, and Lady Eastlake's vindictive review of Modern Painters in the Quarterly Review in March, 1856, were simply the full-stops.

In view of the above, and of Eastlake's own interest in the Primitives, it is not likely that Ruskin exercised any direct influence. He did not give evidence before the Select Committee of 1853. He did appear before the National Gallery Site Commission in April 1857, and his

91. Ibid., p. 206.
recommendations were very similar to those of Eastlake four years earlier, especially in his emphasis on the need to choose paintings for their artistic merit as well as archaeological interest. However, in recommending the purchase of an example of an eleventh-century work, Ruskin was being more radical than Eastlake. Ruskin's statements about the Primitives could only re-inforce what was already being done. The year he gave his evidence was the year in which Eastlake bought the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century paintings from the Lombardo-Baldi collection in Florence. Ruskin's influence on the National Gallery, at least of a direct kind, can thus be discounted.

The Treasury Minute of 1855 gave Eastlake a specific mandate. It stated:

My Lords are also of opinion that, as a general rule, preference should be given to good specimens of the Italian schools, including those of the earlier masters. 94

And this is precisely where Eastlake concentrated his purchasing. Some earlier Northern paintings were also acquired. 95 On the other hand, very few seventeenth-century paintings were bought. 96

The Treasury Minute also stated, and here was a reversal

95. E.g., Jan van Eyck's Portrait of a Young Man and Dieric Bouts' Entombment, bought as a Reglor van der Weyden.
96. Among these, Rubens' Triumph of Caesar and The Horrors of War, and Velasquez' Head of Philip IV.
of earlier practice, that preference should go to paintings from abroad. Eastlake did, indeed, make some important purchases at sales of private collections in England, notably the fresco fragment of Spinello Aretino from the Rogers' sale of 1856 (still thought to be by Giotto), the Botticelli Portrait of a Young Man from the Northwick sale of 1859 (thought to be by Masaccio), Piero della Francesca's Baptism from the Matthew Uzielli sale of 1861, and Bellini's Agony in the Garden, Vincenzo Foppa's altarpiece of The Adoration of the Kings, and the central portion of Perellino's The Trinity -- all from the Davenport Brocley sale of 1863. But such purchases were the exception rather than rule. Most of the additions to the National Gallery were purchased on the Continent.

Every year Eastlake went abroad on a shopping expedition for the Gallery, hunting out likely acquisitions in palaces, convents, churches, and at picture dealers'. He bought for himself also paintings which, because of their fragmentary state or poor condition, he did not think suitable for the Gallery. His ultimate destination was always Italy, but other countries were visited on the journey. The last expedition was in 1865, Eastlake dying en route at Pisa. Lady Eastlake's letters and journals provide a vivid record of these tours. It was a good time to be buying in Italy, disrupted by revolution and war, and there was no lack of impoverished nobles and convents anxious to sell. Eastlake had his failures as well as his

97. Respectively, nos 276, 626, 625, 726, 729, 727.
successes. One of his first disappointments was the Ghirlandaio altarpiece from S. Giusto alle Mura, now in the Uffizi. He had negotiated its purchase, and secured the consent of the Pope. Then the Tuscan government, after representations from the Florentine Academy, refused an export licence, much to Eastlake's annoyance. 98

The most important acquisitions of his first year of office were the Mantegna Virgin and Child with the Magdalen and St John the Baptist (274), bought in Milan, a Bellini Virgin and Child (280), and a Gozzoli altarpiece (283).

Among the purchases of the following year were three panels of an altarpiece by Perugino (288). But these acquisitions were overshadowed by the twenty-two paintings from the Lombardo-Baldi collection bought in Florence in 1657 for £7,000. 99 W.E. Spence had given his views as to the importance of the collection to a meeting of the Trustees in 1653, and Eastlake had first inspected it in 1655.

Among the purchases was the oldest painting to enter the collection, a signed altar frontal by Margaritone (564). As well, there was the Duccio triptych (566), the elaborate altarpiece of the Coronation of the Virgin then given to Colombia (569-78), and other fourteenth-century pictures (564, 566, 567, 569, 591). Among the fifteenth-century paintings were Uccello's Battle of S. Romano (553), and

98. On this affair, see Lady Eastlake's Journals and Correspondence, on cit., vol. ii, pp. 76-7 (letter, 11 October, 1855); Layard, Rossofico Schilderijen, on cit., p. 36; Martin Davies, The Early Italian Schools (National Gallery Catalogues) (London, 3rd ed. revised, 1951), pp. 213 and 117 n.4.

99. For the Lombardo-Baldi purchase, see Martin Davies, on cit., pp. 563-7.
Botticelli's *The Adoration of the Kings* (592). Two other important purchases of fifteenth-century paintings were made in Florence in this year: Pollaiuolo's *Martyrdom of St Sebastian* (292) and a *Virgin and Child with Two Angels* (296), now ascribed to Verrocchio. One last significant acquisition for 1857 was Veronese's *The Family of Darius before Alexander* (294), for which Eastlake paid the then scandalously large sum of £3,650.

There were no further fourteenth-century purchases, but Eastlake continued to concentrate on fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century paintings, including the Bellini *Madonna of the Meadow* in 1858 (as a Basaiti, 599) and Crivelli's *Pietà* in 1859 (602). 1860 saw the purchase of the Gallery's first Fra Angelico, *Christ Glorified in the Court of Heaven* (663), and of Bronzino's *Venus, Polly, Cupid and Time* (651), as well as a group of paintings, mostly north Italian, from the collection of Edmond Secrétain of Paris. In 1861 Eastlake bought Antonello da Messina's *Salvator Mundi* (673), in 1862, Crivelli's "*Madonna della Roncina*" (724), Moroni's *The Tailor* (697), and Piero di Cosimo's *A Mythological Subject* (698).

This list will give some idea of the quality of Eastlake's purchases. Many of them are autograph works or have solid provenances. All are genuine works of their period, and if some of his attributions have since been

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10. It was not the first painting in the collection to be attributed to Fra Angelico. A predella panel, depicting the *Adoration of the Kings* (602), from the Lockard-Baldi collection, was then thought to be by Fra Angelico, but is now considered the work of a follower.
revised, nonetheless, they reflect the most advanced c0~oi 3s curship of the time. One can contrast Eastlake's careful attributions with the attributions given by the lenders of paintings to the Manchester Exhibition, where Giotto and Masaccio abound. Eastlake, for example, hesitated over whether The Agony in the Garden should be listed in the Gallery catalogue as by Bellini, or ascribed to him. "I am always for leaving things undetermined where absolute proof is not forthcoming", he wrote.

Eastlake also sought works which were well-preserved. Yet paradoxically, despite his concern with authenticity, he seems to have shared, in part at least, his century's cavalier attitude towards restoration. Recently, attention has been drawn to the "improvements" made to earlier paintings in the National Gallery. They were of two kinds. Paintings which were fragments of a larger work were altered in order to appear complete in themselves. Secondly, paintings were "improved" in order to conform more closely to the aesthetic standards of the day. There is evidence linking Eastlake with some fairly radical "improvements" of sixteenth-century paintings he had purchased for the National Gallery. There is also evidence in his notes and letters in the National Gallery archives.

archives that Eastlake was not against restorations of this kind. For example, in these notes on a painting of a Madonna and Child, attributed to Francia, which he inspected in Verona in 1863:

The abdomen of the Child a little too cold in colour & also too wide in form. The adoring hands of the angel & the hands of the Madonna not excellent, though like the Master. As the general action is good, the minuter defects might, if necessary be corrected. All the heads are excellent & the general golden colour very attractive -- The green lining of the Madonna's robe wants a little unifying. 164

For "corrected" Eastlake had first written "improved", which he crossed out. This is of course as revealing of his attitudes towards the early Italians as it is of his views on restoration.

Of the 139 paintings bought by Eastlake, three-quarters were Italian, mostly of the period 1450-1520, that is to say, of the period of Raphael and his immediate predecessors. Within this period there is a further concentration on those schools Eastlake considered the most influential, the Tuscan and Venetian schools. The central Italian schools are comparatively ignored. Eastlake in fact visited the north of Italy more frequently than the centre. On a number of occasions his journeys took him no further south than Florence. The masters of "Christian art" are on the whole not strongly represented. Using the attributions of the time we find that Eastlake bought two works of Fra Angelico, one of Perugino, and one of Francia. On the other hand, there were three each of Filippo Lippi, 165

Filippino Lippi and Botticelli. These were three of the four painters whom Lady Eastlake pronounced to "constitute the core of Florentine art". The fourth was Ghirlandaio. Eastlake had failed to get the Ghirlandaio altarpiece he was after, but the Virgin and Child, now ascribed to Verrocchio, was then thought to be by Ghirlandaio. In some respects Eastlake was at the forefront of a taste which was in itself advanced, buying works of painters who were not to become popular until towards the end of the century, and in some instances even later: Botticelli, Piero di Cosimo, Piero della Francesca.

The history of the English taste for Botticelli has already been traced. Botticelli was a painter difficult to appreciate because he did not fit into the story of the progress of art, and because his mannerisms and emotional vein were puzzling and disturbing. The problem of Piero della Francesca was rather different. Vasari had in fact given this artist, almost a fellow-townman, a respectable niche on account of his contributions to the science of perspective. And this is how he survived. One of his difficulties was the paucity of his surviving works, which in any case were almost entirely neglected. It was the rare visitor who went to see the fresco cycle in S. Francesco in Arezzo or his work at Bergo S. Sepolcro. The condition of these paintings was appalling. The Arezzo

frescoes Lord Lindsay described as being in "the last agonies of dissolution".107

Another problem was that Piero della Francesca was a painter difficult to place. He was outside the Florentine mainstream, but could not be fitted into any of the other schools. He was, as Kugler said in the second edition of his Handbook to the Italian schools, a painter "who without belonging to any particular schools seems to partake alike of the Paduan, Umbrian and Florentine styles".108 Finally, Piero's austerity, the impassive figures, the absence of dramatic action, were hardly calculated to appeal to mid-nineteenth-century taste, with its preference for sentiment, individualized character and narrative incident.

Given all these impediments, it is all the more surprising to find a few English art lovers come nearer a just appreciation of an artist now the most highly regarded of the fifteenth-century Italians. Eastlake was the first, when in his review of Passavant in 1840, he referred to Piero as "one of the most accomplished painters of his time".109 Two years later he took Kugler to task for his light dismissal of this artist.110 In the same year Lord Lindsay discovered his frescoes at Arezzo. "They are masterly productions -- I know no other word which so well conveys their character -- masterly in every way".111 Had

110. Kugler simply mentioned him in a foot-note as the "architect of perspective" (see also Lord Lindsay, Apollo, vol.IXXVI, April, 1965, p.217).
he continued with his *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* he would certainly have given public expression to his enthusiasm. The next to publish a sympathetic account of Piero's art was James Dennistoun in his *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino*. He thought that Vasari had over-estimated his importance, but nonetheless devoted eight pages to him. However, it is A.H. Layard who writes most perceptively and appreciatively about Piero della Francesca at this time. Here, for example, is his description of the *Resurrection* in Borgo S. Sepolcro, in a hall with boarded up windows, which had been converted into a storehouse:

> The Saviour, bearing aloft the red-crossed banner of victory, and gathering the grave-clothes about him, leaves the tomb with solemn step. There is an awful and unearthly majesty in His countenance, in the large eyes fixed on vacancy, and in the still placid features. Beneath, buried in a death-like sleep, lie the guards. The cold grey morning creeps above the hills, and the dark trees stand motionless in the twilight. The glory of the rising Christ, and of His shining garments, casts a pale subdued light around Him. No painter has ever so painted the scene!\(^{113}\)

Outside this little group of enthusiasts Piero della Francesca was an unknown. The purchase of his *Baptism* for the National Gallery inspired no comment in the press. Yet there was a good deal of interest generally in the new purchases for the national collection. What was the reaction to them? Layard, who was a good friend of the Eastlakes, wrote an article on the National Gallery for the *Quarterly Review* in 1859. It contained an eulogy of the Director. Layard also mentioned the difficulties in introducing a new

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system "for which the public, and, we suspect, some of the
Trustees, were not prepared, and to which they are scarcely
even yet fully reconciled". 114

It is apparent that Eastlake, despite his mandate, felt
rather nervous about some of his purchases. It was probably
in preparation for the Lombardo-Baldi collection that, in
his Report to the Trustees in 1856, he quoted the Select
Committee comparison of Giotto and Masaccio with Chaucer
and Spenser. He then commented that, notwithstanding the
opinion expressed,

I believe that an interest for early Italian works
of art, of the description referred to, is still
by no means very general. At the same time I beg
to express my conviction, in accordance with the
above views, that the future completeness of the
National Gallery should be constantly kept in view,
without regard to the temporary impression produced
by particular works; and that, therefore, oppor-
tunities should not be neglected for forming what
may be called a chronological foundation for the
Italian schools of art. 115

In his Report of 1858 he was careful to make absolutely
explicit that historical interest was the only reason for
the selection of the really early examples:

The unsightly specimens of Margaritone and the
earliest Tuscan painters were selected solely for
their historical importance, and as showing the rude
beginnings from which, through nearly two centuries
and a-half, Italian art slowly advanced to the
period of Raphael and his contemporaries. 116

Eastlake had no lack of critics in Parliament and the

114. Ibid., vol. cv (April, 1899), p.359.
115. Report of the Director of the National Gallery to the
116. Report of the Director of the National Gallery to the
press. Every year, at the time of the vote for Supply and Civil Service Estimates, the affairs of the National Gallery were debated. Occasionally one finds criticism of purchases on the grounds that money was being spent on pictures appreciated only by a few.117 Eastlake's principal critics in Parliament were Lord Elcho and William Coghhill, the latter, a friend of Morris Moore, the picture-dealer who led the attack on Eastlake in 1847 and who remained his implacable enemy. Yet their attack was directed, not against Eastlake's purchasing policy, but against the actual paintings he bought (which were damned as worthless) and the prices paid for them (inflated).

Similarly, in the press, I have found little evidence of disagreement with the principle that a national gallery should contain an historical collection as well as works of fine art, though fears were expressed that an excessive concentration on early works would degrade taste and turn the Gallery into a Chamber of Mediæval Horrors.118 The Art Journal usually took the line that an historical collection was necessary, but its acceptance of this fact was grudging. With very few exceptions— one of these the Perugino bought


118. e.g., a contributor to the Art Journal (May, 1860), writing about the collection of earlier pictures in the Brera, Milan, said: "The collection, in short, is too like in tone the Chamber of Mediæval Horrors in our own National Gallery, that melancholy monument to the abject superstition of former ages and of the spurious sentimentalism of our own" (p. 130). He is not opposed to the purchase of representative earlier works, but feels that too many have been bought (ibid., p. 133).
in 1856, a generally popular purchase — earlier paintings are allowed historical merit only. The other paintings acquired in 1856 were "positively objectionable as to the intrinsic value of their art". The Lombardo-Baldi pictures generally bore "no relation to the healthier Art of the present time". Even the Crivelli Annunciation (739), presented by Lord Taunton in 1864, was valuable simply as an illustration of the progress of painting.

The Athenaeum is generally more appreciative. One even finds suggestions of possible benefits to British artists (an argument now more seldom presented than in the 1840s). Apropos of the Gozzoli purchased in 1856 it remarked that even "technical artists may perceive the value of earnestness of purpose and the advantage of painstaking in such a crude work as this". Even though paintings are evaluated principally in terms of their contribution to progress, there is evidence of appreciation of their art merits. According to George Scharf, the Pesellino Holy Trinity showed "to what high degree, both of drawing and technical skill, the masters of the first half of the fifteenth century had attained". Even so, Scharf felt obliged to conclude his long and sympathetic analysis of the Lombardo-

119. Ibid. (October, 1856), p.304.
120. Ibid. (June, 1858), p.184.
121. Ibid. (December, 1864), p.375.
123. Ibid. (12 December, 1863), p.803.
442

Baldi pictures on a cautionary note:

It would be wrong, however, now that the antiquarian taste has been roused and taken root as it were in our collection, to neglect the technical schools of the later times. The older ones show the heavings from thoughts working deep within, but it is to the later and more refined works that we must turn for efficient utterance. 124

The Saturday Review reports on Gallery purchases were also serious and well-considered. For example, Piero di Cosimo's Mythological Subject is "beautifully drawn and delicately painted". Scharf simply found the picture "curious". But the Saturday Review critic went on to remark how much of the grace and purity of the picture lies in the fact that the treatment is just that of the religious works of the age unconsciously applied to a Greek subject. Hence, to the thoughtful spectator, the special interest of the work. We have before us the great turning-point in the intellectual history of Christendom — the blending of two great streams of human thought and sentiment. 127

It is apparent that he is trying to make a picture otherwise unappealing interesting by relating it to the "spirit of the age", making it important as a reflection of the intellectual life of the time. One finds similar endeavours on the part of other reviewers of National Gallery purchases. These works cannot stand on their own merits. The public

124. Ibid. (5 June, 1858), p. 726.
127. Saturday Review, op. cit. The article may have been by F. Palgrave, the son of Sir Francis Palgrave. He wrote articles on art for the journal between 1855 and December, 1865. See Horle Hawes Revington, The Saturday Review, 1855-1865, Representative Literary Opinion in Victorian England (..., 1941), p. 295.
must therefore be educated to understand them.

One could give other examples of the ways in which art journalists sought to make the earlier painters acceptable to their readers. To take one example, John Beavington Atkinson's article on "The National Gallery - its Purpose and Management" in Blackwood's in December, 1859. He begins by declaring himself in favour of a gallery which is instructive, since one cannot understand the great masters without studying their roots. There follows a potted history of the revival of painting as illustrated by the Lombardo-Baldi pictures, from the first "feeble notions of life animating the cold and deathlike limbs, the first faint glimmer of intelligence and love gleaning upon features long stricken with stupefaction". There rose the two distinct schools of painting, the one as represented by Orcagna, Fra Angelico and Gozzoli, concerned with the spiritual, the other inaugurated by Filippo Lippi, pre-occupied with the material. (Atkinson cites as evidence of this shift the physiognomy of Filippo Lippi's angels. "The straight tapering nose has become the debased worldly Ph.; and instead of languishing almond eyes, we find the fixed, wide-awake, gaping orbs, into which tears never filled, before whose staring gaze visions never ventured"). In union of these two sides, the spiritual and the material, constituted the maturity of art, and the attainment of "the ideal of Christian art", as illustrated by the work of

112. Ibid., p. 719.
Leonardo, Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi and Raphael. Raphael was of course the culminating point. The story of painting thus inspires speculation about the nature of humanity, and the Gallery is thus a School of Philosophy as well as an Academy of Art. It can also be seen as an illustrated physical geography, and an illuminated chart of national wealth and civilization, pointing to, for example, the fundamental differences between northern and southern civilizations. It can also assist the understanding of present art phenomena, such as Pre-Raphaelitism.

Eastlake would not have disapproved of his purchases being used in this way. In his unfinished paper on "How to Observe" (1835) he had stressed how the enjoyment of a work of art could be enhanced by its various associations, social, historical, political, and literary. "The accumulated associations thus afforded can inform a lifeless work of art with far-reaching thought." But in his preface to Kugler he also wrote of the danger that, with the cultivated observer, associations might supersede the considerations of the art as such. Eastlake, as has been said already, made a very clear distinction between the associations of a painting and its artistic merit. And it is obvious that as regards the Primitives he felt that enthusiasm for the first too often led to disregard of the second. He warned the reader in his preface to Kugler that
the "indulgence with which the productions of the early Italian masters are regarded may sometimes, perhaps, convey too exalted an idea of their merit". 132 This warning applied more particularly to the earliest masters. When Engler declared that Duccio lacked but a few steps to attain the summit of art, Eastlake notes that such remarks belong more "to the age when Duccio's altar-piece was borne in solemn procession, than to the sober criticism of our own times". 133 On the whole, Eastlake was not very responsive to pre-fifteenth-century painting. He bought only one trecento picture for himself, and only a handful of such works for the Gallery. When the Italian paintings were ultimately organized into a chronological collection these earliest works were consigned to a vestibule, forming an introduction "& nothing more". The best fifteenth-century pictures were in another room illustrating "the commencement of the school in its ripening stages". 134

It is not easy to discover what Eastlake really thought of the early Italians. He wrote very little about them, and his comments are restrained and impersonal. He was a man who was extremely reserved, even secretive. S.C. Hall, the editor of the Art-Journal, recalled that even letters on site and common-place subjects he marked "private". 135

132. Ibid., p.xi.
133. Ibid., p.28.
135. S.C. Hall, A Book of Tours in the South of France and Italy, 1860, p.439 n.
His notes in the National Gallery reveal nothing of his feelings about the paintings he bought. They are dry and technical.

One of the rare occasions on which Eastlake was positive and definite was when he insisted to the Select Committee of 1853 that Primitives, like any other paintings, must be bought with taste and discretion. In other words, they must be judged on their artistic merit. And the purchases he made are testimony to the way in which Eastlake bought according to his principles. Yet the merit of these paintings could only be relative. No one could be more sensitive to the "defects" of the Primitives than Eastlake, with his trained taste. His reactions would have been similar to those of Wangen, who wrote in the Art Journal in 1853 that, as one whose eye and feeling had been educated by long study of the great masters, he was more alive to the defects of the early masters than any mere dilettante.

Eastlake's notes on paintings reveal his consciousness of defects, while works are meritorious in proportion to the evidence of technical advance. "Dry", "hard", "rude", "paint" "out of drawing" are words commonly used. For example, of Piero di Cosimo's A Mythological Subject he writes:

- landscape pale & delicate — distant lake & mountains & green in foreground — in mid, distance a heron & birds — her head badly foreshortened — well preserved — but, in no respect excellent except in landscape.

He is more appreciative of the Filippo Lippi frescoes at Spoleto. Even so they are a stage in the progress of art.

Drapery always excellent — heads always studied, characteristic & expressive. . . . good architecture — hands equal to heads — landscape not better than immediately preceding masters — Mantegna'sque rocks trees like L. Gonzoli but rather better.

Expression is also important, and quite frequently allowed to be fine, solemn, true, dignified and earnest. But merit is always relative. The efforts of the early masters, he wrote in his preface to Kugler, "prepared the brightest era of Art, and contained within them the germ of a perfect development".

It is doubtful whether Eastlake in fact allowed the earlier painters any intrinsic merits peculiar to them alone and not surpassed by the masters of the High Renaissance. On the other hand, there were characteristics he found in the earlier painters which appealed to him. For example, he acknowledged the deficiencies of painters like Mantegna, Cosimo Tura and Francesco Cozza: their hard and dry imitation of antique models, their indiscriminate imitation of nature. "On the other hand", he wrote, "their best, conscientious truth, it must be admitted, often made up as for all defects by the charm of individuality". Absence of individuality was the reason for the decline of the reputation of the Bolognese painters.

It has been felt that, in the attempt to combine the excellences, however great, of various kinds,
the chief recommendations of human productions, viz. the evidence of individual character, the moral physiognomy, which in its sincerity and passion tones for so many defects, is of necessity wanting: this is one reason why the Germans dwell so much on the unaffected efforts of the early painters. The principle to which the taste of the present age leans would include all Art which is remarkable for spontaneous feeling and singleness of aim. 141

Eastlake also seems to have responded to the appeal of the immaturity of painting not simply because it led to the maturity, but because of its very immaturity.

In 1863 he told the Royal Academy students:

The modern painter, accustomed to the refinements of Art, finds it difficult to recognize the extent and importance of the improvements of the first innovators from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, and it may be granted that the study, however interesting, is rather antiquarian than artistic. But if we turn from the freshness of those efforts — rude as the best often are — to the consequences of what are called the later revivals, we are compelled to acknowledge that in Art, if not in Nature, the promise of an original development is more interesting than an avowedly borrowed perfection. 142

Yet it is also noteworthy that, two years before his death, Eastlake is suggesting that the study of the earlier painters is "rather antiquarian than artistic". It is difficult to believe that that was what he really felt.

All the same, his purchases were of vital importance for the revival of the Primitives. "The present management of the National Gallery has done much to prepare the public to look at these primitive works with a proper interest",

141. Ibid., p. 395 n.
wrote George Scharf in the Athenaeum in 1863. And the obituary notice in this same journal (by F.G. Stephens) stated that next to Mrs Jameson, we owe, probably, most to him for an extension of popular knowledge of the early Italian schools of painting. The additions to the National Gallery while under his direction have been made in a very severe order of taste; wisely so, and greatly to the benefit of the English School.

\[\text{Footnotes:}
\begin{align*}
\text{143. Athenaeum (6 June, 1863), p. 749.} \\
\text{144. Ibid. (30 December, 1865), p. 926.}
\end{align*} \]
CHAPTER X

The Manchester Exhibition, Collectors, and Tourists

The main purpose of Dr Waagen's visits to Britain in the 1850s was the collection of material for a re-written and expanded edition of his *Works of Art and Artists in England*. *Treasures of Art in Great Britain* was published in three volumes in 1854, with a supplementary volume in 1857. These revealed the extent and value of art works in private hands in the country, works which were inaccessible to the general public.

England had long had the reputation of being the grave of art, its treasures hidden from the view of all but the most privileged. In the words of the French critic, Thoré, "L'Angleterre est pour les chefs-d'œuvre comme le tombeau pour les morts: sa porte ne s'ouvre point en dedans".  

At a time when so much national benefit was being expected from the diffusion of taste and the knowledge of art, it is not surprising to find a desire that owners be more generous with the valuable objects in their possession. It was such a desire that was to lead to the Art Treasures Exhibition held at Manchester in 1857. The originator of the idea of a loan exhibition was John Deane, a Manchester barrister.  

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2. For an account of the events leading up to the Exhibition, see *Exhibition of Art Treasures of the United Kingdom, held at Manchester in 1857, at the Request of the Manchester Committee* (Manchester, 1857). In the paper by John Deane and Peter Cunningham, given at a preliminary meeting on the 30th March, 1856, Waagen's *Treasures of Art* is referred to. John Deane,
1856 an executive committee was formed. A visit of prominent Manchesterians to London in May secured royal patronage. A guarantee fund was set up, to which £74,000 was subscribed. The city's merchants and manufacturers were persuaded by appeals to civic pride and economic self-interest. Here was an opportunity to prove that the north was not a cultural desert. Hopefully also, the exposure of the population to the finest examples of art workmanship would have that magical effect of raising taste and improving design.

Early in July 1856, a second deputation went to London to seek advice from Prince Albert about the choice of works for the Exhibition, and his assistance in persuading owners to lend. The Prince provided the committee with a copy of the list of schools and painters compiled by Eastlake and Wormald for the Select Committee on the National Gallery in 1853. This was enclosed in a letter to Lord Ellesmere, the President of the Committee. The letter supported the decision that the Exhibition should be devoted exclusively to art treasures. The Prince then went on to tackle the problem of unwilling owners. The solution, he suggested, was to persuade them of the usefulness of the undertaking from a national point of view, since neither simple satisfaction of public

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a member of the Manchester Royal Institution, had been associated with exhibitions at Cork in 1852 and Dublin in 1853, and with the Crystal Palace. On the Exhibition generally, see John Steedman, *Critic*, pp. 634-5, and "Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857" (Editorial), *Burlington Magazine*, vol. xcix (November, 1957), pp. 361-3.
curiosity nor the promise of intellectual entertainment to the population of Manchester were sufficient reasons:

The national usefulness might, however, be found in the educational direction which may be given to the whole scheme. No country invests a larger amount of capital in works of Art of all kinds than England, and in none, almost, is so little done for Art education! If the collection you propose to form were made to illustrate the history of Art in a chronological and systematic arrangement, it would speak powerfully to the public mind, and enable, in a practical way, the most uneducated eye to gather the lessons which ages of thought and scientific research have attempted to abstract; and would present to the world, for the first time, a gallery such as no other country could produce, but for which, I feel convinced, the materials exist abundantly in private hands among us .... A person who would not otherwise be inclined to part with a picture would probably shrink from refusing it, if he knew that his doing so tended to mar the realisation of a great National object.

It is evident that, though Albert envisaged the enhancement of the nation's prestige through the demonstration of the wealth of its art resources, the real value of the Exhibition was educational, in the sense of both education in art and education through art. So the Manchester Exhibition joins the fresco experiment in the new Houses of Parliament, the re-organized and enlarged National Gallery, the new museum of Ornemental Art at South Kensington, as an expression of the desire to bring art to the people.

The Prince had given permission for his letter to be used as a means of securing works for the Exhibition, and the Committee had it printed in the Press and included in a circular sent to the principal owners of art works in England. Wezen assisted the Committee by marking in a copy of his

3. Report of the Executive Committee, 1855, p. 27.
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Treasures of Art those works he considered essential to the Exhibition. The Committee had the assistance of two other experts: J.B. Waring and George Scharf. Waring was an architect and an authority on mediaeval and Renaissance architectural ornament and decoration. He had compiled, with W.D. Wyatt, guidebooks to the architectural courts of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. His other publications included Architectural Art in Italy and Sospir (1850) and The Arts Connected with Architecture in Central Italy (1855). He was made Superintendent of the works of ornamental art and sculpture for the Manchester Exhibition. George Scharf was appointed as Art Secretary, and was in charge of the paintings in the Exhibition. He had trained as an artist, and worked as an illustrator, contributing to the Kugler Handbook to the Italian Schools and Mrs Jameson's Sacred and Legendary Art. He had also done the reproductions for the Arundel Society's Life of Fra Angelico. Like Eastlake, Dyce, Ralph Wornum, and many other artists of the time, he became involved in art administration. He was concerned with the arrangement of exhibitions for the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, and in 1857 was appointed Secretary of the new National Portrait Gallery. He was also Professor of Pictorial Art at Queen's College, London, until 1858, and a regular contributor to the Athenaeum during the 1850s and early 1860s.

These two men were principally responsible for the handling and display of the thousands of art works which the Committee had succeeded in obtaining for the Exhibition. Not only were there paintings, classified as ancient and modern, but also prints, drawings, photographs, sculpture,
armour, as well as enamels, ivories, goldsmith's work and other applied arts. The Exhibition contained the important Soulages collection of mediaeval and Renaissance art, which had been bought by the Executive Committee. 4

This vast collection was housed in a specially erected building at Old Trafford, adjoining the railway line, which was the chief means of transporting visitors to the Exhibition. The official opening was by Prince Albert on the 5th May, 1857. In his address to the 10,000 visitors gathered in the Great Hall, he emphasized once again the educational nature of such an exhibition.

If Art is the purest expression of the state of mental and religious culture, and of general civilisation of any age or people -- an historical and chronological review, given at one glance, cannot fail to impress us with a just appreciation of the peculiar characteristics of the different periods and countries, the works of which are here exhibited to us, and of the influence which they have exercised upon each other.5

In the 142 days it was opened over one and a quarter million people visited the Exhibition. It closed on the 17th October. 6

In the section of the Exhibition devoted to the "Ancient Masters", that is, to pre nineteenth-century masters, there

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4. The collection had been purchased in Toulouse by Henry Cole, in the expectation of its being included in the collection for the South Kensington Museum. Then the Treasury refused to support the purchase, it was sold to the Executive Committee of the Manchester Exhibition. Afterwards it was acquired for the South Kensington Museum on a piecemeal basis. See John Steegman, loc. cit., pp. 234-5.

5. See Art Journal (June, 1857), p.137.

6. The Manchester Exhibition was not the popular success its organizers had hoped for. (The Great Exhibition in the six months it was open had over six million visitors). It
were over 1200 pictures, and something like a quarter of these were attributed to artists of the fifteenth century and earlier. This was far and away the largest exhibition of Primitives seen in Britain to this date. None of the handful of precedents could compare with the show at Manchester.

In 1848 Prince Albert had organized an exhibition of a hundred Primitives formed by a relation, Prince Ludwig-Kraft-Ernst von Oettingen-Wallerstein. Most of these were early German and Flemish works, but there were some early Italians as well, including the Giusto de'Menabue triptych now in the National Gallery. 7

In the same year, in the annual Old Masters exhibition at the British Institution, a room was devoted (more or less) to specimens of "antique art". There were about thirty works altogether, mostly Italian, all from the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, with the exception of the Spinello Aretino fresco fragment from the Carmine, then in Samuel

broke even, making neither a profit nor a loss. The Committee in its Report blamed the railway companies for being too slow in introducing cheap excursion trains to the Exhibition. However, remoteness from London was the reason most commonly given in the press for the Exhibition's comparative lack of success.

7. The collection was for sale, but failed to attract any purchasers. It became the property of Prince Albert in 1851. When first exhibited in 1848 there was an accompanying catalogue prepared by Gruner. The Art-Union reviewed the exhibition at length in the August, September and October issues of 1848. It urged the purchase of the collection for the National Gallery (ibid. October, 1848, p.299). The collection had been offered to the Gallery in 1844, but was refused by the Trustees. See Parliamentary Papers (1852-3), vol.xxxv, p.475.
Rogers' collection, and another fragment from the same church from the Towneley collection. Other works lent by Rogers included his paintings attributed to Fra Angelico, Lorenzo di Credi, Van Eyck and Hemling. Another collector of Primitives who lent to the British Institution exhibition was the Rev. John Sanford. Most of the early paintings in the exhibition, however, came from collections which contained few works of this class. The Earl of Pembroke lent the Wilton Diptych; R.S. Holford, a collector of "great catholicity of taste in works of art" contributed a portrait attributed to Gentile Bellini; the Marquess of Westminster provided three paintings, among them a Crivelli acquired in Rome in 1841. The only serious collector of the generation after Rogers and Sanford, who was represented at the exhibition, was William Fuller Maitland of Stansted Hall, who lent five paintings.

Both the Art-Union and the Athenæum commended the British Institution for including such examples, while commenting on the uncertainty of the attributions. The Art-Union wrote of the charm of antiquity, "delicious in the contemplation of these pious creations of religious feeling". Neither Solomon Hart in the Athenæum nor

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8. Including two scenes from the history of Joseph, there attributed to Ubertini, now in the National Gallery as Baschinoca (1213/9).
the Art-Union reviewer thought the works exhibited of the highest class, but felt that they gave a good idea of the progress of art in those days.

In the following years there were usually a few examples of early works included in the British Institution exhibition, but the emphasis is on "few". The nine specimens in the 1852 exhibition, among them Botticelli's Exotic Nativity, which had entered Fuller Maitland's collection, and five predella panels by Perugino, were thought to be an "unusually large number". Token examples such as these gave no clue to the extent of the Primitives mounting up in private collections.

There were two private collections with Primitives which were easily accessible to the public at this time, those of Lord Northwick and Lord Ward. Lord Northwick's pictures were in specially constructed galleries in his house, Northwick Park, and in Thirlestone House near Cheltenham, bought to house the overflow from Northwick Park. These galleries were open to the public, and visitors were often taken around by Lord Northwick himself, who delighted in talking about his collection. A simple and unpretentious old man, he was sometimes taken for a servant.

Upon more than one occasion he was offered half-a-crown, he replied, "Lord Northwick never takes any money for showing his pictures", making, at the same time, a profound bow.14

A handbook to the principal printings at Thirlestone House

was published in 1843. A second edition, revised and enlarged, appeared three years later. This drew upon articles on the Northwick collection which had appeared in the *Art-Union* in September and October, 1846. Waagen, who visited Thirlestome House in the early 1850s, felt that the collection had two drawbacks: "the first is, that the majority of the pictures, bearing high-sounding, but too often erroneous, names, are either badly restored, or in themselves insignificant works; and the second, that, with the exception of a few rooms, pictures of the most various times and schools are mingled together in the most arbitrary way". Still, he concluded, there were few collections in England with so many worthwhile pictures of the fifteenth-century Italian school. There is little information about the Primitives in Northwick's collection before 1843. The guides to Thirlestome house and the *Art-Union* articles mention paintings attributed to Guido da Arezzo, Masaccio, Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, Lorenzo di Credi, Francia, Mantegna, Cima da Conegliano, and Passigno. Lord Northwick, who was buying paintings up to the last years of his life, was certainly all the while adding to the Primitives in his collection. He bought a

17. See above pp.111-2.
Fra Angelico and a Perugino at the Lucca sale of 1840, and a Francia from the Sir William Forbes sale of 1842. Further Primitives, not mentioned in earlier accounts, are described by Waagen in Treasures of Art in Great Britain. In any case, at the decease sale of 1859, one hundred and twenty-five early Italian works are listed, which makes Lord Northwick's collection one of the largest of the time.

The other collector who showed himself to be unusually public-spirited was Lord Ward, created Earl of Dudley in 1860. He opened his collection to the public in 1851 in a specially arranged gallery in the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly. The part of the collection which aroused the most interest and to which the most importance was attached were the paintings of the earlier Italian schools. Many of these had been acquired by Lord Ward in Rome. The

18. Lord Northwick never married, and died intestate in 1859. Consequently, all his property was sold. See the catalogue of Northwick sale (Phillips', 26 July, 1859, and twenty-one following days). On this sale, see Frank Herrmann, The English as Collectors. A Documentary Chrestomathy (London, 1974), pp. 74-86. A nephew bought back a small part of the collection, which passed to Captain Spencer-Churchill in 1912. See Tancred Borenius, Catalogue of the Collection of Pictures at Northwick Park (1931), compiled with the assistance of Lionel Cast. The Northwick pictures were sold with the rest of the Spencer-Churchill collection in 1965.

19. The collection was first made available to friends and recommended persons in his house in Grosvenor Square in 1849 (Art Journal, March, 1849, p. 98). The Eastlakes went to see it in May (Lady Eastlake's Journals and Correspondence, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 231). The collection was sold in 1859, after Lord Ward's death. See the catalogue of his decease sale (Christie's, 25 June, 1859). Some of his pictures had been disposed of earlier, in an anonymous sale in 1876.
two most famous paintings in his collection, the Raphael
Crucifixion, now on loan to the National Gallery, and the
Fra Angelico Last Judgment, bought for the Berlin Museum
in 1855, came from the Pesch collection. In 1847 he had
made an en bloc purchase of the Bisenzio collection. 20
Cought up by the events of 1848-49 in Italy, Lord Ward
managed to get himself and his paintings safely out of
the country. As well as the Fra Angelico and the early
Raphael, the exhibition at the Egyptian Hall included works
attributed to Giotto, Lorenzo di Bicci, Filippo Lippi,
Crivelli, Bellini, Francia, Perugino, Botticelli, and
Ghirlandaio. 22 The Dudley Gallery, as it was called,
attracted fifty thousand visitors in 1851, the year of
the Great Exhibition. However interest declined after
that, partly no doubt because the appreciation of these
paintings depended on that "purer taste", as Waagen called
it, which looked for the "moral significance" of a work
and which was not deterred by "meagerness of forms, hardness
of outline, erroneous perspective or defective keeping". 23

20. Three of the early Italian paintings from this collection
are now in the National Gallery (2502, 2926, 2434).
21. The panel, now in the National Gallery, is ascribed
to the Master of the Cambiano Vispo (1916).
22. See Art Journal (May, 1851), p.149; Solomon Hart,
Athensian (3 July, 1851), pp.712-3; Waagen, Treasures,
oc.cit., vol.ii, pp.259-60. The Ghirlandaio, which
Waagen attributed to Gischi, is now in the Fitzwilliam
Museum, Cambridge, as Francesco Botticelli (1463).
The Botticelli, now considered to be a studio piece,
is in the Terrisian collection, see the Art of Painting
in Florence and Ferrara from 1570 to 1576, Winterthür,
Catalogue (nach Chresten, London, 1851), no....
But it also seems that the continuation of the exhibition after 1851 was not generally known, since it was not advertised at all, an oversight commented on by the Athenaeum in an article on Lord Ward's gallery in 1855. The absence of a carefully prepared catalogue was also regretted. "Many of his pictures that are in themselves really important are so uninviting at the first glance as to be lost to the generality, and it is this circumstance which renders some little assistance really desirable". Thus on the one hand, presumably in the interests of education, Lord Ward had generously made his collection accessible to the public. It was open every day of the week except Monday, so those who were working could visit it at the week-ends. On the other hand, he had done nothing to bring the public there nor to help them once they had come to view. Simple exposure sufficed. The same kind of criticism was to be made of the Art Treasures Exhibition at Manchester.

In the display of the old masters at Manchester, George Scharf had tried to make this section of the exhibition an "educational museum" rather than simply a "gorgeous spectacle". Paintings were hung in chronological order, all the Italians being on one wall, and other schools on the wall opposite. The intention was that the

25. Ibid., p.817.
spectator could follow the progress of a school, and by crossing the floor compare other schools of the same period. In its execution the success of the scheme was diminished by the inadequacy of the representation of some schools, and by their being jumbled together. The later Spanish, French, and Flemish painters were not separated in any way; early German and Flemish paintings were mixed; and no attempt had been made to classify Italian painting into its separate regional schools. Moreover, paintings were not labelled. As the Saturday Review said, the pictures should have borne the name, date and school of the artist if they were to educate the lower and even the middle classes. It also suggested that lecturers be employed to provide popular running commentaries on the pictures, a suggestion not adopted so far as I know. A vast collection of art treasures has been brought together, yet little was done to effect the educational purpose of the Exhibition. The Saturday Review was critical also of the official catalogue for being too expensive and for containing too little information. However there was one cheap handbook, A Visit at the Pictures, which sold for a penny. The Art-Treasures Examiner contained articles on paintings and painters represented in the exhibition. On a more critical and learned level was A Walk through the Art-Treasures Exhibition at Manchester, under the guidance of Dr. Neumen and George Scharf's Handbook to the Paintings by Ancient

Masters in the Art Treasures Exhibition, reprinted from articles in the *Manchester Guardian*. Lastly, there were the long and careful reviews of the Exhibition in the major journals. However, Waagen, Scharf, and other reviewers were addressing themselves to an educated minority. The *Athenaeum* might have hailed the Exhibition as "a proof of the widening of our Art taste and knowledge", but the *Saturday Review* was nearer the truth when it wrote of its failure to win much popularity among the working classes, and of the necessity of some preliminary education in art for enjoyment and profit from its lessons.

Nowhere was some preliminary education felt to be more necessary than with the Primitives in the Exhibition. Consequently, accounts of their works were generally preceded by explanations of why such paintings might be considered to have some value (although the *Ecclesiologist* simply assumed the careful attention of those sympathetic to ecclesiological ideals). The author of *A Peep at the Pictures* warns that a "man who looks at them for the first time, if he do not feel inclined to laugh and pass them by, may, at any rate, wonder why they are here, and what they mean". He then goes on to explain how art was in its infancy then, as well as religion; how the paintings were the books of the unlettered; and how we must look at these ancient pictures in a spirit of calm and loving enquiry if

we are to understand the earnestness and real religious feeling of the men who painted them. Comments on actual works are rudimentary, being confined to little biographical anecdotes (such as Filippo Lippi's capture by pirates), remarks about contributions to the advancement of art, and, in the case of Fra Angelico, earnest piety. But it is interesting to note that the author also puts forward the notion of the decline of art, and makes the contrast between later artists who worked for their own fame and those old masters who worked for the glorification of God. Thus we find the Purist interpretation of the history of art being disseminated at a popular level. Not with great success, one might add, since more than one reviewer stated that Annibale Carracci's The Dead Christ and the Three Maries, lent by the Earl of Carlisle, was the most popular picture in the Exhibition.32

Similarly, with other accounts one finds prefatory warnings and explanations. J.B. Atkinson states that the uninitiated will view the early Italian works with curiosity, astonishment, and even repugnance. But he draws attention to the extenuating merits.33 Dr Weagen advises the visitor to look very closely at the early Italians, if he is to penetrate to the spiritual beauties behind the uncouth exterior.34 George Scharf, the Saturday Review critic, and A.H. Layard in a review in the Quarterly Review, issued a

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33. Ibid., p.761.
warning of another kind: that since the early Italian paintings in the Exhibition were mostly easel pictures they gave but an imperfect indication of the genius of the time which realized itself to its fullest extent in frescoes.\textsuperscript{35}

In one way at least, these old paintings might have been of interest to visitors insensitive to their religious or historical appeal. In 1857 the controversy over the Pre-Raphaelites had still not died away, and the fact that their works were also in the Exhibition provided an opportunity for comparing them with their namesakes. Reviewers pointed to the value of the inclusion of the Primitives from this point of view.\textsuperscript{36}

Discussions of the earlier paintings in the Exhibition are pretty comprehensive in the main, although no one goes as far as Layard who devoted twelve pages to these and four and half to the rest of the European paintings. The importance of paintings of this early period was not questioned, but there was disappointment about the overall quality of the works on display. Since the official catalogue followed the attributions of the owners, one finds ambitious-sounding names. There were five Cimabues, nine Giottos, three Masaccios. It was a measure of the advance in


\textsuperscript{36} e.g., J.B. Atkinson, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, vol.lxxxvii (June, 1897), pp.751, 763-4; Athenæum (2 May, 1897), p.557.
connoisseurship that so many of the attributions were questioned, just as it was a measure of the extension of the knowledge of the period that omissions of artists and schools were commented on. It was no longer sufficient to illustrate the history of the revival of Italian art with works attributed to Cimabue, Giotto, Masaccio, Mantegna, Bellini, Ghirlandaio and Perugino.

Layard was among the most critical. The early Italian section was, he felt, the weakest and most incomplete part of the collection. Almost the only schools represented were the Florentine and Sienese, and these inadequately. His criticism was just. None of the Cimabues had a right to their name. Nor had the Margaritone. As for the Giottos, Layard was right when he disputed most of the attributions. He did not have much to say about specific

37. No. 7, from Christ Church (3), is now given to the school of Duccio; no. 36, also from Christ Church (6), is attributed to Jacopo di Cione; no. 19, now in the Walker Art Gallery (2857), is a late fourteenth-century work. Layard did not refer specifically to any of these paintings. Waagen and Scharf accepted the attribution of no. 7 to Cimabue. Catalogue numbers are taken from the definitive Catalogue of Art Treasures of the United Kingdom, collected at Manchester in 1857 (London, 1857).

38. No. 14, from Christ Church (1), is a later imitation of the Florentine school; no. 18, now in the Walker Art Gallery (2752), is considered to be from the studio of Giovanni del Siondo. George Scharf described no. 14 as "a fabrication of modern times" (op. cit., p. 7), but he accepted no. 18 as genuine.

39. The 'Giotto's included The Coronation of the Virgin, now attributed to Lorenzo Monaco, in the Courtauld Institute Galleries (116), no. 34 at Manchester, and the Spinello Aretino fresco fragments from the Manetti chapel (nos. 24 and 32), now in the Walker Art Gallery (2752). These were still accepted, on the authority of Vasari, as the work of Giotto. Interestingly enough, Layard disputed this attribution, thinking the frescoes more like Taddeo Gaddi. On the other hand, he thought the fragment from the same chapel, which had been in
paintings attributed to Giotto. Nor did Scharf, who did not think there were any very striking examples of Giotto in the exhibition, although he believed the works attributed to him gave a fair impression of the school. 40 Connoisseurship had advanced sufficiently for doubts to be expressed about some of the attributions to well known painters, but the detailed knowledge which would assist in re-Attribution was still lacking. One of the few of the earliest works whose authenticity was undisputed was Prince Albert's Duccio, "a triptych of singular beauty", wrote Layard. 41

Of Giotto's and Duccio's successors Layard maintained there were no worthwhile examples. In particular, he regretted the absence of Orcagna, noted by other commentators.

Samuel Rogers' collection and which had recently entered the National Gallery (276) to be the work of Giotto. See Quarterly Review, vol. ciii (July, 1857), p. 172.

40. Scharf, op. cit., p. 11. The only works he appears to accept as genuine are the Menetti chapel fragments. Waagen, in addition, accepts Lord Ward's Last Supper (no. 30), from the Bisenzin collection (A Walk, op. cit., p. 2; cf. Treasures, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 250). One "Giotto" confidently rejected was a Death of a Virgin, lent by Lord Northwick (no. 66). Scharf believed it was a north Italian work, and had it hung with the fifteenth-century paintings. Of the remaining two "Giottos", no. 10, from Christ Church (9), is now attributed to Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, and no. 33, now in the Walker Art Gallery (2761), is given to the studio of Bicci di Lorenzo. A catalogue note states that no. 26, lent by Lord Northwick, is a "genuine picture of the School"; no. 29 is one of the pictures from the Douce collection.

41. Quarterly Review, vol. ciii (July, 1857), p. 172. No. 12 in the definitive catalogue. The other "Duccio", no. 11, from Christ Church (31), is now attributed to Sano di Pietro. Conservative fifteenth-century paintings were frequently given to fourteenth- and even thirteenth-century masters.
also. Orcagna was still the most highly esteemed of the fourteenth-century painters after Giotto. However, there were in fact one outstanding and other good works of this period in the Exhibition. There was William Roscoe's Simone Martini from the Liverpool Royal Institution. There were also some panels from the Ugolino altarpiece, and altarpieces by Bernardo Daddi and Barnaba da Modena. As well as the fragments from the Manetti chapel, there were fragments from Spinello Aretino's fresco of The Fall of Lucifer in S. Michele Arcangelo in Arezzo.

Layard was equally critical of the collection of fifteenth-century paintings. Where were the works of the early Umbrians, like the Nelli family, Benedetto Bonfigli, Giovanni Sanzio? (This question was being asked at a time when the Arundel Society was producing chromolithographs after some of these masters, and Layard draws attention to its forthcoming publication of Ottaviano Nelli). Where were the works of the early Venetians, the Viverini, Jacopo Bellini, Carpaccio? Even the great Tuscans, Masolino, Masaccio, Pollajuolo, Lorenzo da Credi, Verocchio, Pietro della Francesca,
Luca Signorelli, the two Lippis, and Benozzo Gozzoli, either do not appear at all, or in works of doubtful authenticity or of very questionable merit.45

Of Botticelli there was only one good specimen, of Ghirlandaio only one head. The portrait which Layard gave to Ghirlandaio was in the catalogue attributed to Masaccio.46 There was in fact nothing attributed to Ghirlandaio in the Exhibition, a serious omission in view of the high regard for this artist. Of the two "Masaccios", one is a Botticelli and the other a Cosimo Rosselli.47

On the other hand Fra Angelico, it was agreed, was admirably represented by Lord Ward's Last Judgement. And if there were paintings with high-sounding names now denoted to lesser names, or "Studio of" or "Follower of",48 there were also paintings of undoubted significance: the two versions of The Agony in the Garden by Bellini and Mantegna, the Ecce de'Roberti Pietà, Botticelli's Mystic Nativity. This last picture was both puzzling and disturbing. For the Athenaeum it was typical of his "quaint productions".49

George Scharf referred to the "gipsy-like" character of the angels in all their "energy and wildness of exultation".50

46. No.48. Waagen also gave this portrait to Ghirlandaio (A Walk, op.cit., p.3).
47. No.51, now in the National Gallery (626), and no.53, now in the Walker Art Gallery (2803).
48. e.g., Nos 69 and 70, attributed to Filippo Lippi, are now given to Bartolomeo di Giovanni (Walker Art Gallery, 2755 and 2756); no. 97, attributed to Mantegna, is now believed to be a studio piece (Christ Church, Guise Bequest).
As well as the disappointment over the general quality of the earlier masters in the Manchester Exhibition, there was also concern about the actual condition of a number of the paintings, in particular the neglected state of the Fra Angelico Last Judgment and of Mantegna's Triumph of Scipio from Hampton Court Palace, which was buried beneath coats of discoloured varnish and dirt. The paintings from Christ Church were also rather dark and dirty. On the other hand, there were also paintings which had been rather too enthusiastically "restored". Layard complained about the "injudicious restoration" of Prince Albert's Duccio, especially the heavy-handed re-gilding.

Whatever the disappointment expressed by cognoscenti over the quality, condition and arrangement of the early Italians in the Manchester Exhibition, the fact that so many of these works were on display indicated the growing taste for them among collectors. The paintings at Manchester came from forty sources. Some of the individuals and institutions who lent works have already been mentioned. The

51. They had also not been shown to advantage in Christ Church, being "pent up in a dark and close library" (Athenæum, 2 May, 1857, p.567). They will now "be seen for the first time by many a member of the venerable community" (ibid.).
53. Another indication of the increase in the numbers of Italian Primitives in England are the references to paintings in English collections in histories of art, e.g., in Mrs Jameson's Sacred and Legendary Art series, in Mrs Forster's translation of Wacken, in second and subsequent editions of Hugler, in the second and third editions of Gombrich's The Story of Painting.
Liverpool Institution contributed the paintings it had acquired from the Roscoe collection, as well of some of its later purchases. Christ Church, Oxford, lent some of the Fox-Strangways pictures. Both collections aroused much interest, as they were not well known. Colonel Meyrick lent the paintings Douce had bought from Carlo Lasinio, but these were "small and unimportant". Lord Northwick lent a few pictures from his collection.

There were also paintings from other collections already discussed, which had come into the possession of a new generation of collectors, paintings from the Solly, Roscoe and Ottley collections. George Scharf in his account of the revival of the taste for the early Italians, which begins his Handbook, lists the principal collectors of their works represented at Manchester: the Rev. Davenport Bromley, Lord Ward, the Rev. John Fuller Russell, William Fuller Maitland, and Alexander Barker. He might also have added Prince Albert, who apart from the Gottingen-Wallerstein pictures he found himself saddled with, was buying Primitives on his own account. A.H. Layard was also in the process of building up his collection. Both the Prince and Layard were represented

54. Scharf, op.cit., p.5.
55. Including one of the pieces of the Pesellino altarpiece, now on loan to the National Gallery, Gozzoli's Fall and Judgment of Simon Magus, and Gentile da Fabriano's Virgin and Child, all acquired from Warner Ottley. Prince Albert also owned a Gossellino of Bernardo Daddi, and a St Jerome by Perugino, in the Consort's collection, see Winslow Jones, op.cit., pp.134-8. On his death in 1861 the best of the Gottingen-Wallerstein paintings were presented to the National Gallery by the Queen, in accordance with his wishes. Three of these were early Italian works (701, 702, 723).
at Manchester, Layard by one painting only however.\(^{56}\) Not all the important collectors were contributors — there being nothing from either Eastlake or Thomas Gambier Parry. All the people listed so far might be considered to have a specialized interest in the early Italians, even if they did not confine their collecting to this area alone. But there were also those who out of curiosity perhaps, or for the sake of completeness, owned a few Primitives. Lord Overstone was interested principally in Dutch painters,\(^ {57}\) but he bought Rogers' Lorenzo di Credi, which he lent to the Manchester Exhibition.\(^ {58}\) G.E. Vernon, who mostly collected paintings of the seventeenth century,\(^ {59}\) lent pictures attributed to Orcagna, Spinello Aretino and Granacci.\(^ {60}\) Henry Labouchere (afterwards Lord Taunton), a collector of catholic tastes, owned a few fifteenth-century Italian pictures, including a Baptism by Francia which he lent.\(^ {61}\) The most important of his Primitives, the Crivelli Annunciation, was not shown there.\(^ {62}\)

\(^{56}\) No.39, the Spinello Aretino fresco fragment from Arezzo.

\(^{57}\) See Waagen, Galleries and Cabinets of Art, on cit., pp. 130-147.

\(^{58}\) No.113.

\(^{59}\) See Waagen, Galleries and Cabinets of Art, on cit., pp. 347-52.

\(^{60}\) Nos 21,31,75.

\(^{61}\) No.81.

\(^{62}\) The other early Italian paintings mentioned by Waagen are by Fra Angelico, Perugino, Gentile da Fabriano, Signorelli and Manzorna. The last three were from William Coningham's collection, as was the Francia lent to Manchester. The Crivelli was from the Solly collection. Labouchere also owned the unfinished Holy Family by Michelangelo in the Nacional Gallery, then generally thought to be by Ghirlandajo, but rightly identified by Waagen as the work of Michelangelo (Treasures, on cit., vol.iii, pp.416-23).
Waagen, in his *Treasures of Art in Great Britain* stated several times that the taste for early painting was confined to a very few collectors. In fact it was more widespread than Waagen realized. In the first place, there were those collections which Waagen did not mention, either because he was unaware of them or because they were in their infancy at the time of his visits to Britain, collections like those formed by Layard, Gambier Parry, Sir R. Shafto Adair, 63 and J. Erle Drax. 64 In the second place, if one takes into account those who owned only one or two examples, then one finds that around the middle of the century there were a considerable number of people with early Italian paintings in their possession, two hundred at the very least in the years 1835-1865. 65

There were two important sales with Italian Primitives in 1849, the Thomas Blayds sale in March, with nearly eighty works, and the William Coningham sale in June, with

63. Sir R. Shafto Adair, of Flixton Hall, bought a number of Italian Primitives at the Thomas Blayds sale (Christie's, 23-24 March, 1849). He also owned two parts of an altarpiece, ascribed to PASOLINO, which came from the Fesch collection, and are now in the National Gallery (5962, 5963).

64. J. Erle Drax, M.P. for Wareham, made extensive purchases at the Northwick sale. He bought about a dozen Italian Primitives.

65. This calculation is based on information contained in Waagen's volumes, annotated catalogues of the major sales with Primitives in this period, the catalogue of the Manchester Exhibition, and Alcemon Graves' *A Century of Loan Exhibitions 1817-1912*, 5 vols (London, 1913-15). This is a very conservative estimate since I have not examined all the sale catalogues. Nor would those collectors, who did not publicly exhibit or dispose of their works, or who were not visited by Waagen, be taken into account. But the figures do establish a minimum.
twenty paintings of this class. During the 1850s we have
the Dawson Turner sale (1852, about nine early Italians),
the E. Joly de Banneville sale (1854, twenty early Italians),
the James Dennistoun decease sale (1855, thirty early
Italians), the Samuel Rogers decease sale (1856, twelve
early Italians), the anonymous [Lord Orford] sale (1856,
about six early Italians), the Lord Northwick decease sale
(1859, about one hundred and twenty-five early Italians).
In the 1860s there is the Samuel Woodburn decease sale
(1860, eighty early Italians) and the Davenport Bromley de-
cease sale (1863, over a hundred early Italians).
Thereafter, there are no sales of any significance until
Alexander Barker disposed of his collection in 1874.
Older collections were broken up and dispersed, to form
the nucleus of new collections, which in their turn
suffered the same fate. Paintings travelled from one
collection to the next, and then on to another. Thomas
Garthor Parry acquired from the Davenport Bromley sale a
predella of the early fifteenth century which Davenport
Bromley had himself bought at the Woodburn sale.66

Forty of Davenport Bromley's paintings in his decease
sale were stated to have come from collections sold in
England: from Ottley, Rogers, Woodburn, Solly, Lord
Northwick, Dawson Turner, Dennistoun, Lord Orford, and
E.J. de Banneville. Fuller Maitland owned pictures from
the Ottley, Woodburn and Coningham collections. Alexander

66. Now attributed to the circle of Fra Angelico. See
The Garthor Parry Collection: Provisional Catalogue,
Barker made purchases at the Blayds, E.J. de Bammeville, and Northwick sales, and owned pictures from the Beckford and Coningham collections. Fuller Russell owned paintings from the Ottley, Beckford, Dawson Turner, Woodburn, and Blayds collections. Thomas Gambier Parry acquired pictures from the collections of Ottley, Coningham, Lord Orford, and Davenport Bromley.

However, even though there were more Primitives coming up for sale in England than ever before, Italy remained the principal source of supply, a land of impoverished counts and convents, and governments for the most part indifferent to the exodus of art works. As had happened earlier, residence in Italy often stimulated an interest in earlier masters. Such was the case with Lord Ward and Thomas Blayds. 67 The Brownings took to buying also, and Elizabeth wrote to Mrs Jameson from Florence in May, 1850, about her husband's finds:

Robert has been picking up pictures at a few paunds each, 'hole and corner' pictures which the 'dealers' have not found out; and the other day he covered himself with glory by discovering and seizing on (in a cornshop a mile from Florence) five pictures among heaps of trash; and one of the best judges in Florence (Mr Kirkup) throws out such names for them as Cimabue, Ghirlandaio, Giotto, a crucifixion painted on a banner, Giottesque if not Giotto, but unique, or nearly so, on account of the linen material, and a little Virgin by a Byzantine master.68

67. According to the sale catalogue (Christie's, 30-31 March, 1849), the "highly interesting Series of the Works of the Great Masters of the Italian School in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century" was "collected by Mr Blayds with great taste and judgment during a Residence in Italy".

Another collection formed principally in Italy was that of W. Drury Love of Locko Park, between 1840 and 1865. Presumably James Dennistoun made purchases on his visits to Italy in the 1830s and 1840s. William Coningham bought many of his pictures in Italy, Rome especially, among these the Lorenzo Monaco he gave to the National Gallery, which came from the vast collection of Cardinal Fesch, sold between 1843 and 1845. The Mantegna Agony in the Garden came to Coningham from the same collection. The Fesch collection was rich in earlier painters, some of which found their way into English collections: those of Lord Ward, the Reverend Davenport Bromley, and Alexander Barker. Thomas Gambier Parry was another collector who did much of his buying in Italy, on visits in the 1850s and early 1860s. In 1858 and 1859 he obtained paintings from W.R. Spence, the English artist living in Florence, who had advised the National Gallery on the Lombardo-Baldi pictures. Alexander Barker was another regular visitor to Italy. He came into competition with Eastlake on his annual expeditions. Barker bought in Florence Piero della

70. Twenty of the Italian Primitives in the sale catalogue (Christie’s, 12 and 13 June, 1863) were stated to have come from the Fesch collection.
71. No.916 in the National Gallery (by a follower of Botticelli), purchased at the Alexander Barker sale (Christie’s, 6 and 8 June, and three following days, 1874), is probably a Fesch picture. See Martin Davies, op.cit., p.116.
Francesca's **Nativity** which Eastlake apparently had an eye on for himself. Eastlake had bought a few pictures before his Directorship, but most of his collection was formed during that last decade of his life. The fact that Eastlake was simultaneously buying for himself and for the National Gallery might appear somewhat unorthodox. But on his death, most of the paintings he bought then were offered by Lady Eastlake to the Gallery, at the prices which he had paid for them. Eastlake's close friend, A.H. Layard, also formed his collection entirely in Italy, from the early 1850s on.

Turning now to consider the composition of mid nineteenth-century collections of Italian Primitives, it is important to stress at the outset that what people owned does not matter so much as what they thought they owned. And what the early paintings in most collections added up to, be these few or numerous, was an illustrated history of the revival of painting in Italy, concentrating on Florence, though with some examples of fourteenth-century Sienese art, and with other schools usually represented by artists at the end of the fifteenth century. This pattern was established in England early in the nineteenth century. Here, for example, are the names one finds in the catalogue of the Roscoe sale of 1816: "Greeks", Cimabue, Giotto, Simone Martini, Fra

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73. The painting was bought at the Barker sale (lot 70), for the National Gallery (1903).
74. Eastlake would buy for himself paintings whose condition he did not consider good enough for the national collection, or which were obviously fragments of larger works.
Angelico, Masaccio, Castagno, Filippo Lippi, Pollaiuolo, Baldovinetti, Lorenzo di Credi, Perugino, Mantegna, Jacopo Bellini, Catena, Francia, Ghirlandaio. A Jacopo Bellini attribution is unusual, Giovanni Bellini being very much more common. Otherwise these paintings are a good example of a type of collection of Primitives which prevails throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. On a small scale it is reflected in the collections of Samuel Rogers and William Beckford; on a large scale it is seen in the collection of Lord Northwick, in whose sale of 1859 one finds no less than a dozen Giottos, five Masaccios, four Fra Angelicos, four Mantegnas, eight Francias, five Lorenzo di Credis and six each of Giovanni Bellini, Perugino and Ghirlandaio. Similarly, in the sale of the collection of the dealer Samuel Woodburn, who was buying over half a century and who died in 1853, one finds five Giottos, five Masaccios, four Fra Angelicos, four Ghirlandaios, eight Lorenzo di Credis, and four paintings attributed to Perugino or his school. One also finds a concentration of most of these painters in the works listed in the catalogue of the Thross Bleyds sale. Other collections, notably those formed by Lord Ward, William Fuller Maitland, William

75. There are seven Giottos, two Masaccios and two Peruginos, and four each of Mantegna, Giovanni Bellini and Ghirlandaio.

76. See Waagen, Treasures, op.cit., vol.iii, pp.1-7. Four early Italian paintings from the Fuller Maitland collection are now in the National Gallery (1032, 1033, 1034 and 1665). The most important of these is the Botticelli Mystic Marriage. There are also paintings from the Fuller Maitland collection in the National Gallery of Scotland (1533, 1535, 1536 and 1541).
Drury Lowe, 77 and the Reverend Davenport Bromley, 78 are comparable.

This does not mean that there were no shifts in taste or advances in connoisseurship between Roscoe and the mid nineteenth-century collectors. It is difficult to imagine Spinello Aretino being sold as Masaccio, as had occurred at the Greville sale in 1810. There are a greater diversity of names in the middle of the century, reflecting partly increased knowledge (particularly in regard to fourteenth-century painters), but also developments in taste. These changes were anticipated in Ottley's collection, with his liking for fourteenth-century Sieneese art, and his concentration on central Italian painters.

The first thing one notices, then, is a greater interest in painters of the fourteenth century, and in particular, in Sieneese painting. The collection of the Rev. John Fuller Russell, which will be discussed presently, consisted almost entirely of trecento works. Nearly half of Thomas Blayds' paintings, and over a third of Davenport Bromley's, had fourteenth-century attributions. As far as these attributions are concerned, although Cinabue, Giotto and Orcagna retain their popularity, other Florentine names are also coming forward, especially Taddeo Gaddi, Bernardo Daddi, and

77. See Waagen, Galleries and Cabinets of Art, op.cit., pp.496-9; Jean Paul Richter, Catalogue of Pictures at Leicester Park, op.cit.
78. See Waagen, Treasures, op.cit., vol.iii, pp.371-80, and the catalogue of the Davenport Bromley sale (Christie's, 12 and 13 June, 1883).
Stamina. But it is the interest in Sienese painting which is worth noting, and the appearance of paintings attributed to Ugolino, the Lorenzetti, Barna da Siena, Bartolo di Fredi, and Taddeo di Bartolo, as well as the more traditional attributions to Duccio and Simone Martini.

A second development in taste is the appeal of the more Gothic-looking painters of the early fifteenth century: Fra Angelico, Gentile da Fabriano and Lorenzo Monaco. In view of the general adulation of the blessed Angelico, it is not surprising to find his name popular with collectors. Gentile da Fabriano is not much less popular, and we find his work in the collections of Lord Northwick, William Coningham, Thomas Blayds, Samuel Woodburn, Davenport Bronley, and James Dennistoun.

Thirdly, one finds with some collectors a greater concentration on Florentine painters of the fifteenth century: on Filippo and Filippino Lippi, Pollaiuolo, Pesellino, Botticelli, Cosimo Rosselli, Verrocchio, Lorenzo di Credi and Ghirlandaio. Most of Woodburn's and nearly all of Drury Lowe's paintings have Florentine attributions. Fuller Hartland appears to have had a similar bias.

As to non-Florentine artists, one finds evidence of the beginnings of an extension of interest to schools or artists previously ignored. For example, with central

79. Lot 181 in the catalogue of the Thomas Blayds sale (Christie's, 23 and 24 March, 1649). It is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (592), as Simone Martini and his workshop.
Italian painters, as well as Perugino, Pintoricchio and Signorelli, one sometimes finds paintings attributed to somewhat earlier artists: Giovanni Santi, Bonfigli, and Piero della Francesca. Occasionally also one finds fifteenth-century Sienese paintings in collections, with attributions to Matteo di Giovanni and Sano di Pietro. As for north Italian painters, the most popular continue to be Francia and Giovanni Bellini, Cima and Mantegna. Of other Venetians, the earlier masters, such as the Vivarini or Gentile Bellini, appear rarely, Crivelli somewhat more frequently, and Carpaccio not at all. Not until Eastlake and Layard does one find a taste for the Ferrarese, and the only painter of this school acceptable to the taste of the time was Lorenzo Costa, nearer in style to Francia. On the other hand, one finds emerging a definite taste for Milanese painters of the late fifteenth century, Luini first of all, then other Leonardesque painters, such as Boltraffio and Gaudenzio Ferrari. This shows the way the taste of the time went for softness and sentiment. Painters like Ercole de' Roberti and Cosimo Tura were altogether too wiry and idiosyncratic.

The paintings in the William Coningham sale of 1849 are unusual because of the predominance of works with north Italian attributions: a Basaiti, a Bellini, two Cimas, two Crivellis, and three Mantegnas, including the Ascan in

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51. One of these (lot 41), The Virgin and Child with Goldfinch, entered the Beaucoupin collection, Paris. It was purchased with the rest of the Beaucoupin pictures in 1853 for the National Gallery (634).
the Garden. The Agony in the Garden was bought in, but by 1853 was in the collection of Thomas Baring, who acquired also the other outstanding painting in the sale, Antonello da Messina's St Jerome in His Study, still attributed to van Eyck. This had formerly been in the possession of his father. Most of Thomas Baring's early paintings were Netherlandish, and the few Italian Primitives he owned were in fact north Italian (apart from the Antonello da Messina).

Still, it must be repeated that in most collections Florentine painting is predominant. The collection which seems best to reflect the different tastes of the time is that of the Rev. Walter Davenport Bromley, among the largest formed then. The trecento was well represented with Sienese and Florentine painters, as well as works attributed to Spinello Aretino. For the thirteenth century there were but two examples, a Crucifixion given to Giunta Pisano, and another Crucifixion, attributed to Duccio.

With the fifteenth century, about half the paintings have

61. The other two Mantegnas (lots 39, 40) are also in the National Gallery, as the work of an imitator (1106 and 1321). Other paintings from the Combien collection, now in the National Gallery, are Pollaiuolo's Apollo and Daphne (924), Antonello da Messina's St Jerome in His Study (1413), and a tondo depicting the Adoration of the Kings (1033), now attributed to Botticelli.

62. On Thomas Baring's collection, see A Descriptive Catalogue of the Collection of Pictures forming to the Work of Inspiration. The Italian, Flemish, and French Schools (1874). Among the Italian and Spanish Schools is an Early Paul Ricolet (London, 1907). Thomas Baring bequeathed his collection to his nephew, Lord Northbrook.

63. Including a Virgin and Child, attributed to Bellini, originally in his father's collection, and bought at the William Cominham sale (Christie's, 9 June, 1949), lot 47.
Florentine attributions. With the other half the central Italian, Venetian, Paduan, and Lombard schools are more or less represented. Waagen was very enthusiastic about Davenport Bromley's pictures, as he might well have been, when one recalls the paintings Eastlake bought at the decease sale in 1863 for the National Gallery.

Mr Davenport Bromley is an ardent admirer of all such pictures, be they of the 13th or 16th century, in which an unaffected and genuine feeling is expressed. I found, accordingly, in his house a number of works, chiefly altar-pieces, illustrating the Italian schools from their first rise in the 13th century to their highest development in the 16th, such as I have not met with, especially as regards the earlier schools, in any other gallery in England.84

Waagen sees Davenport Bromley's paintings as illustrating the rise and progress of Italian art. In this respect his collection is in intention the same as William Roscoe's. Yet their motives cannot be seen as identical. At the time that Roscoe was buying the appeal of the Primitives to himself and other English collectors, such as the Earl of Bristol and Charles Greville, was purely historical. Ottley was a notable exception. Davenport Bromley, on the other hand, was building up his collection at a time when such pictures were being valued more for their own sake.

In this regard it is useful to compare the notes of the compiler of the catalogue of an anonymous sale in May 1812, which contained a number of Primitives, with the notes in the catalogue of the Woodburn sale in 1860.85 With the

84. Waagen, Treasures, op.cit., vol.iii, p.371.
85. The first sale is discussed in George Redford, Art Sales, op.cit., p.112. For the second, see the catalogue of the Samuel Woodburn sale (Christie's, 9 and 11 June, 1860).
first, all one finds are words such as "curious", "singular", "rare", "antique". With the second, such words are confined to the oldest paintings. Now one finds a Pollaiuolo being described as a "superb chef-d'oeuvre", Pintoricchio as being "perfectly matchless", a Ghirlandaio as "approaching the perfection of art", and even an Orcagna as an "exquisite work of the highest rarity and interest". This no doubt is puffing, but it is unthinkable that such terms would have been used in a sale catalogue in England fifty years earlier.

It is difficult to discuss motives of collectors when all one has — as has been the case with all the collections discussed to this point, apart from William Coningham's — are lists of works in catalogues. Coningham's evidence before the Select Committee on the National Gallery of 1851 gives us a clue to his attitudes. There are also a few other collectors, whose collections are in a sense more specialized, and about whose motives more information can be gleaned.

There were a few collections of a specialized nature reflecting more closely the religious basis of the appeal of the Primitives in the mid nineteenth century. James Dainstoun's small collection was very much a product of his own preferences and prejudices. Waagen, who had met Dainstoun when he visited Berlin in 1851, inspected the

56. Now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, as Biagio di Antonio (1444,45).
57. Now in the Walker Art Gallery (2753), attributed to Gresecci.
collection when he was in Edinburgh. Ruskin saw it in 1853, and wrote to his father:

Has a most interesting collection ... all good ... Edinburgh people don't like old Italian pictures, I do -- and he is so grateful for my admiration that I daren't go near the house for fear of being pulled into damp rooms and not being able to get out again.

Dennistoun had a few Northern Primitives as well as Italians. Nearly half of his early Italians had trecento attributions.
The fifteenth-century pictures in his collection reveal a decided preference for the more "Christian" painters of this period: Lorenzo Monaco, Fra Angelico (three paintings, plus one given to his school), Gentile da Fabriano and Sano di Pietro. His interest in Umbrian art is reflected in the two pictures given to the school of Perugino and, more interestingly, the two pictures attributed to Giovanni Santi, one of them a portrait of Raphael when a boy, whose authenticity Waagen disputed.

The collection of the Rev. John Fuller Russell was even more rigorously selective. So impressed was he with the "purity and religious depth of feeling" of ecclesiastic art from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, wrote Waagen,

that the art of the 16th century, with all that fuller development of chiaroscuro, perspective, &c,
which too often usurped the place of the true religious aim, is only sparingly admitted into his collection. So richly are his walls adorned with Italian specimens of the 14th century, that the spectator feels as if transported into a chapel at Siena or Florence.

Fuller Russell's preference for religious painting which was non-naturalistic and symbolical has already been referred to in the context of the discussion in the Ecclesiologist over a suitable style of decoration for churches. Further evidence of his enthusiasm for the Primitives and disapproval of practically everything that came afterwards can be found in the two articles on "Early Christian Painters" in the gallery at Berlin, examined in the company of his "esteemed friend" Waagen, which were published in the Ecclesiologist in 1852. True religious art stops at Raphael, who in "dignity, spirituality, and high religious sentiment" is surpassed by his contemporaries and predecessors. As for these latter:

Radiant with their gilded backgrounds, glowing colours, and burnished nimbi, they are in the aggregate marvellously splendid, and until the eye becomes a little accustomed to them, really bewilderingly so.

What Russell responds to, as we see here, is the beauty of early paintings as devotional objects. In addition, he appreciates the non-naturalistic colour, the symmetry and formality of the compositions, the conventionality of the

57. See above, pp.290-2.
93. Ibid. (June, 1852), p.143.
figures. His taste was thus as advanced as that of Lord Lindsay or Ruskin.

Only three of the early Italian paintings in his collections had fifteenth-century attributions, there being two by Sano di Pietro, and one by the Milanese painter Borgognone. In other words, the "progressive" Florentine school was not represented at all. And a good half of the fourteenth-century paintings were Sienese, including the predella panels of Ugolino from the Ottley collection, which are now in the National Gallery.96

Fuller Russell's collection was the most uncompromisingly "Early Christian" and mediaeval of the collections formed at this time. Fuller Russell had been one of the first of the Cambridge sympathizers with the Oxford movement, and he was on the committee of the Ecclesiological Society. One can give examples of others with the same sympathies who bought Primitives: Alexander Beresford Hope,97 Gladstone,98 Lord Lindsay,99 and G.E. Street.100

96. See the catalogue of the John Fuller Russell decease sale (Christie's, 18 April, 1885).
97. See the catalogue of the A.J.B. Beresford Hope sale (Christie's, 15 May, 1885).
98. See the catalogue of the William Gladstone sale (Christie's, 23-26 June, 1875). A Man with a Pair of Diversors, ascribed to Gentile Bellini, in the National Gallery (1213), was owned by Gladstone.
99. Lord Lindsay bought Italian Primitives at the Thomas Blyds sale, lots 81 (Signorelli) and 198 and 199 (Giotto). The "Giottos" were in the Italian Art and British exhibition at the Royal Academy, 1875 (270, as Luca da Tomma). The two little Signorelli panels were shown at The Art of Painting in Florence and Siena exhibition at Wichlstein's, 1875. (73 and 74). Other paintings in this exhibition which had been in the collection of Lord Lindsay were an early fifteenth-century Florentine work (32), now in The Cloisters, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Picci di Lorenzo (34). Lord Lindsay bought paintings at the Northwick sale of...
Another collector similarly motivated was Thomas Gambier Parry, of Highnam Court in Gloucestershire. He was a member of the Ecclesiological Society from its beginnings as the Cambridge Camden Society, and later was a member of its Committee. He was a subscriber to the Arundel Society, and was elected to the Council in 1859.

He began collecting paintings as a young man at Cambridge in 1835. At first his taste was conventional and he bought seventeenth-century pictures. By 1849, however, he was buying earlier Italian pictures and his interest grew through the 1850s, taking in the trecento as well as the quattrocento. His last major purchases were at the Davenport Bromley sale in 1863. Altogether he owned about thirty early Italian works, of which about a third were of the fourteenth century. Nearly all his fifteenth-century pictures were Florentine. Conspicuous by their absence were those names dear to older collectors: Perugino, Mantegna and Bellini.

1859, lots 1002 (Gentile Bellini), 1719 ("Andrea Veronica" [Verrocchio?]), and 1781 ("Pisole"). There are two early Italian paintings from Lord Lindsay's collection in the National Gallery, one of the Ugolino fragments (3473) from the Ottley collection, which came to Lord Lindsay via Davenport Bromley, and aresco fragment by Donenico Veneziano (1215).

According to his son, Street owned many panels of the early schools of Christian art, especially Italian works. See Memoir of Street, op.cit., pp.59-60.

For Thomas Gambier Parry and his collection, see references cited above, p.297 n. 98. See also The Gambier Parry Collection (provisional catalogue), op.cit. The collection was bequeathed to the University of London by Mark Gambier Parry, and is now in the Courtauld Institute Galleries.

There are three collections which have not yet been dealt with, the collections of Alexander Barker, Eastlake and Layard. I have left these until last because they seem to anticipate the tastes and interests of the latter part of the nineteenth century. Alexander Barker was a collector of remarkable independence of taste, buying the paintings of artists who were scarcely known, or not much liked, or in whom an interest was only just beginning to develop. His collection is unusual because it contained only one fourteenth-century work. Barker's early Italian pictures were almost entirely from the second half of the fifteenth century. Among these one finds Piero della Francesca's Nativity, a Virgin of Cosimo Tura, Crivelli's Immaculate Conception, Botticelli's Mars and Venus and Nastasio del Casti series. What also is unusual about Barker is his interest in quattrocento non-religious painting, particularly cassoni panels. He also had a fresco fragment depicting scenes from the Odyssey, by Pintoricchio.

103. The first four were among paintings bought for the National Gallery (903, 908, 906, 915), at the Alexander Barker sale (lots 70, 64, 64, 68). The Nastasio del Casti series had been considered for the Gallery, but were rejected by Eastlake's successor, Sir William Boxall, probably on account of the subject matter. See Michael Levey, "Botticelli and Nineteenth-Century England", pp. 300.

104. There had been a few cassoni panels in the Woodburn and Davenport Bromley collections. Davenport Bromley bought two panels attributed to Piero de Cosimo at the Samuel Woodburn deceased sale (Christie's, 9 and 11 June, 1860), lots 17 and 18. These were lots 72 and 73 in the Davenport Bromley sale. But this interest was very rare indeed.

105. Also bought for the National Gallery (911) at the Alexander Barker sale (lot 84).
Although Eastlake had some works of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the most important part of his collection were his fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italian pictures. Only one trecento work is recorded—a Crucifixion attributed to Spinello Aretino, from the Ottley collection. From the start Eastlake seems to have had a high regard for the north Italians, since Waagen, who saw the collection in the early 1850s, describes paintings attributed to Giovanni Bellini, Cima da Conegliano, and Previtali. Doubtless this preference arises through Eastlake's attraction to the Venetian painters of the High Renaissance. By the time of Waagen's second account of his collection, visited in 1856, Eastlake also had a Ghirlandaio, further examples of Bellini and Cima, and Cosimo Tura's Virgin and Child Enthroned, now in the National Gallery (772). Eastlake did acquire important paintings of the Florentine and central Italian schools, notably, Filippo Lippi's Annunciation, which he presented to the Gallery in 1861, Piero della Francesca's St Michael, and Pisanello's Virgin and Child with Sts George and Anthony Abbot. Still, it is

106. On Eastlake's collection, see Waagen, Treasures, on cit., vol. ii, pp. 263-6, and Galleries of Cabinets of Art, on cit., pp. 113-6. As has been stated already, most of the paintings Eastlake bought between 1855 and 1865 were sold to the National Gallery in 1857 by Lady Eastlake. The other paintings in his collection were sold in 1894. See the catalogue of the Sir G.L. Eastlake sale (Christie's, 2 June, 1894). The Gallery made some purchases at this sale. Other paintings, bought for Ludwig Mond, came to the Gallery as part of the Mond Bequest, 1924.

107. Waagen, Treasures, on cit., pp. 264-5.

108. 1665. This was the year in which the companion picture, Seven Saints, was bought from Alexander Barker (687).
the concentration on north Italian painting which is remarkable. He bought works of earlier Venetians: Gentile Bellini and Antonio Vivarini. He acquired paintings of the Ferrarese, Cosimo Tura and Ercole de' Roberti. He also bought Montagna.

Layard's taste preferences are almost identical. In his work for the Arundel Society he had concentrated on Umbrian and Florentine art. Yet when he came to build up his own collection in the 1860s he was drawn mostly to the north Italians. He may have been influenced by Eastlake, who began specializing in this area a little earlier. Like Eastlake, Layard was buying north Italians, among these Gentile Bellini, Carpaccio, Montagna and Cosimo Tura.

Nearly all his Primitives were fifteenth-century.

Only a handful of people in the mid nineteenth century had shown any appreciation of the fourteenth-century paintings for their own sake. The decline in their appeal as examples of mediaeval religious art, combined with a fading of interest in collecting paintings illustrative of the

109. On Layard's pictures, which were bequeathed to the National Gallery, see Martin Davies, op. cit., p.574.
110. Layard bought Tura's Allegorical Figure in 1856 (N.G. 3070). Eastlake saw the picture in the Costabili collection at Ferrara in 1858, but did not think much of it. See his Notebooks, 1858.
111. The trecento paintings from Layard's collection in the National Gallery reflect an interest in frescoes rather than fourteenth-century art. There are fresco fragments by Spinello Aretino (1215, 1216A and B) and ascribed to Pietro Lorenzetti (3571/2). The other trecento work is an illuminated letter, ascribed to Lorenzo Monaco (3039).
progress of painting, meant that the fourteenth century lost most of its appeal to collectors. Thus in the sale of William Graham, one of the most important collectors of the latter part of the century, in 1886, only half a dozen of the hundred and twenty Italian Primitives are pre fifteenth-century.112

Eastlake's and Layard's taste for north Italian painting became much less unusual as the century advanced. It is difficult to understand why Cosimo Tura or Ercole Roberti should have appealed to them, though their linear, mannered and decorative style accorded well with late nineteenth-century taste. In the case of Eastlake and Layard, their intensive knowledge of Italian art no doubt led them to an appreciation of the merits of painters who were hardly known. Little known painters were also cheaper to buy than well known painters, and this must have been a definite factor in their favour for men of limited means.

With all the fluctuations in prices at sales, the value of Primitives was going up. Major works of the most popular masters could even reach a few thousand pounds. The auctioneer, George Christie, in his evidence before the Select Committee on the National Gallery in 1853, stated that the prices of earlier Italian, German and Flemish pictures had increased in the previous few years, since such artists had attained a reputation and there was now a taste for their pictures.113 By today's standards the

112. See catalogue of William Graham sale (Christie's, 2 April and following day, and 8 April and two following days).
prices paid for Primitives might appear ludicrous, and with a few exceptions, they cost a great deal less than old masters of later periods and modern painters. Still, relative to what had been paid for them before, many Primitives had become quite expensive. And that surely is the yardstick that counts. Some of the increases were quite dramatic. To cite one very well known example: Bellini's Acony in the Garden went from £5 at Reynolds' sale in 1795 to £52.10.0 at the Fonthill sale in 1823 (lot 77) to £630 at the Davenport Bromley sale in 1853 (lot 62), when it was bought for the National Gallery. 114 Perugino's Holy Family was bought back by Beckford for £312.0 in 1823. The National Gallery paid £800 for it in 1841. One of the most dramatic increases was Botticelli's Mystic Nativity, bought in at the Ottley sale in 1811 for £42 (lot 32), and sold to the National Gallery by Fuller Maitland in 1879 for £1,500. Even accepting the fact that prices tended to be inflated when the National Gallery was purchasing, the increases are impressive. Fourteenth-century paintings were also affected, though they were very much cheaper than fifteenth-century works. A Virgin Enthroned, attributed to Cimabue, which was sold for twelve guineas at the Greville sale in 1810 (lot 74), made £52 at the Rogers sale in 1856 (lot 597). The Two Halved Kneers by Spinello Aretino, then thought to be by Giotto, 114. For information about prices paid for Italian Primitives, I am indebted to Reitlinger, Picture Prices, 1841, especially pp.113-123. There are also prices listed in annotated catalogues, and reports of sales in the press.
was bought by the National Gallery at the Rogers sale for £78.15.0 (lot 721). It had cost Rogers £10 at the Greville sale (lot 76).

Although it is easy to demonstrate an overall increase in the cost of Primitives, it is much less easy to determine the significance of prices paid for individual works, particularly if nothing more is known than what is stated in a sale catalogue. There are so many factors to be taken into account: the genuineness of the work, its claim to the title it bears, its size and subject, its condition, and its quality. All these considerations must be kept in mind if the wide range in prices is to be understood. For example, the paintings attributed to Mantegna at the Blayds sale in 1849 went for £22.2.0, £3, and £1.16.0.115 At the Coningham sale in the same year, the Mantegna Acony in the Garden was bought in at 400 guineas (lot 58). At the Woodburn sale in 1860, one painting attributed to Fra Angelico made 5 guineas, another, a small altarpiece, made £102 (lots 73A, 83).

It was a sign of the taste for the Primitives that the energies of forgers should be directed to the manufacture of old pictures. The genuine paintings of a little known master were converted into a spurious work by another better known artist. Alternately, the forger would paint a Giotto on the remains of an old panel.116 Thus no doubt many of

115. Lots 22, 67 and 56, 94. The prices paid for pictures at this sale were unusually low, the highest price being £24 for a large altarpiece attributed to Ridolfo Ghirlandaio (lot 215), sold to Alexander Barker.

the Primitives which went for next to nothing at sales were forgeries. Others suffered from over-ambitious attributions. Five panels, attributed to Giotto, went for 125 guineas at the Warner Ottley sale in 1847 (lot 13). By the Davenport Bromley sale in 1863 they had been demoted to Ambrogio Lorenzetti. Consequently they made only £29.8.0 (lot 138). 117

Big pictures cost more than little pictures, and religious subjects were more highly priced than pagan subjects (until the Barker sale, that is). 118 And, as has been said already, little known painters cost less than better known painters. Eastlake paid £55 for his Domenico Veneziano, £40 for his Antonio Vivarini, £50 for the Piero della Francesca St Michael (thought to be by Fra Carnavale), £160 for the Cosimo Tura Madonna and Child Enthroned. The Mantegna Madonna Enthroned, bought in the same year as the Tura, for the National Gallery, cost £1,152.12.0.

Fourteenth- and thirteenth-century paintings were very much cheaper than fifteenth-century paintings. Most works of this period went for £20 and less. A few pictures made around £60. At the Rogers sale, paintings attributed to Titian were sold for £52 and £69.6.0 (lots 597, 611), £64.1.0 was paid for the Bernardo Daddi altarpiece in the Davenport Bromley sale in 1863 (lot 56), which almost immediately went...

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117. These were exhibited at the The Art of Painting in Florence and Siena exhibition at Wildenstein's, 1965 (1), as the work of a contemporary of Giotto.
118. On these points, see Reitlinger, Picture Prices, pp.126-7.
into the Gambier Parry collection. A handful of works went for more. At the Rogers sale a "Giotto" sold for £325.10.0. At the Davenport Bromley sale a Duccio made £262.10.0, a pair of saints by Simone Martini, £203.14.0, a Coronation of the Virgin, attributed to Giotto, £204.15.0, and, most spectacularly, an Ascension of the Virgin, also attributed to Giotto, from the Fesch collection, sold for £997 (lot 173). This was probably the highest price paid for a fourteenth-century work in England until the early twentieth century. If the value of trecento paintings did not actually decline in the latter part of the nineteenth century it did not increase either. The Primitives in the Fuller Russell sale of 1865 made about the same as they would have made if sold twenty years earlier. The bottom price was £2 for a Sienese fragment, the top price, 240 guineas for an elaborate altarpiece with about fifty figures, by Spinello Aretino.

The range of prices for fifteenth-century works was much wider than for the trecento, from a few pounds to the £1,200 paid by the National Gallery for the predella of the S. Domenico altarpiece by Fra Angelico in 1860. Most

119. Lot 614. Now in the National Gallery (5581), as the work of a follower of Fra Angelico.
120. Lot 52. This had come down slightly, since it had sold for £275.5.0 at the E.J. de Banneville sale (Christie's, 12 June, 1854), lot 54.
121. Lots 77,78. These made 16 guineas at the Werner Ottley sale (Foster's, 30 June, 1847), lot 17.
122. Sold to Gambier Parry, lot 148. It is now attributed to Lorenzo Monaco (The Gambier-Parry Collection, cit., no.116).
paintings with fifteenth-century attributions went for less than £100, and some very fine works raised trifling sums.

The little Apollo and Daphne panel of Pollaiuolo, in the National Gallery (928), was sold for 13 guineas at the Coningham sale (lot 23). At the Woodburn sale, the Masaccio Virgin and Child Enthroned in the National Gallery (3046) went for 15 guineas, as Gentile da Fabriano (lot 21). At the same time quite a few pictures, valued altarpieces by well-known painters, went for between £100 and £600. To cite some examples: at the Coningham sale in 1849 a tondo attributed to Filippo Lippi made £283.10.0 (lot 34), an Adoration of the Kapi attributed to Filippino Lippi sold for £199.10.0, a Giovanni Bellini Virgin and Child made 175 guineas (lot 47). At the same sale, there was also the Mantegna Aeon in the Garden, and a Crivelli Virgin and Child with Saints was bought in at £910 (lot 59). The movement of prices was in an upwards direction. At the Davenport Bromley sale of 1863, as well as the Bellini Aeon in the Garden, there was a Filippo Lippi which sold for £255.3.0, a Filippino Lippi, £483, Boltraffio, £62, a Botticelli, £787.10.0 (lot 85), and the Pesellino

123. Lot 38. This is now in the National Gallery as Botticelli (1033).
124. Lot 75. Now in the National Gallery as Florentine School (2508). The painting was bought by Davenport Bromley at the anonymous [Lord Orford] sale (Christie's, 25 June, 1856) for £42 (lot 258).
125. Lot 165. Bought at the Rogers sale, where it was attributed to Verrocchio, for £194.5.0 (lot 587).
126. Lot 152. Bought at the Northwick sale of 1699 (where it was attributed to Verrocchio) for £241.10.0 (lot 576). Now in the National Gallery (725).
Holy Trinity, bought for the National Gallery for £2,100 (lot 133).

The Pesellino was not the only quattrocento work to reach four figures. Lord Ward had paid £1,500 for Fra Angelico's Last Judgment. Sir Charles Eastlake paid lavish prices for some of his National Gallery purchases. The Fra Angelico has already been mentioned. Other examples are £3,155 for Pollaiuolo's Martyrdom of St Sebastian and £3,571 for the three panels of an altarpiece of Perugino.

The peak of popularity of fifteenth-century paintings in the English art market was reached with the Alexander Barker sale of 1874. There four paintings made a thousand pounds and more, the top price being £2,415, paid by the National Gallery for Piero della Francesca's Nativity, fourteen paintings made between £500 and £1000, and nineteen paintings made between £200 and £500. Thereafter there was no advance in prices until the end of the century. The quattrocento works in the Hamilton Palace sale of 1882 did not exceed the paintings in the Barker sale of 1874.

The prevalence of early Italian masters in England was commented on by a reviewer of the National Exhibition of Works of Art at Leeds in 1868, the second and last of the big provincial exhibitions. "Indeed, in England, under late Pre-Raphaelite proclivities, a large store has been gathered of works by early Italian masters", he wrote. 127

The Leeds exhibition was held in Street's newly completed Gothic revival infirmary. Mediaeval works were housed appropriately in the hospital chapel. The organizers had the benefit of the expertise of a London Committee of Advice, which included leading connoisseurs, collectors and professional administrators.128

The Leeds exhibition was comparable in size and scope to Manchester. There were 930 Old Masters, 28 of these being part of the "Dudley Gallery", that is, from Lord Ward's collection, illustrating the rise of oil-painting in Europe. This didactic approach was unusual at Leeds. While the exhibition at Manchester had been intended as an educational museum, this approach had been abandoned by the organizers of the Leeds exhibition. According to the Art Journal the contents were to be selected exclusively on the ground of Art-merit,

that is, while other exhibitions have sought historic sequence, and have thus, for the sake of completeness, sometimes included works of little or not intrinsic Art-merit, this collection shall, as a novelty, bring together only the choicest examples of the best schools. Leeds does not seek to be archaic or merely antiquarian.129

One consequence of this approach was that only one fourteenth-century picture passed the art-merit test to take the walls of the exhibition -- a Coronation of the Virgin, lent by Alexander Barker. Overall there were fewer early

Italian works at Leeds than at Manchester, 70 as opposed to around 120. The principal lenders to the exhibition were Alexander Barker, Layard, and Frederick Cook. 130 Fuller Maitland lent, yet again, Botticelli's Mystical Nativity. Other contributors included William Drury Lowe, the Liverpool Royal Institution, Christ Church, Oxford, and Gladstone. Layard did not think much of the "art-merit" of the works exhibited. 131 Certainly Barker's best pictures, his Botticelli's, the Piero della Francesca Nativity, were not there. F.G. Stephens in the Athenaeum and the Art Journal reviewer, however, thought more highly of the paintings at Leeds. 132 But on the whole, the exhibition did not raise much interest one way or the other. It did not have the press coverage which had been given the Manchester Exhibition. It attracted only half the number of visitors, 500,000. Exhibitions of this kind were no longer a novelty, and art as an instrument of mass entertainment and education had lost its attraction. Too bad if the uneducated masses don't appreciate the art-merit of the treasures on display said the

130. The Cook collection was begun around 1860. In its early stages, much of the purchasing was done on the advice of J.C. Robinson, Superintendent of the art collection at the South Kensington Museum from 1852 until 1859. See J.C. Robinson, Memoranda on Fifty Pictures, selected from a collection of works of the Ancient Masters (London, 1859); A Catalogue of the Paintings at Uppity House, Richmond, and elsewhere in the collection of Sir Frederick Cook, etc., Visconti de Legnorrato, etc. Herbert Cook, Volume of Italian Schools, by T. J. Borenius (London, 1917).


Art Journal, for these will "surely win their way quietly with the higher and middle classes who possess appreciative knowledge". 133

In these last two chapters we have been considering the effect of the fashion for the Italian Primitives on collecting, and the acquisition and exhibition of their works in England. However, although the value of the paintings to be seen in the National Gallery or at Manchester was recognized, it was only in Italy that a proper understanding and appreciation of the older masters could be developed.

It will be remembered that, in the two decades or so after the re-opening of the Continent, interest in the earlier Italians was confined to artists and to those who lived or travelled extensively in Italy. In travel and guide books references to the Primitives were few and disparaging. Although similar instances of neglect can be found in travel books published in the 1840s and 1850s, they are much less common. Even relatively uninformed visitors to Italy are aware of the older masters and the kinds of things being said about them, and know where examples of their work are to be found. Catharine Taylor did not have time to go to Assisi, but she knew it was a place worth visiting, because friends in Rome had told her about the celebrated remains of Cimabue and Giotto there. 134

133. Ibid., p.137.
134. Catharine Taylor, Letters from Italy to a Younger Sister, 2 vols (London, 1840-42), vol.11, p.117.
The change in the taste and its effect on patterns of travel in Italy was noticed.

"Not many years ago the Domenichinos and Guidos in the Bologna Gallery were the shrines elect. Now, pilgrimages are made to the Francis and Peruginos, the Fra Beatos and Ghirlandajos, the Cosimo Rossellis and the Giotto — nay, by some very devout worshippers, to the Cinabues of the churches and collections. The historical — not to say devotional — study of Art has taken the place of the mere sensual devotion to form and colour."

This was written in 1846. The extent of the revolution is exaggerated, for the Bolognese were still popular painters with the tourist. But the direction of change is accurately described. By the 1850s the shift is clear. An Athenaeum contributor in 1856 recalled how in the 1830s

our tourists, instead of talking about Assisi, or Saronno, the brick churches of Milan and Cremona, the Bassaiti pictures at Venice, the Arena chapel at Padua, were expending such mystical sympathy as they had to spare on the new architecture and the new pictures at Munich.

From the beginning of the 1840s travel books reveal a greater awareness of and more sympathetic response to the earlier masters. Catherine Taylor may have failed to visit the Assisi frescoes, but she saw the Giotto in the Arena chapel in Padua, as well as the frescoes in the Campo Santo, which retained its popularity as the instant educator in the history of the revival of painting. Mrs Trollope also visited Pisa and Padua. Although she lacked that "recondite

connoisseurship" which would reveal the hidden beauties of Giotto, she found it impossible not to reverence his frescoes, which had an interest "totally independent of the execution".  

Firstly, there was the knowledge that Titian had studied them. Secondly, there was Dante's friendship with the artist, whom he had assisted here in his conceptions. Neither of these travellers refer to the appeal of the earlier works they saw as examples of Christian feeling.

Purist sentiments filled the pages of Francis Palgrave's Hand-Book for Travellers in Northern Italy, published by John Murray in 1842. From the moment the traveller sets foot in Lombardy, his gaze is directed towards the earlier and purer masters: to the frescoes of Luini and Gaudenzio Ferrari, whose affections "fixed upon the simpler and devotional feeling of the earlier periods, in preference to the secularized, heathenized, and voluptuous tone which speedily alloyed the higher tendencies of Christian art". In the Erera, in Milan, Palgrave concentrates on the earlier painters. This bias is found in his descriptions of other cities and towns of northern Italy: Mantua, Padua, Venice, Pisa, Florence. In Florence the traveller is encouraged to see the fresco cycles in the churches and convents and the early works in the Accademia and the Uffizi.

For the second edition of the *Hend-Book*, which came out in 1846, there was a new editor. Palgrave had been accused of being too subjective and not giving enough practical information. The new edition omitted the more enthusiastic of his utterances and his diatribes against debasing pagan influences on art. All the same the Primitives are not diminished in importance. Indeed, the description of the Arena chapel has been expanded, although the "language of middle-age mania" has been avoided.

Octavian Blewitt, the editor of the *Murray Handbook for Travellers in Central Italy*, first published in 1843, also drew attention to the works of the early Italians. He emphasized the need for travellers to leave the main routes, and the importance of towns like Siena, Cortona, Arezzo, Borgo S. Sepolcro, Città di Castello, Orvieto, Perugia, Assisi, Spoletto, Spello. Although not as committed as Palgrave, Blewitt does stress the "purity and devotional character of early Italian art". To Perugia, the headquarters of the Umbrian school, he devotes twelve pages.

The importance of the *Murray* handbooks cannot be over-emphasized. Not only did they tell travellers what to see, but they gave them information about roads and inns. A contributor to the *Art Journal* in 1853 much regretted not having seen the Assisi frescoes, but in the days of his travels, "*Murray* had no existence, the subject of fresco painting had not been revived, and the sort of general impression I had in mind on the value of a visit was insufficient to urge me through the

very bad weather and some difficulty in including it on the road to Foligno.\textsuperscript{141}

After the publication of the Murray handbooks we find tourists venturing off the beaten-track. J.G. Francis, for example, included the towns of central Italy in his tour, and dutifully inspected the remains of earlier art to be seen there.\textsuperscript{142}

Mrs Trollope and Catharine Taylor may have been unaware of the devotional view of early art, but we find this appearing in travel books from 1842 onwards. J.G. Francis contrasts the simple portrayal of scriptural narratives by Christian artists with the "dash and mannerism of modern times".\textsuperscript{143} Mary Shelley's\textit{ Rambles in Germany and Italy} (1844) is full of enthusiasm for early Christian paintings. The under-graduate who took a\textit{ Trip to Italy, during the Long Vacation} (1844) succumbs to the charm of the old paintings.

\begin{quote}
The very soul of the oldest Christian faith is breathed in them; (the eldest masters seldom gave rein to their fancy in illustration of heathen mythology;) \ldots\textsuperscript{144}
\end{quote}

The sight of the originals could also bring disappointment. The poor condition of frescoes was always distressing, and for the comparatively uninstructed it was difficult to make sense of images which "seem to fade, like flickering

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\textsuperscript{141}.\textit{ Art Journal} (November, 1853), p.252.
\textsuperscript{142}. J.G. Francis,\textit{ Notes from a Journal kept in Italy and Sicily, during the years 1845 and 1846} (London, 1847).
\textsuperscript{143}.\textit{ Ibid.}, p.252.
\textsuperscript{144}.\textit{ Trip to Italy, during the Long Vacation} (London, 1844), p.117.
\end{flushright}
ghosts before you”. Sir Charles Eastlake said in 1863: “I have never witnessed anything but disappointment, even among cultivated people, in first seeing frescoes by the great masters in Italy”. And he adds that this was largely because of their bad state of decay and the poor light.

In the 1820s the Primitives had truly been a discovery. By the 1850s they had been familiarized through literary descriptions and reproductions. The tourist went to Italy with preconceptions not always borne out by the originals and with expectations sometimes disappointed. Caroline Fuller Maitland was surprised to find the “Orcagna” Last Judgment in the Campo Santo “rather more quaint than terrific after all”. Of the Fra Angelicos in S. Marco and the Accademia Elizabeth Tuckett wrote:

How exquisite are all the Angelicos, but I think you enjoy them quite as much in delicate engravings, or in careful copies of single figures, as in the original painting, where often the excessive use of heavy massive gilding robs the outlines of some of their purity. This is only ignorant criticism; the colouring, of course, is most lovely, and wonderfully true and fresh in all.

Still, the converse also happened. Elizabeth Sewell did not think much of the Primitives to begin with. “Upon

145. Frances Trollope, op. cit., vol.1, p.82.
146. Royal Commission into the Royal Academy Parliamentary Papers (1833), vol.xxxvii, p.72.
first beginning a picture-seeing course", she wrote, "all painters before Raphael are put down as belonging to the same date". 149 However she soon learned "to admire, and understand and distinguish", 150 It was in Florence that William Whewell, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, comprehended what he never comprehended before, "the interest with which many of my friends regard the early painters, Cimabue, Giotto, Perugino, and the like". 151 And he goes on to praise "the expression of angelic and saint-like and God-like feelings in the attitudes, and especially in the countenances". 152

In travel books published in the 1860s the "Early Christian" interpretation of early Italian art predominated. By then, too, the Bolognese had at last fallen from grace. Alexander Maclaren, although he went to Bologna, did not get round to visiting the gallery there, an oversight unthinkable for a tourist of the 1820s. On the other hand, no remains of the older masters are overlooked in Florence. Moreover, Alexander Maclaren finds himself unmoved by Raphael's celebrated Madonna della Sopra. The

loftier and distinctively Christian aspects of that mysterious childhood which were so impressive in less skilful hands, because they were so dear to the hearts, of the earlier painters, have

150. Ibid.
152. Ibid.
escaped the gentle sweetness of Raphael's pencil.153

By the 1860s the centres of Christian art were fashionable, and a visit to Assisi almost de rigueur:

For who would not go so far out of his way to visit the head-quarters and special home of early Christian art? Surely, not the one man in an hundred, who really understands and cares either for the sentiment of the trecentisti, or for what may be called the genealogy of artistic history! And still more certainly not any one of the ninety and nine, who in obedience to "la mode" have substituted for the raptures on "the Correggiosity of Correggio" an intense gusto for the Giottesqueness of Giotto! So everybody visits Assisi; and the vetturino horses take the turn, which leaves the great road to mount the shorn steep hill that leads to it, without any hint from the rein.154

CONCLUSION

The fashion for the Primitives which I have been describing did not last far beyond the 1860s. The fashion died partly of its own excesses. Eastlake in 1853, it will be remembered, had criticized the fashion and predicted that it would not last. In 1859 A.H. Layard declared the movement in favour of early paintings no less vicious and hurtful to art than the earlier exaggerated esteem for the Bolognese painters. "German Archaism, English Pre-Raphaelitism, and the extravagant prices now paid for the vilest daubs of what is called early or Gothic art are symptoms of it." ¹

But the fashion waned principally because the attitudes and conditions which shaped its manifestations and the images of Italian art which prevailed then were changing. The Anglican and Catholic revivals of the 1830s petered out, and with them the Purist worship of the elder masters. Crowe and Cavalcaselle in the first three volumes of A New History of Painting in Italy, published in 1864, have little sympathy for the painters of the Sienese and Umbrian schools, so dear to the "Early Christians". ² Their art is conservative and superficial, distinguished, not by devotional enthusiasm, but by languid tenderness, affected grace, and excessive ornament. Gothic-influenced painters,

². One reviewer is surprised to find that, despite the fact that the first two volumes deal exclusively with the period of Christian art in Italy, the authors make no reference to the work of Nic or Ars camosa. See Art Journal (January, 1859), p.71.
beloved by Purists, are now dismissed in a few words.

Gentile da Fabriano's masterpieces, for example,

are only remarkable for their longing softness,
their affectation of grace, their laborious fusion,
and for a profuse ornamentation inherited from
the Umbrian and Siennese schools. 3

Fra Angelico's reputation survives, however, although his
rank is diminished.

The Middle Ages finally yielded to the Renaissance,
which now included the fifteenth century, as the place to
which the imagination escaped for solace and stimulus.
The importance of the classical revival was asserted once
more, and "pagan" ceased to be a dirty word. In the
opposition of the two great epochs the values associated
with the Renaissance were now the ones to appeal.
J.A. Symonds in his history of the Renaissance is attracted
to the amorality, the sensuality, the love of physical
beauty which were believed to characterize the age. The
Middle Ages are trapped in asceticism and fettered by
ecclesiastical authority. 4

Symonds and Crowe and Cavalcaselle had reservations
about the realism of fifteenth-century painting, preferring
the ideal and classicizing beauty of the sixteenth century
painters. The painters dear to the mid nineteenth century

3. J.A. Crowe and G.B. Cavalcaselle, A New History of
Painting in Italy from the Second to the Sixteenth

4. For Symonds' attitudes towards the art of the Middle
Ages and the Renaissance, see his Renaissance in Italy,
for their careful depiction of the facts of the material world, Gozzoli and Pintoricchio, are dismissed by Crowe and Cavalcaselle as second-rate. This can be related to a general reaction against the realist movement in contemporary art.

Modern German art had also lost its appeal. The fresco experiment in the Houses of Parliament had proved to be a failure. The controversy over the Pre-Raphaelites had at last come to an end. Revivalism and archaism ceased to be issues in debates about the arts.

Overall there was a decline of interest in the content of paintings and a corresponding rise of interest in their pictorial and formal means. There was a reaction against the theory that the chief function of the arts was the communication of thoughts, ideas and sentiments. The story told by a painting and the feelings expressed were not now so important. Beauty came to be considered the great end of art, and the progress of painting interpreted as the pursuit of beauty. The expression of devotional sentiments, the scrupulous depiction of facts, the clear and natural conception of a subject -- these were subordinate aims. The earlier painters were still not seen as mature masters, and history of the revival was still a story of progress towards perfection. But the Primitives were valued now more for themselves and less for what they represented. Their paintings could be valued as beautiful objects. This does not mean they were viewed more objectively, nor does it mean they were seen in isolation. But they did
not need the literary support that was given them in the middle of the nineteenth century. Nor did interest in the Primitives require justification. The paintings justified themselves by their existence. In contrast we have seen the ways in which the contemporary relevance of the earlier masters had been argued, from moral, religious, educational and utilitarian points of view.

In the later nineteenth century, however, we find a lessening of moral and didactic pre-occupations. Consequently there was not the same desire to use art for the education and civilization of the population. There was not the same interest in popular education in the history of art or the raising of popular taste. Indeed it was now widely felt that art had been contaminated by popularization. J.B. Atkinson in 1860 saw the dawn of a great revival of the arts in England, reflected in improvements in taste and modern art, in the Arundel Society publications, and in the enlargement of the collection in the National Gallery.\(^5\) Earlier in the year he had written an article entitled "The Diffusion of Taste among all Classes a National Necessity".\(^6\) By 1855 he was singing a different tune:

> Art has sunk lower in standard in proportion as it is more widely diffused: being spread over a broader surface, it becomes shallower. Patrons of art in like manner, as they multiply, degenerate: in place of the educated few rise the ignorant many.\(^7\)

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\(^5\) [Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, vol.lxxxviii (October, 1860), pp.267-71.](#)

\(^6\) [Ibid., vol.lxxxvii (February, 1860), pp.151-62.](#)

\(^7\) [Ibid., vol.cxxxviii (July, 1838), p.23.](#)
This reaction against the democratization of art had an interesting effect on the interpretation of the revival of art. Whereas the mid nineteenth century had stressed its popular roots, had argued that art revived only because it grew out of the feelings and desires of the people, in the later nineteenth century it is the result of the activities of an extraordinary and exceptional élite of artists and men of culture.

The end of the fashion thus coincided with the breaking down of the peculiar combination of phenomena which created it: the interest in German art and thought, the Mediaeval revival, the Oxford Movement, and the concern to make art an efficient instrument of social and moral progress. In conclusion, it must be confessed that a study of the taste leaves one better informed about nineteenth-century Britain than fifteenth-century Italy. But the history of a taste always says more about the people who have the taste than the object of their interest.
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