

ITALIAN
DRAWINGS

GREAT DRAWINGS OF ALL TIME

VOLUME

I

*Italian
Thirteenth through
Nineteenth Century*

SELECTED AND EDITED BY **IRA MOSKOWITZ**



KODANSHA INTERNATIONAL

TOKYO, NEW YORK, SAN FRANCISCO

Distributed in the United States by Kodansha International/USA, Ltd.,
10 East 53 Street, New York, New York 10022;
in Japan and the Far East by Kodansha International, Ltd.,
2-12-21 Otowa, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112

Revised edition published in 1976 by Kodansha International, Ltd.
and Kodansha International/USA, Ltd.

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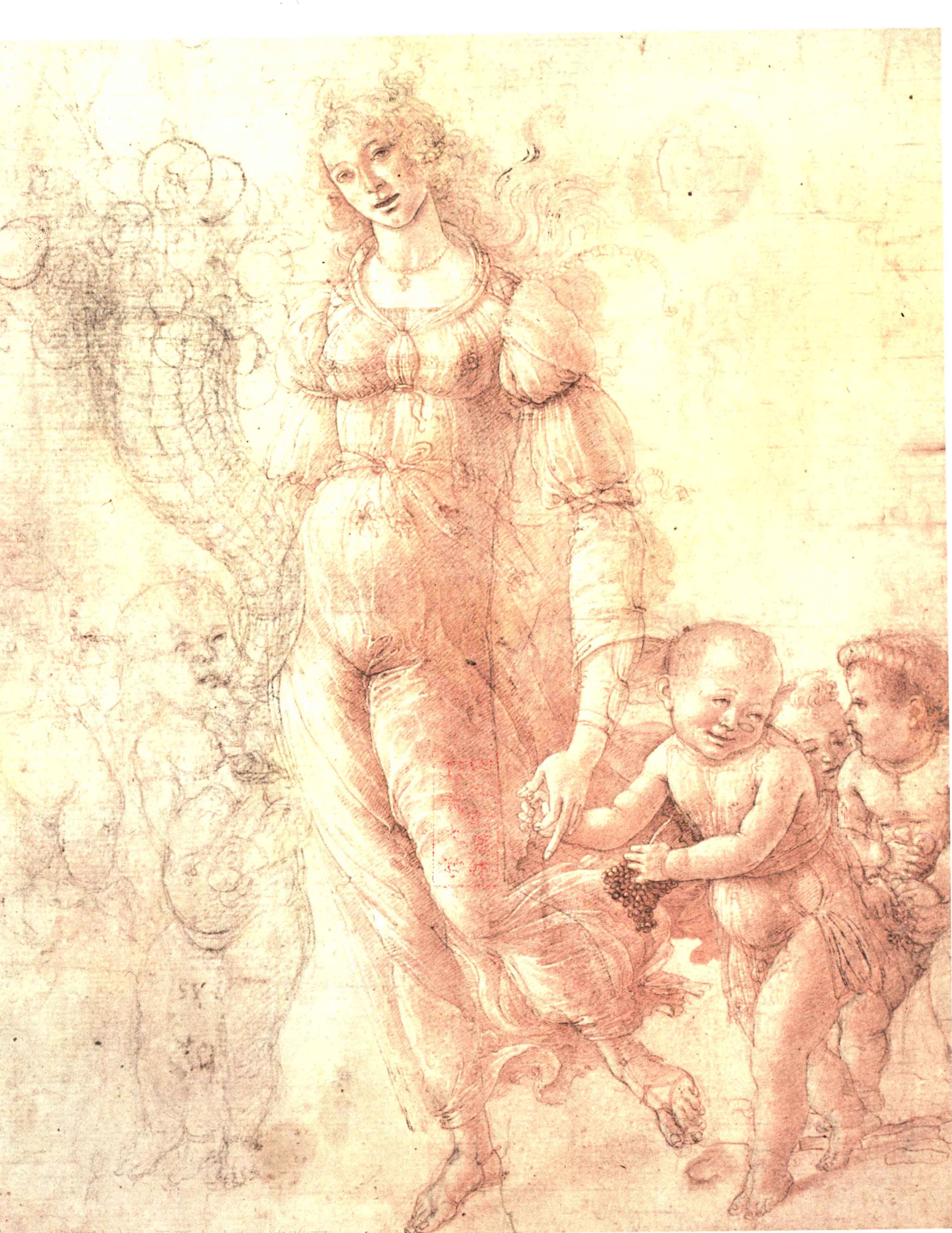
Designed by Peter Oldenburg

LCC 75-19869 JBC 3371-785202-2361

ISBN 0-87011-263-5(I) -291-0(II) -292-9(III) -293-7(IV) -294-5(set)

Printed and bound by Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd. in Japan

GREAT DRAWINGS OF ALL TIME I



GREAT DRAWINGS OF ALL TIME

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Foreword to the Revised Edition

IN THE PAST fourteen years since the first publication of *Great Drawings of All Time*, I have never ceased looking at and studying drawings, both here and abroad. Besides that I am constantly involved with my own work as an artist with emphasis on drawing. My feelings about the drawings selected for these four volumes have not changed. The bases for my selection were intuition plus a spontaneous reaction to the spirit, the soul, the intrinsic ingredient which elevates the drawing beyond the many qualities a good drawing possesses.

After examining literally hundreds of thousands of drawings in collections throughout the world, I learned to differentiate between a master drawing and an inspired drawing. It is this special quality which is the soul, the miracle, or in the words of the late Bernard Berenson: "And yet so little effort is there to be perceived in this wonderful alchemy that it is as if suddenly by the mere feat of a demiurge, earth were transubstantiated to heaven." The combined qualities which make for a master drawing are as rare as the gold in a ton of ore. They are not subject to analysis and reveal themselves only to those who are sensitive to them. Though it is fourteen years later, as I look at the four volumes today my reaction is pure pleasure.

As regards the contemporary scene, to have gotten deeper into our time would have been a most difficult task, involving a great expenditure of time and considerable research. The amount of work would have been staggering. And time has its own way in selection. The major obstacle is vested interest, especially lately since art has become big business, reaching Wall Street proportions! This field with its problems I leave to the professionals. My endeavor was to make a token selection of contemporary work, to state the continuity of the creative spirit in man. And it does go on.

Although the selection is my own, such a work in its entirety could not have been brought about without the help of the scholars who took part in it. Their names appear in the first foreword. I had the great advantage of having the important scholars of our era give me their precious time and cooperation. I feel most fortunate in having had many meetings and conversations with Prof. Otto Benesch, Frits Lugt and Agnes Mongan, to mention a few. I must also express my extreme gratitude particularly to John Davis Hatch and Winslow Ames, who helped me continuously throughout the compiling of the four volumes. And last but not least, without the encouragement and generosity of the publisher, Mr. Samuel Shore, the publication of these four volumes could never have been a reality.

IRA MOSKOWITZ

May 6, 1976

Foreword

EARLY IN 1955 Mr. Samuel Shore talked with me about the book of drawings he was contemplating as his first venture into art publishing. His goal, he said, was a volume of modest scope but special significance—a book of a hundred drawings reproduced with the beauty and accuracy made possible only by the most advanced technology yet developed by the human skill of the best technicians. As an artist with a special passion for drawing, I took to the idea instantly and with utmost enthusiasm.

After even the briefest initial research it was obvious to both of us that a selection of only a hundred from the treasure of the world's extant great drawings was hopelessly slight. From then on, we followed the advice of my dear friend, the late Walter Pach: "Let yourself grow with the project"—for a project it had truly become. The opportunity to examine and study hundreds of public and private collections throughout the world, plus discussion with scholars and lovers of drawing, widened the scope tremendously. What now emerges is the result—seven years from its inception—made possible through the broad vision, generosity, and encouragement of the publisher, the interest and cooperation of a number of outstanding scholars and laymen, and the professional skill of those who have produced the physical volumes.

A first requirement, even in the early planning stages, was a working definition of what constitutes a drawing—especially the necessity to decide where to put the line between "drawing" and "painting." Since the question remains debatable, in the selections for these volumes we have exercised a tolerance wider than that of a dictionary definition and have not limited drawings simply to pure line and tone devoid of color.

During the years, as the material steadily increased, it became advisable to publish the irreducible selection of drawings in four volumes. A decision concerning arrangement then had to be made. The present grouping has been dictated by two major factors: (1) in a selection of this scope it is impractical to attempt something approximating a chronological sequence; and (2) we had available introductory texts specially written for this work by distinguished authorities, each of whom had devoted an essay to a particular school. Some compromises were therefore required and some arrangements necessarily rather arbitrary, although valid.

The Italian and French schools, the most prolific, needed separate volumes. The German section seemed to fit best with the Dutch and Flemish schools. The remaining schools, from which there were fewer examples, were grouped in one volume, beginning with token representation of Oriental drawing.

It should further be obvious to anyone interested in contemporary drawing that attempting to evaluate the creative output of men of our own time is a most difficult task. A full study would require years; inclusion here does not suggest a judgment that these are necessarily the best creative draughtsmen of our time. Certain styles of the last several decades have been deliberately excluded because, in the editor's opinion, we need more time to weigh their validity.

While it is not always possible to free oneself entirely of prejudices, pressures and personal preferences, I've tried to be as objective as possible. Also, I have attempted not to include drawings simply because they have been accepted by tradition.

I have been constantly in contact with scholars and lovers of drawings. Lengthy discussions have more than once influenced a choice. Yet I never lost sight of the quality I sought which cannot be explained. To understand is to be moved by it.

The emphasis in these volumes is on the drawing, not on the artist. The selections have been made first from an aesthetic set of criteria, not first from the standards of the history of art. We have been seeking intrinsic values. The drawings speak for themselves, as they must. If the reader asks "What constitutes a *great* drawing?" the only answer here must be in the sum total of selections and omissions.

To be able to express intrinsic values in words, one must be (at the least) a poet. One of the few sensitive and creative men who have been able to express themselves nobly concerning the aesthetic value of a drawing was the late Bernard Berenson. Speaking of the drawings of Leonardo he said:

And yet so little effort is there to be perceived in
this wonderful alchemy that it is as if suddenly by the
mere feat of a demiurge, earth were transubstantiated
to heaven.

I call it the *miracle*—this essence, this ultimate function of a work of art.

IRA MOSKOWITZ



Acknowledgment

A work of the scope and magnitude of these four volumes could never have been accomplished without the generous help, encouragement, and contributions of scholars, collectors, and institutions the world over. Since the task of bringing this collection together covered many years, it is possible that the names of some who contributed measurably may inadvertently have been omitted. The editor and publisher owe special thanks to the following persons, without whose assistance and cooperation this publication would never have been possible:

Jean Adhémar	Francina Harris	K. T. Parker
Sherman Baker	Carlos van Hasselt	Heinz Peters
Mariana Bersano Begey	Bartlett H. Hayes, Jr.	Dorothy W. Phillips
Lidia Bianchi	John Hayes	M. Prévost
Elmira Bier	Julius S. Held	J. Q. van Regteren Altena
Maria Paz Blass	F. D. Carl Hernmarck	Louise S. Richards
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J. E. S. Edwards	Al Lerner	Laurence Sickman
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Ettore Gian Ferrari	Jacques Mathey	Kojiro Tomita
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Mrs. B. E. Gordenker	Edward F. Croft Murray	Richard P. Wunder
Luigi Grassi	Sra. José Clemente Orozco	Carl Ziggrosser
	Clemente Orozco, Jr.	

Deep appreciation is due those scholars of many lands who contributed the text and brought to these volumes the benefit of their knowledge and insights. To the many private collectors and institutions who generously opened their collections and gave permission for reproduction in these pages, our gratitude. Their names appear with the descriptions of each plate. The transparencies for plates 882 and 892 were kindly lent by Time-Life Inc.

A special debt is acknowledged to Anna Barry Moskowitz who, from the outset, gave unstintingly of time and talents toward the accomplishment of what sometimes seemed an almost impossible task. Thanks are due also to Sabina Holzka and Christopher Wolske for endless attention to detail, and to the staff of Shorewood technicians who contributed skill and professional devotion to achieve the most faithful reproductions now possible.

This note of acknowledgment would not be complete without grateful mention of the contributions of three remarkable men, all now deceased: Walter Pach, with whom the editor first discussed the project; Bernard Berenson, who encouraged and contributed graciously his wealth of knowledge; and Dr. Harry H. Shapiro, whose counsel during the years of collecting the material in these volumes was a constant aid.

Italian Drawings

Italian Drawings

THE COLLECTING, study, and enjoyment of Italian drawings would not have been armed with as much original material or as much information as we possess without the efforts of Giorgio Vasari. The sixteenth-century painter undertook not only to write the *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, but also to collect their drawings. We now can recognize, through Otto Kurz's researches, many remnants of Vasari's volumes, in which he mounted drawings in decorative borders of his own design. He often gave wrong attributions to masters earlier than his own period, but more often he salvaged these precious pieces of paper from total loss. The whole of what must probably always be acknowledged as the golden age (through Michelangelo) was covered by Vasari, whose volumes, broken up sometime before 1700, gave up their treasures to many other collections. Padre Resta, the seventeenth-century collector, was far less accurate about fifteenth- and sixteenth-century artists than Vasari had been, and he had rather bizarre ideas of quality; but for Mannerists and for his own contemporaries he was as sound as Vasari had been for his fellows; and Resta continued almost a century and a half beyond Vasari. Resta's collection, too, reconstructed by A. E. Popham, gave precious information and saved many a drawing that might otherwise have been lost.

In our century the vast researches of Bernard Berenson, published as *Drawings of the Florentine Painters* (1903, revised edition 1938) and Hans Tietze and his wife E. Tietze-Conrat (*Drawings of the Venetian Painters of the 15th and 16th Centuries*, 1944) have put every lover of Italian art in their debt. Though some of their judgments, too, are subject to revision, one chips away these Rocks of Ages at his peril.

The story of Italian drawing is really the story of the Renaissance and the spread of its effects into the rest of Europe. The later chapters in Italy are not without reverse influences from Northern artists and Northern collectors. In the beginning, however, the power and variety of Italian drawings rise from the variety, and in a sense from the competition, of the Italian city-states. These (particularly north of Rome) had become by about 1400 solid social clusters, outreaching in trade, inwardly proud, each with its churches and guilds and merchants to commission work from architects, painters, sculptors, and goldsmiths. The artists were thought of as possessing a "trade, mystery, or profession" comparable to those of the weaver, druggist, or lawyer: they kept family workshops, sometimes even for many generations; they took apprentices; they treasured trade secrets; they supplied for a demand, and contracted for their service, often providing drawings as part of the

contract in order to give the buyer an advance notion of what he would eventually receive. This businesslike situation continued until late in the eighteenth century, and indeed lasted longer in Italy than in France or Germany or Britain.

Great landowners hardly played the part of patrons of artists until the time when they took power in certain cities from the bourgeoisie. There were exceptions in both directions: the ducal court of Urbino (a very small city) was metropolitan in its culture, and employed artists as fine and various as Piero della Francesca, Justus of Ghent, Raphael, Baroccio; and no one noble family ever managed to take over Venice, though the native oligarchy knew how to use the skills of artists.

The competition among city-states led to mutual knowledge as much as to battles between mercenary soldiery. Artists who were found good by their fellow citizens acquired fame, and were called elsewhere; when the power of the Papacy began to grow in the mid-fifteenth century, the Vatican drew painters from all over Italy, and work in Rome caused numerous artists to rub off their provincial edges by contact with others.

Nevertheless, the identifiable regions of Italy kept their identifiable styles for centuries, even though leadership changed (Siena, great in the fourteen-hundreds, hardly produced a painter of interest after 1575).

Tuscany (Florence, Siena, Pisa, Arezzo) led off. We have no drawings by Giotto or by Masaccio or Castagno (save for the recently found under-drawings on the first coat of plaster for frescoes). But we have many by Parri Spinelli, which tell us about the late-Gothic practice of drawing and painting from which Giotto had moved forward, leaving provincial performers behind. From the time of Ghirlandaio on we have ample evidence of Renaissance studio procedure, in composition sketches, fuller studies, nudes and other details, contract drawings, and occasionally cartoons or full-size patterns. We also have, all through the fifteenth century, evidences of older habits, still followed in up-to-date studios as well as provincial shops: *simili* or permanent patterns of standard compositions and standard figures, as for instance the more popular saints; copies of famous paintings and of classical sculpture; and other such valuable permanent reference material, which every young artist accumulated.

The subalpine plain was also an early region of draughtsmanship, or perhaps we should say that it is almost the only other region for which much material has been preserved. Milan, on the west or Lombardic side, was full of artists attracted by the late construction of the cathedral, begun before 1400 and continuing through most of the fifteenth century; and Verona to the east was a sort of crossroads for the "International style" of the early fifteenth century. We have many Lombard pattern books, and from Verona we have works of (or connected with) Altichiero and others by Stefano da Zevio, in whose circle was Pisanello, later the most diligent wanderer of his time (Naples, Rimini, Mantua, Venice).

Some regions never produced pictorial artists of great caliber. Cremona, for instance, had fine stone-carvers in the Middle Ages and makers of stringed instruments in the Baroque period, but no draughtsman of deserved fame; yet Emilia, just to the south, produced the Ferrara, Parma, and Bologna artists of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries whose drawings are still a joy to our eyes. The early Ferrarese had connections northward to Padua, Verona, and Venice; their interest in sculptural effects was a common ground. In the high Renaissance the Parmese, through Allegri (nicknamed Correggio from his birthplace near Parma) and Mazzola (called Parmigianino) provided two great figures whose work helped create respectively the soft luxury of the Baroque and the harder elegance of cross-grained Mannerism. The Bolognese, though Francia was an early artist representative of his city, came to a later flowering with the Carracci and Guercino.

Umbria, east of Tuscany and south of Emilia, was always a provincial school in the sense of remaining somewhat retarded, but it produced, on the basis of Perugino, Viti, and Pinturicchio, the cosmopolitan Raphael; and in Piero della Francesca (by whom we have no sure drawings) it gave a start to Signorelli, a very great draughtsman who transcended the provincial without becoming really cosmopolitan (Arezzo, where Piero worked and Signorelli admired him, is actually Tuscan but close to Umbria; so is Cortona, Signorelli's birthplace).

The Venetians, beginning with a rather hard, tight Ferrarese-Paduan manner, by the time of the Bellini came to understand the light of their own city; and in the heyday of Venice as a shipping power, in the high and late Renaissance, the Venetian painters were sought after by all Italy. Venice sent off Sebastiano del Piombo to Florence and Rome, and served as a place of broadening for the Florentine Fra Bartolommeo.

Venetian drawing was almost always what we call painterlike: that is, it dwelt upon masses and the light and shade upon masses; while Florentine drawing, by and large, was more sculpturelike, dwelling upon silhouettes, structure, and motion. Venice was enjoying messages from the eye, as the Impressionists would do in the nineteenth century. Florence was transmitting messages from muscle to muscle through the eye. As the reader will see particularly in the drawings in dark and light on medium-toned grounds, the Venetian draughtsman noticed and (in his own sort of shorthand) recreated the presence of some light in shadow and some pockets of shade in lighted surfaces; the Florentine concentrated on those turning-edges or meeting-lines of planes where the strongest lights and darks seemed to lie (it took a Cézanne to synthesize these two views).

It is not surprising that the Florentines of the fifteenth century were mad about linear perspective with its mathematical devices for setting two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional objects plausibly in a two-dimensional substitute for space; or that they tended to be more interested in how the human body worked and moved than in the pleasures of its surfaces (which Venetians enjoyed).

The unique land-and-water situation of Venice never failed to affect her artists. In the silver age of the eighteenth century the glitter of multiple reflections from the water runs through all that Guardi and the Tiepolos did; while Canaletto, more interested in the architectonic, nevertheless deliberately used in his full-dress drawings a warm-cool opposition of ink and wash that suggested wider ranges of color.

Michelangelo, master of many arts, crowned the movement in drawing that had proceeded from Pollaiuolo and Signorelli. The easy-to-take Florentines just before Michelangelo, such as Credi and Filippino Lippi, were beautiful draughtsmen, but with Buonarroti we come into an area of immense breadth, complexity, and mystery. His contemporary Andrea del Sarto continued the easy-to-take character, while Pontormo, one of the creators of Mannerism, took the thornier side of Michelangelo.

Well into the seventeenth century, with Stefano della Bella, Florence produced interesting draughtsmen. But there were many other centers. Leonardo, basically a Florentine, influenced a whole new group of followers in Milan and finally carried Italian art to France. The growth of Rome as an artistic center after Raphael and Michelangelo, and even after Vasari, eclipsed almost everything else in the seventeenth century. The Carracci were summoned there from Bologna; the French Claude and Poussin spent most of their lives there. For various reasons this book cannot dwell on that period in Rome or on Naples or Genoa of the same time. We hit a few high spots with Castiglione and Vanvitelli before returning to Venice. In the nineteenth century, despite the excellence of such Italian draughtsmen as Canova, Pinelli, Boldini and Mancini, the scene was really overrun by artists from other countries. The "Nazarenes" with their cloistered simplicity led off, and eventually carried much that was Italian to the German cities where in their later years many of them headed academies. In the middle third of the century, the "art life" of Italy was heavily populated by British and American sculptors (see *The Marble Faun*).

The French Academy in Rome, so sound a training-place in the 1750's, continued its work from Ingres on. In the third quarter of the century the Spaniards who painted and drew backward-looking anecdotes were the noticeable performers; and finally the British in Florence, the Americans in Venice, by painting, etching, and drawing learned and propagated a sort of Italian architectonic discipline.

I must record my gratitude to friends who have given help in the course of preparation of the text for this volume: chief among them are A. Hyatt Mayor and Jacob Bean of the Metropolitan Museum, James Byam Shaw of London, Henry Sayles Francis of The Cleveland Museum, Agnes Mongan of the Fogg Art Museum, Felice Stampfle of The Pierpont Morgan Library, Philip Pouncey of the British Museum, Rudolf Wittkower of Columbia University, and Janós Scholz of New York, who has continued for us all the work of Vasari and Padre Resta, Berenson, and the Tietzes.

—WINSLOW AMES

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