I. The Duecento

Christus Trimphants and Christus Patiens: in the 13th century, the old Christus Triumphans or Triumphant Christ, who was shown being crucified but not suffering (to symbolize the Resurrection) was replaced by the more realistic Christus Patiens, who hangs dead on the cross and evokes our pity. These images were painted on large cross-shaped panels, which were suspended from the ceiling to the church over the altar. The Christus Patiens was influenced by Byzantine Greek depictions of the Crucifixion.

Cimabue: Last significant Florentine Master of the Maniera Greca (Greek Manner) of painting in the 1200s, possibly Giotto's teacher. Known for the emotionality of his works within the limits of the Greek Manner: Crucifixion ca. 1275, Madonna in Majesty (Florence, ca. 1280).

Nicola Pisano: Sculptor who worked in Pisa and Siena, where he sculpted pulpits decorated with biblical scenes in relief. The Pisa pulpit (1259) shows a Classicism based on ancient Roman sculpture (Adoration of the Magi).

II. Churches and other Buildings

Church of St. Francis, Assisi: A great double church in the Italian Gothic style built between 1228 and 1253, it is best known for its frescoed decoration on the interior. The upper basilica has ruinous frescoes in the transept by Cimabue (1280s). The upper walls of the nave were done by the Isaac Master and other Roman painters (1290s). The scenes on the lower walls of the life of St. Francis are by the St. Francis Master and the Master of St. Cecelia (ca. 1300-1310). The crypt-like lower church includes paintings by Giotto's workshop (ca. 1310), Simone Martini (1317), and Pietro Lorenzetti (1320s).

Santa Croce, Florence: Franciscan church designed by Arnolfo di Cambio in 1294 in the Italian Gothic style, but retaining the flat, beamed ceiling of Early Christian basilicas. Notable for the frescoes by Giotto and other Florentine painters of the Trecento, as well as later monuments such as the Tomb of Lionardo Bruni by B. Rossellini (ca. 1445).

Sta. Maria Novella, Florence: Dominican church begun in 1278, and, like Santa Croce, the site of much later Renaissance art (Masaccio's "Trinity", ca. 1427, for example). In style the church is Italian Gothic (with vaulted ceiling) save for the facade, which was designed by Alberti in 1456.

Palazzo Vecchio or Palazzo della Signoria, Florence: City Hall and heart of the Florentine Republic, the massive, fortress-like structure was built 1299-1310, probably after a design by Arnolfo di Cambio. Actually the Palazzo del Commune; gets its current names from the Medici dukedom of the 16th and 17th centuries.

III. Artists of the Trecento

Giotto: Great Florentine painter (1267/77-1337) whose interest in naturalism in the figures and the space of his paintings revolutionized western art. Best known for his frescoes in the Arena Chapel at Padua (ca. 1306) depicting the lives of the Virgin and Christ, with a Last Judgement over the doorway. His later work includes the ruinous frescoes in two chapels in Sta. Croce (1320s) and a design for the Campanile (bell tower) of Florence's Cathedral (1334-37).
**Master of the St. Francis Cycle:** Main master of the frescoes depicting the life of St. Francis on the lower walls of the nave of the upper church at Assisi. Identified by some as the young Giotto (following Vasari in the second edition of his *Lives*), he seems rather to have been Roman trained and to have painted the cycle in the first decade of the 14th century. He uses more architecture than Giotto, his compositions are less unified, and his style is less naturalistic than that of the great Florentine. But the scenes are lively and entertaining.

**Andrea Pisano:** Florentine sculptor influenced by Giotto, best known for his Bronze Doors depicting the Life of St. John the Baptist on Florence's Baptistry (1336). He also made sculpted marble reliefs for the lowest story of the Campanile, including interesting scenes of artists at work.

**Duccio:** Founder of the Sienese school of painting (d. 1318), his earliest work that survives is the Rucellai Madonna of ca. 1285. It and his masterpiece, the Maestà Altarpiece made for Siena's Cathedral 1308-1311, show graceful figures and a lyrical sense of color in scenes with a limited naturalism. The Maestà today shows a Madonna in Majesty on its front, and scenes of Christ's Passion on the back; it was once surrounded by many subsidiary scenes of the Life of the Virgin and Christ, all encased in a tabernacle-like frame.

**Simone Martini:** Sienese Master active ca. 1315-1344. His style shows a graceful linear rhythm and elegance which is essentially Gothic. Works: Fresco Maestà in the Council Chamber of the Town Hall of Siena (1315), Annunciation (1333).

**Ambrogio Lorenzetti:** best known for his allegorical frescoes of Good and Bad Government in the City and Country painted in Siena's Town Hall (1338-39). These include the first panoramic landscape vistas since Classical Antiquity, as well as interesting scenes of everyday life (good and bad). Ambrogio seems to have perished in the plague of 1348.

**Andrea Orcagna:** Florentine painter and sculptor of the 3rd 1/4 of the 14th century whose work shows some rejection of Giotto's naturalism and a return to the flat, symbolic spirituality of Dugento painting. Works: Strozzi Altarpiece (ca. 1355) depicting Christ, the Madonna and Saints; Tabernacle Altar for Orsanmichele (1355-59).

**Andrea da Firenze:** Artist of the Chapter House (Spanish Chapel) at Santa Maria Novella (1355). Frescoes there include a symbolic scene of the Triumph of the Dominican Order whose style shows a rejection of strong naturalism similar to that of Orcagna.

**IV. The Early 15th Century in Florence**

**Lorenzo Ghiberti:** Elegant sculptor (c. 1381-1455) best known for his two sets of bronze doors with reliefs made for Florence's Baptistry. The earlier set (1403-24), showing the Life of Christ, and his trial panel for the door competition of 1402, with the Sacrifice of Isaac, are basically International Gothic in style. The reliefs are arranged in medieval quatrefoil frames, although tempered by naturalistic anatomy and limited three-dimensional space in the latest panels. They show knowledge of ancient Roman sculpture and its qualities. The same progression towards naturalism can be seen in his bronze statues for Orsanmichele: St. John the Baptist (c. 1415) is more decorative than the more naturalistic St. Matthew of c. 1420. Ghiberti's second set of bronze doors have ten large
square relief pictures illustrating the Old Testament and have deep perspectival recessions into depth, and completely naturalistic figures. Called the "Gates of Paradise" by Michelangelo, they took Ghiberti from 1425 to 1452 to complete. These begin with Creation Stories, and end with the Meeting of Solomon and Sheba.

**Filippo Brunelleschi:** architect and sculptor (c. 1377-1446) who, after losing the competition for the bronze doors to Ghiberti in 1403, abandoned sculpture for architecture. After direct study of ancient buildings in Rome around 1410, he revived the ancient Roman method of designing after mathematical proportions, and, perhaps, invented single-point perspective in order to create visually correct drawings of buildings. While building the dome of Florence's Cathedral (1420-36), Brunelleschi designed several notable structures in Florence: the Ospedale degli Innocenti (Foundlings Hospital, 1419), San Lorenzo with its Old Sacristy (1420s and 30s), and the church of Santo Spirito (1435). Construction of most of these lingered on after his death.

**Nanni di Banco:** sculptor who died young in 1421. His most notable work is the Four Crowned Martyrs at Orsanmichele (1414). This is clearly based on ancient Roman models, and has a relief at its base showing sculptors and other stoneworkers doing their jobs.

**Donatello:** sculptor (c. 1386-1466) who created works whose naturalism is tempered by an expressive piety. Throughout his career Donatello showed an interest in optical corrections based on the positioning of his work. Until 1450 he primarily adapted Classical prototypes to Renaissance themes: David (1408), St. Mark (1411-13), St. George (1415-17), the bronze David (c. 1440?), and Gattamelata (1443-53) are all based loosely on Classical statuary. His relief works after 1425 frequently showed a deep perspectival space: the Feast of Herod (c. 1425). After 1450 Donatello's late works show a frenzied religious expressionism: Mary Magdalene (c. 1455); Judith and Holophernes (late 1450s). He is also important for his role in transmitting Renaissance style to northern Italy during his stay in Padua (c. 1443-53).

**Gentile da Fabriano:** Painter from central Italy who worked primarily around Venice. Gentile's style was International Gothic, showing a limited naturalism and interest in decorative effects. His greatest work is the "Adoration of the Magi" painted in 1423 for the Strozzi family in Florence.

**Masaccio:** Short-lived painter (1401-28) who revolutionized western painting through his introduction of single-point perspective. But Masaccio also used chiaroscuro (effects of light and dark) to model his massive figures, a naturalistic trait that was ignored by Florentine painters after his death until Leonardo in the 1470s. Masaccio's masterpieces are few but select: the Pisa Polyptych (1426), the Trinity (c. 1427), and parts of the Brancacci Chapel frescoes in the Church of Santa Maria delle Carmine (c. 1425-27). In the latter commission he collaborated with the less progressive painter Masolino. The most famous of the Brancacci Chapel frescoes is the Tribute Money of c. 1425, but the scene of "St. Peter Baptizing Converts" is also important.
**Fra Angelico:** Otherworldly monastic painter of graceful spiritual visions. He used single-point perspective, often in deep landscape recessions. Works: Cortona Annunciation (1434), San Marco altarpiece (1440) and frescoes ("Coronation of the Virgin," 1440s). He also painted the Chapel of Nicholas V in the Vatican (1448) and helped to bring the Renaissance style to Rome.

**Fra Filippo Lippi:** Non-religious monk, ravisher of (willing) nuns and father of Filippino Lippi by one of them. Also taught Botticelli and was Cosimo de'Medici's favorite artist. A gifted if occasionally clumsy painter: Madonna and Child (c. 1455), Adoration of the Child (c. 1456), "Feast of Herod" (1450s).

V. Renaissance Art and Institutions

**Humanism:** a practical philosophy of political and social life that dominates the Renaissance. Humanism believed that by studying Classical literature and monuments one could learn lessons which, combined with Christian faith, could be applied to create a better life on earth. Devised in the first half of the 14th century in Tuscany, most notably by Petrarch (d. 1374).

**Signoria:** a type of government in Renaissance Italy in which the city-state is ruled a Signore (lit.="Sir"), or by a non-noble ruler or family who has seized control of the state. In Florence, the town hall gets that name when the Medici family rules openly from there after 1512.

**Commune:** a republican city-state, ruled by its upper classes, usually in concert with the major guilds. States of this sort include Florence, Siena, and Venice (which was ruled by a council led by an elected Duke or Doge).

**Tempera Painting:** paintings done with pigments suspended in a mixture of water and egg yolks, usually on wood (panels). Used initially for altarpieces. Since the paint dried very fast and to a hard surface luster, tempera requires a lot of preparatory underpainting and drawing to establish exactly where the figures and other forms will be, since changes are impossible during the painting. Until 1450 virtually all Italian painting was done in this technique.

**Oil paint:** pigments suspended in linseed oil and turpentine. Oil becomes popular in Italy after 1450, by 1500 almost universal, since it dries slowly and forms can easily be changed or adapted.

**Fresco painting:** painting done on walls in a technique in which watercolors are applied to wet plaster (fresco="fresh"). The paint bonds chemically with the walls, and is very durable. Some colors can’t be achieved in *buon fresco* (true fresco) and have to be applied when the plaster is dry, this fresco secco does not adhere well and often chips off the wall. Fresco paintings were common in churches and chapels, and often present narrative paintings of Biblical figures’ or Saints’ lives. These are usually subsidiary instructional devices to a tempera altarpiece.

**Bronze:** an alloy of copper and tine (usually about 10%) which was used to create hollow statuary in the round, or relief images through creating a mold and casting an image. Cost about 30 times what a stone figure cost to carve!

**Religious Institutions**
**Monasteries and Nunneries**: associations of individuals of a single sex (monks=men, nuns=women) who lived in dormitories, and who associated in communal worship and dining. These conform to various orders, of which the Franciscans and Dominicans are the most important, but all western monks were bound by the Benedictine rule, which emphasized poverty (i.e. no material possessions), chastity, and obedience to authority (the church hierarchy). Of the Renaissance types, conventional orders allowed their adherents out in public, while observant orders were cloistered and closed off from society. The interiors of monasteries and nunneries were often decorated with art, notably frescoes, but these were usually unavailable to the lay viewer, and indeed to most viewers other than the clerics who lived in the house. Chapter houses are the chapels of monasteries and nunneries, that is for those who have taken vows alone. They usually include a representation of the Crucifixion and other paintings (see the Chapter House of Santa Maria Novella, Florence by Andrea da Firenze, c. 1355). Refectories are dining rooms, and usually were decorated with a Last Supper. Usually the art in this type of establishment is more intellectual than public religious art in a church.

**Franciscans and Dominicans**: orders of monks created in the early 13th century whose special charge was maintaining faith in towns. Their urban monasteries always included a large church to serve the masses (Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce in Florence); this was often richly adorned with art.
Confraternities: organizations of dedicated to saints that did good works in most Italian towns. In Venice these were called Scuole (lit. “schools”), were particularly strong, and had elaborate meeting halls, often featuring many paintings. The confraternities also might possess relics (such as the fragment of the True Cross seen in Gentile Bellini’s “Procession of the True Cross” of 1496 for the Scuola of Saint John the Evangelist in Venice). Confraternities might commission artworks in churches and sometimes controlled the adornment and upkeep of churches.

Political Institutions, People and Families

Guilds: organizations of professions in medieval towns that regulated commercial activities; most Italian towns in the Renaissance had these. Some guilds tended to be more prestigious and wealthier than others (in Florence the Seta or Silkworkers, the Bankers, the Lana or Woolworkers, among others). These might be put in charge of administering a church, at times. Artists were members of Guilds depending on their art medium (sculptors could members of the Stone and Woodworkers Guild in Florence which included construction workers=masons, or the more prestigious Silkworkers Guild, if they worked in bronze; painters were members of the Pharmacists Guild). In republican towns like Florence, the wealthier Guilds might control the town. Since the Labors of the Months were enshrined by God, Guilds often had meeting halls that were chapel-like and had an altarpiece that was prayed to or invoked during meetings (see Fra Angelico’s Linen Workers Guild Altarpiece of 1433).