

**ESSAYS IN THE
STUDY OF SIENESE
PAINTING**

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Essays in the study of Sieneese painting by Bernard Berenson

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BERNARD BERENSON

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MATTEO DI GIOVANNI: MADONNA
PERCENA

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BY
BERNARD BERENSON
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PREFACE

There was a time when the ardour of mere discovery made me nearly as happy at the sight of a new Sano di Pietro as of a new Piero della Francesca. Yet even then, it did not seem worth while to publish pictures like those of the good Sano and his peers, for, although excellent in their way, and exciting to come across for the first time in some out-of-the-way little hill town, such paintings tend to resemble the standardized products of a mint rather than the spontaneous creations of a changeful human spirit.

My intention throughout all my work has been, as a rule, to publish only such pictures as went rather to constitute an artistic personality hitherto un-integrated, or to extend, by showing it in a new phase, a personality already known.

And of such a nature are the papers that appear in this volume; only that never before, as in these essays, unless it be in my recent book on "Venetian Painting in America," and in my third series of "Study and Criticism of Italian Art," have I applied with such scrupulousness the test of chronology, and never have I thrown my nets so wide or been so painstaking in gathering up the facts that go towards determining a date.

In the article on "Ugolino Lorenzetti," I started out with an altarpiece regarding which we had no infor-

mation whatever. I venture to hope that I have succeeded not only in finding out just when it was designed but what are its exact affinities with the rest of Sieneſe Painting. Compared with that effort, the task of gathering up other works that can be demonstrated to be by the ſame hand, and to integrate them into an artistic perſonality, is relatively eaſy and ſimple. I beg the ſtudent, even when not perfectly convinced by my arguments, to believe in my concluſions. Not that I have failed to do my beſt, but that the tedium would have been intolerable if I had ſtated all that could be ſaid. And beſides, our ſtudies are not the fitteſt ſubject for the dialectical method. Argument in our field can never be concluſive: it can only be directive.

The ſame reaſons have prevented my putting down more than a part of the arguments I could adduce in proof that the Marriage Salver recently acquired by the Boſton Muſeum of Fine Arts was not by Boccatis of Camerino but by a cloſe follower of Coſſa and Tura. The problem preſented is, however, of ſuch relative ſimplicity that one is almoſt aſhamed to take it ſo ſeriouſly. And yet it needs to be ſo taken, if at this date accredited adepts of our profeſſion can ſtill make ſuch blunders. Evidently ſome people ſtill have to be convinced that even for an attribution ſo obvious as of this Marriage Salver, it is neceſſary to have a thorough knowledge of all the ſchools of Italy. I muſt add that if I include this paper on a Ferrareſe painting in a book on Sieneſe maſters, it is, as the reader will ſee, becauſe the diſcuſſion turns on Matteo di Giovanni, their chief during the advanced Quattrocento, oblig-

ing me to characterize him and to define his relations to his contemporaries in a way in which I, at least, have never done before.

The essay on Matteo and Cozzarelli is intended to show what progress has been made in distinguishing closely between artists so kindred that as recently as ten years ago their works were still jumbled together in almost unsuspected confusion.

The shorter papers are slight enough, yet not without their use. The one on Cola Petruccioli is to introduce a hitherto all but unknown little master who plays his own little pipe to charm us with. The one on Lippo Vanni extends our acquaintance with that painter, who, until a little while ago, was a mere name. The brief notice on the Girolamo da Cremona at Havre increases our acquaintance with that fascinating and poignant illuminator by adding a work of unexpected type and character to the still very scanty number of his panel paintings.

These papers, imperfect as they are, will, I trust, persuade the attentive reader that our studies, if properly pursued, make demands upon all of a man's mental energies, and furnish a discipline inferior to few. They require the first-hand observation of the naturalist, the analysis of the psychologist and the skill in weighing and interpreting evidence necessary to the historian.

A generation ago, when a beginner, I enjoyed the privilege of being guided through the Borghese Gal-