First published 1971 by Penguin Books Ltd
Third edition 1993

20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

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Set in Monophoto Ehrhardt, and printed in China through World Print Ltd

Designed by Gerald Cinamon and Paul McAlinden

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ISBN 0–300–05587–0 (pbk)
0–300–05586–2 (cloth)

Library of Congress catalog card number 75–15156

For Catherine,
Will, Kate, Nathaniel, and Sydney Jr,
and in memory of Nonna

БИБЛИОТЕКА
ОДЕЉЕЊА ЗА ИСТОРИЈУ УМЕТНОСТИ
Инв. бр. 14106
Сигн. II-4630
ФИЛОЗОФСКОГ ФАКУЛТЕТА
УНИВЕРЗИТЕТА У БЕОГРАДУ

CHAPTER I

CENTRAL ITALY 1500–1520[1]

The artistic events that most powerfully determined the history of sixteenth-century painting took place in the century's first two decades in Florence and Rome, in the time which, implicitly recognizing the stature of its achievement, we have come to call the High Renaissance. The most extraordinary intersection of genius art history has known occurred then and gave form to a style which, again eliciting a term that is a value judgement, we call 'classic' or 'classical' – meaning, in its original usage, 'of the highest class'. The inventors of this classical style developed it and demonstrated it with an authority that compelled their contemporaries to reshape their art, and for the artists of succeeding generations of the sixteenth century this style remained an inescapable precondition with which they had to deal. In Central Italy the painters who chose – or whose lot it was – to work with the inheritance of the High Renaissance masters made their relation to them clear, and dependence on them is apparent even when the later artists may be of pronounced individuality. Even the artistic actions that may have been meant as a dissent from classicism were conditioned by it in essential ways; usually the dissenter was, in time, reclaimed. This does not mean that innovation of important kind was precluded by the weight of classical authority: it does mean that what was new within the sixteenth century after the High Renaissance was either a consequence drawn from it or had to be reconciled in some way with its tradition. The innovations in Central Italian painting through the century's course were many and significant and they resulted in a diversity of styles, but all are marked by their descent from the ideal created in its first two decades. The relationship persisted even as the interval of distance from the early Cinquecento grew and reference to its classical example became indirect, compounding references made earlier; and it persisted through circumstances of political and Church history that were not sympathetic to a classical cultural style. The classical heritage of the High Renaissance created a common denominator among the varieties of painting that arose in sixteenth-century Central Italy. That classicism is their shared term of reference, and its vicissitudes compose the historical thread that links them.

With less emphasis this applies elsewhere in Italy through the sixteenth century's extent. In Venice the first years of the Cinquecento had seen the invention of a style which in more essential principles resembled that of the contemporary Florentines. The Venetian variant of High Renaissance classicism endured longer than its counterpart in Central Italy and assumed, in the territories relevant to Venice, a comparable authority. Though the Venetian style had been more flexible from the beginning than that of Central Italy, and was by no means so intellectually defined, the Venetian conception of a classicism was also central not only to its High Renaissance style but to developments that followed. Intermittently in the early Cinquecento, but later with more constant pressure, Central Italian style intruded upon Venice, and the issue of the differences between them became crucial – at first that between their variants of classical style, then that of the changes both schools came to make in them. In North Italy outside Venice, often less culturally advanced, there were centres where painting remained, well into the sixteenth century, mainly what it had come to be in the preceding time, a mimetic instrument. But as Venetian influence penetrated to these centres, then (together with it and at times displacing it) that of Central Italy, the history of North Italian painting became not just one

of native modes but a dialogue between them and classicism. The diversity of Cinquecento styles throughout Italy, vastly multiplied beyond that within the Central Italian school, is thus also bound, though more loosely, by the consequences of the classicism of the High Renaissance.

The principles of High Renaissance classical style had been precociously conceived by Leonardo da Vinci more than two decades before the new century began. He was alone in his exploration of a new style until the early nineties, when the younger Michelangelo – as personally precocious as Leonardo, but by an accident of generation not so historically advanced – independently conceived some similar ideas. A third Florentine, Baccio della Porta (later to be known as Fra Bartolommeo), formulated a more elementary conception of a Cinquecento classicism in the last moments of the old century. It was very shortly after 1500 that the parallel event occurred in Venice, in the art of Giorgione, and in Umbria in the painting of the youthful Raphael. The routes by which these artists came to their resembling principles were diverse; when we examine their histories individually we shall try to ascertain how each was moved to his invention. Before the middle of the first decade of the new century their actions were no longer personal and separate probings but had become a current, of a height and force that derived from the genius of its makers, and which had the power to alter the direction of contemporary art.

The Venetian development initiated by Giorgione remained distinct, but the other innovators, Florentine by origin save for Raphael, converged in Florence, and they were joined there by the young Umbrian in 1504. The conjunction of great genius in Florence was brief, dissolving finally in 1508 with the departure of Raphael for Rome and Leonardo's definitive departure for Milan; Michelangelo had already gone to Rome in 1506. The presence of the younger innovators determined where the capital of art was to be, but furthermore they found in Rome a climate of extraordinary cultural aspiration and large opportunity, evoked by Pope Julius II, which made new stimuli to creativity, expanding its scale and accelerating its pace. In Julius's Rome and then throughout most of the succeeding reign of Leo X de' Medici, the two great artists worked towards, and often on, the highest reaches of expression that art knows, developing the resources and powers of their classical principles of style; at times forcing them and, finally, perhaps exceeding them. What they achieved is of such a stature – of the mind as well as aesthetically – that all else in their context is diminished by comparison. Painters who in other circumstances would be pre-eminent in rank seem to recede: in Rome this is the case with Baldassare Peruzzi and Sebastiano Veneziano, and in Florence with Fra Bartolommeo and the younger aspirant to the place of Florentine *caposcuola*, Sarto.

There were no more than twenty years between the time when the new classical style became recognizable in Florence as an including current and the emergence of another style, the evident issue of the High Renaissance yet no less evidently distinguishable from it, and which would displace it. Events of political, and in particular religious, history that were certainly most unsettling for contemporary Italian culture have been called on – in a somewhat over-simple view of the relation in cultural history between cause and effect – to account mostly for the displacement in Central Italy of High Renaissance classical style. The same logic would require that conditions oppositely propitious to classical cultural style should have existed when the High Renaissance began and have accompanied most of its course, but this is hardly true. The classical style in painting emerged in Florence in a time at which the political and social actualities were in disaccord

with it: the latter years of the fifteenth century were a time of commotion more violent than the state had known since the mid Trecento, and the first years of the sixteenth century were less disturbed but by no means serene. The classical style was a consequence not of what we commonly refer to as historical reality but of a historical order of another kind, made up of ideas. It was the realization of an ambition the early Renaissance had been unable to attain: to reconcile what its culture had newly discovered and valued of the material world with its inheritance of Christianity. The conflict made a dichotomy of cultures within Florence, which could be regarded (perhaps more than some apparently 'objective' cause) as the source from which the worst of Florentine political commotion came. We may in part interpret Cinquecento classicism as a solution, in terms of art that do not touch political reality, and are not essentially touched by it, to the Quattrocento's cultural dilemma.

In Florence not only the beginning but the whole course of the new classical style was in a context of events and social circumstances that did not make a climate sympathetic to it. Under its penultimate republican government, of the Gonfaloniere Soderini, Florentine political and moral stature shrank, as did the Florentine economy. In 1512 the Medici were able to re-impose their rule, and when in the following year Leo X became Pope, Florence became a political dependency of Rome; it is clear that in the second decade of the Cinquecento the sociological climate of Florence was largely mediocre. Much art in Florence at the time reflects this social stature, and the absence of a sense of aspiration qualifies the accomplishment even of Fra Bartolommeo and Sarto. The effects of the milieu upon their style (though not upon their lesser Florentine contemporaries) are qualitative, much more than of kind; they still remain protagonists in the development of the principles of classical style.

Rome came to provide a differently propitious atmosphere for the development of classicism, but this was only well after its Florentine invention. Pope Julius II invited the creators of a style that had been clearly formed to practise in Rome, and through efforts for which Julius himself seems ultimately to be responsible, made circumstances of patronage and, more essentially important, a cultural climate favourable to their continuing development. Julius gathered as much as he could of the best literary reputations into Rome just as he did the best artistic ones, not necessarily concerning himself in either case with their allegiances of style. The creative stature of the so-called humanists did not resemble Michelangelo's or Raphael's, but they too were involved – for reasons that are perhaps more obvious than the artists', if without their grand measure of success – with the realization of a classical ideal of style. Not just underlying the cultural milieu but in a sense including it, so that it was infused by its tenor and its kind, was Julius's concept of the action of the Papacy in Italian and European politics, and inseparable from it, his concept of the role of Papal Rome. In both there was a discernible analogy to Rome of the ancient Empire, and by it Julian Rome reassumed much more of its ancient sense of grandeur. The cultural atmosphere was charged with the effects of Julius's aspiration, which not only stimulated creativity but indicated the direction it should take. The modern artists reached out towards the art of antique Rome as they had not in the early Renaissance, and as they had no comparable inclination or opportunity to do in Florence; in Julian Rome the symbols of antiquity took on powerful new relevance. What could be discerned of classicism in the art of old Rome – and often this might be appearance more than substance – came to serve more cogently than at any time before as a guide for the proponents of the modern classical style, affirming the outward resemblance between the two but also strengthening their relationship of principle.

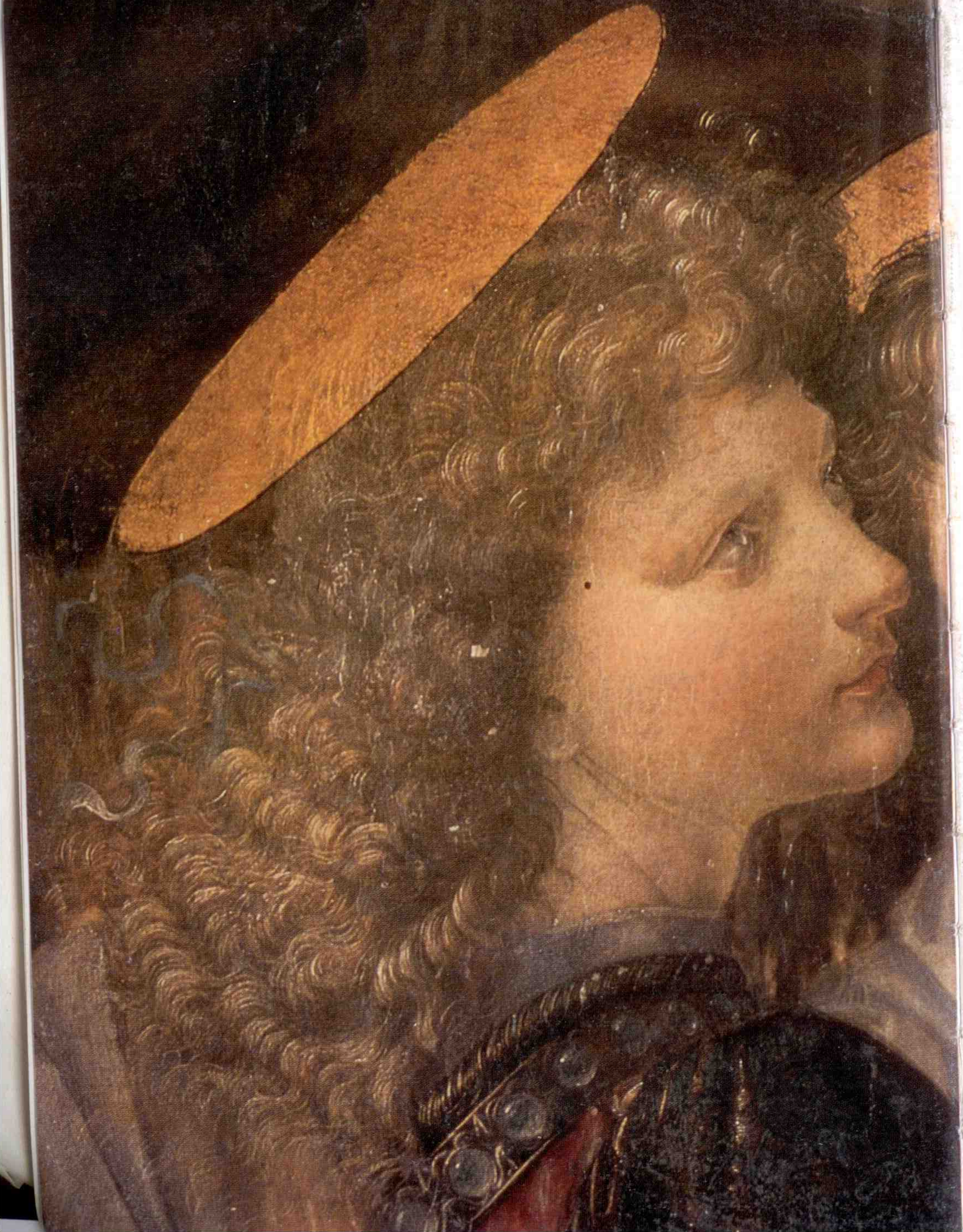
The impetus of development that Julian culture gave to Roman classical style survived him: it was part of the legacy of achievement that Julius left to Leo X. For a short while in the early years of Leo's reign the Papacy stood at a climax of both temporal and cultural authority, and this time was one of climax in the development of the Roman High Renaissance classical style. But Leo was unable to maintain the situation Julius's efforts had made: he came to dissipate his financial and political inheritance, and while opulently promoting culture Leo's action in the wider world was such as eventually to deprive culture in Rome of the conditions of environment that permitted aspiration to a classical style. In Leo's reign the favouring environment began to be removed as surely as, in Julius's time, it had been assured. However, this process did not have an effect on art until after Leo's death; Clement VII, the next Medici Pope, was to induce more drastic ruin. Meanwhile, sharing in the benefits of Leo's opulence, Roman artists manipulated their material, much more tractable than that of politics, to explore still farther (or, more often, to refine) the classical principles of which they won the substance earlier.

A verbal précis of these principles is possible, but almost unavoidably gives an effect of cliché. The rules we might select as defining High Renaissance classicism may sound, especially to modern ears, like noble platitudes, and because they are reduced to rules what they define seems less to be the classical style than the academicism that derived from it. Even more than in the case of other styles the tenets of High Renaissance classicism lose meaning when they are abstracted from the actuality of art, for it is this style's almost overriding principle that principle and actuality should fuse. Their interaction is a living one, by which idea is given substance in the particular event of art, while its substance is informed, conversely, by idea. It is a living relation in another, equally important sense: while principle remains consistent in its essence it is not unchanging but itself a vital, thus developing, idea; it is responsive, too, to the substance of art in which it is required to exist. Abstraction in a scheme of words will not convey this life of principle. We shall identify it as it works, finding it as we experience the paintings, singly and as they follow one another to make the history of High Renaissance painting style.

LEONARDO

Leonardo's invention of the idea of style that was to shape so much of the history of the Cinquecento occurred more than two decades before the century began. However, it is not only as a matter of chronology that an account of this invention and its earlier results belongs in the history of the fifteenth-century style. Much in Leonardo's art requires to be seen as a fulfilment of identifiably fifteenth-century ideas, and some of his most salient innovations have their reverse, retrospective face. Even in the later years of his career, into the sixteenth century, qualities persist in Leonardo's style that indicate its origin in the century before and mark him off, subtly but distinctly, from younger colleagues in the modern style. None of this discounts the novelty or the prodigious historical significance of his invention. It is caution that the view that we shall take of it, in a perspective with a sixteenth-century station point, should be complemented by a view taken from the Quattrocento side.

The Cinquecento was a quarter of a century away when, close to 1475, Leonardo demonstrated the idea of what we recognize to be the core of the High Renaissance classical style. Born in 1452, Leonardo was then past twenty years of age and had not yet left the employ of Verrocchio, who had been his teacher. His



demonstration is within a painting otherwise mainly by Verrocchio, *The Baptism of Christ* (Florence, Uffizi), in the head of one of two angels attendant on Christ [1].[2] The difference between this detail and the context into which Leonardo painted it is the symptom of a difference of much greater magnitude, between the idea Leonardo's image represents and the whole context of contemporary art. In that setting his idea is an innovation almost as drastic as Masaccio's had been fifty years before. Leonardo's angel reconciles what his contemporaries and predecessors of the early Renaissance had normally dealt with as opposites in their depictions of a human image: physical description and expression of a state of spirit or mind. This purpose has required Leonardo's reshaping of the ordinary experience of nature – which he knew better than any of his early Renaissance contemporaries how to record and paint – so that appearance is reformed into a manifest idea of harmony, while the expression that inhabits the appearance is remade according to the same intention and with equal stress. The image that results is visibly distinct from normal expectations, and aesthetically and ethically far superior to them. Yet, surpassing reality, it commands us to feel it to be plausible as no image in art was before. A wonderfully subtle knowledge of the look of nature has been subsumed into the harmony of form, and a sense of actual vitality inspires the harmony of mind. These infuse each other: the harmony itself becomes not a condition but a living power. Spirit and substance, equally asserted in the image, concord within this vital harmony, interact, and become synthetic: this was the first event in the history of classicism in the Christian world that resembles, in its essence, the classicism of the antique Golden Age.

Half a decade later Leonardo had the opportunity to demonstrate this new – in a longer perspective, re-created – principle of art in an extended form. His vehicle was an *Adoration of the Magi* (Florence, Uffizi) [2], commissioned in 1481 for the monastery of S. Donato a Scopeto near Florence. Leonardo did not complete the work, leaving it as an underpainting, but carried far enough to indicate clearly what his ideas were. He has applied the concept of ideal revision of appearance that he laid down in the angel of the *Baptism* to the wide cast of characters the Adoration theme permits: he has shaped the actors' heads into perfected types, condensing his experience of humanity and selecting qualities from it that have to do not only with appearances but with spiritual disposition and moral values. His generalizings are insistent, yet Leonardo observes – or invents – shading differences of individuality, so that there is interplay among his actors in quality of appearance and tonality of feeling. This reforming process is applied also to the bodies of the actors, most apparently in the Virgin, whose whole figure has been shaped in curves of smoothed melodious effect into which no disharmonious accident of nature has been permitted to intrude. The pattern of her shaping and her posture – an incipient contrapposto – unfold farther, with change of stress but not of essence, the sense of a living harmony that Leonardo has illustrated in the Virgin's head. Less insistently, he extends this mode of shape and pose to the surrounding male forms. Their kinds and powers of feeling are differentiated by a character of bodily action consonant with the expression of their heads; but as Leonardo describes it even the utmost power of emotion takes on a harmonious shape.

The principle of an arbitrarily formed and living harmony extends beyond the single

1. Leonardo da Vinci:
Angel, from Verrocchio's Baptism of Christ.
Florence, Uffizi

figures to their relation in a composition. Two strong geometric shapes, of almost schematic obviousness, form a framework on which the figures are arranged: a semicircle, partly laid back into space, locks into a triangle mainly drawn on the picture surface. Within its arbitrary clarity each of these shapes engenders an effect of movement and of its simultaneous control; and each shape plays with complementary and magnifying effect upon the other. Obviously ideal as it is, the scheme of design is instinct with energy that derives from its shapes alone; however, this scheme functions not just as an abstract geometry but in terms of the figures it contains, which literally inhabit it, taking energy from it and simultaneously giving it their own. There are no inert relationships, and balances are made within the geometric scheme not just of shape or apparent mass but of energies. Literal symmetry is not useful or even relevant to such a concept of relating forms. They begin in the *Adoration* to act in the reciprocal responses of a contrapposto.

Much in the *Adoration* still shows that it is a beginning. Yet the bases of the new principles of style that Leonardo has conceived are generally legible in it even when they may not yet be surely formed or enough articulated. His idea of a functioning of space is of this kind: not yet certainly defined, it still holds the symptom of a principle that would be vital to the subsequent history of the classical style. Leonardo had, obviously, learned perspective science thoroughly; he became one of its theorists and acknowledged masters. Yet, since he was concerned to make an ideal reforming of reality rather than to imitate it, and to capture the effect of life, not to fix it, Albertian perspective was at best incidental to Leonardo's purposes. The structure of the *Adoration* rests on an inversion of the Albertian rule. Leonardo's space begins not as Alberti had prescribed with a perspective grid, which then is populated with the figures, but oppositely, with the figures: their volume gives shape to the surrounding space. A history of the evolution of the classical style that would not be only formal in its kind could be composed with the fulfilment of this beginning in the *Adoration* as a central thread.

The style Leonardo conceived for the *Adoration* is 'ideal' (in the commonly accepted meaning for art criticism of the word); and it is so because it is the most 'ideated' picture up to its time in the history of art. Later in his career, when Leonardo formed the habit of recording his ideas in words, he came to define most of the conceptions on which his invention of a new artistic style was based. His definitions may be in his scientific notes as well as in his observations on the art of painting. In Leonardo's view, knowledge was a unity and art the preferred instrument for its communication, and scientific principles might often be principles of painting, too.

Painting, for Leonardo, is 'the sole means of reproducing all the known works of nature' which it does with 'subtle and philosophic speculation' (*Trattato*, I, 4v); '. . . the mind of the painter must transmute itself into the very mind of nature and be the interpreter between it and art, commenting with art the causes of its demonstrations as they are determined by its laws . . .' (*Trattato*, I, 24v). None of these words counsels imitation but, instead, the depiction of that truth which intellect may find behind the façade of visible experience. In a scientific context Leonardo defines this prescription more precisely: 'This is the true rule how observers of natural effects must proceed: while nature begins with reasons and ends in experience, we must follow the opposite [path], beginning with experience and with that investigating the reasons' (Cod. E 55r). The programme is the same as that by which, in painting, Leonardo seeks the typical and general that underlie the evidence of surface observation. In painting it is not sufficient to describe the physical phenomena alone: 'A good painter has two chief objects to paint, man and the intention of his soul. The former is easy, but the latter hard, because he has to represent it by the attitudes and movements of the limbs' (*Trattato*, I, 60v); a 'figure is not praiseworthy if there does not appear in it the action that expresses the feeling of its spirit' (Cod. A 109v). It is through substance that spiritual life must be communicated; and this life must be expressed in a concordant vital motion of the body: 'The painted movement appropriate to the mental state of the figure should be shown with great liveliness . . . if this is not done, such a figure will be called twice dead, for it is dead because the figure is an imitation, and dead again when it does not display motion, either of the mind or body' (*Trattato*, III, 110). And, with arbitrary licence: 'Where natural vitality is lacking, create an artificial one' (Cod. Atl. 147r). The action of the body, or its cause, 'energy, originates in the movement of the spirit . . .' and then inspires the physical form; 'running down through the limbs of conscious animals, it expands their muscles . . .' (Cod. Arundel 151r and v). This inspiration is pervasive in the form: in an untranslatable phrase it is 'tutta in tutto, e tutta per tutto' in the body where it is caused (Cod. Atl. 302v). In the same definition energy is described as incorporeal and weight corporeal, and immediately redefined as spiritual and material. The contrast is of the two realms that Leonardo unifies, in their interaction, in his painting. To this interaction of spiritual and physical being harmonious form must be given, since painting depends 'on the harmonious proportion of the parts [that] pleases the senses' (*Trattato*, I, 11). And this harmony, since it encloses vital forms, must live in itself as music lives harmoniously, in movement: 'Music is not to be called anything other than the sister of painting . . . rhythm circumscribes the proportionality of the members of which harmony is composed not otherwise than the circumferential line surrounds the members of which human beauty is generated' (*Trattato*, I, 16–16v).

There is not, in Leonardo's writings, any central summarizing definition of his art; the work of art itself is his manifest definition. Yet each separate verbal definition of a principle proceeds from an identifiable common conceptual core: to see, within the indissoluble unity of being, a functional equilibrium between substance and spirit, and between immediate experience and general law. Leonardo had no collective name by which to call this new doctrine of style; it was Vasari who described it, two generations later, as the beginning of that 'third manner which we wish to call the modern' (IV, 11). It was not only modern: we have remarked already that there is a deep resemblance between the principles of Leonardo's art and those which govern ancient classic style. However, Leonardo's 'modern' classicism is neither imitation of the ancient style nor purposely recreative of it; it is in no sense a neo-classicism. It was conceived within a pre-existent and contemporary Christian culture that had acquired some of the attitudes of classicism, partly by imitation, but partly also self-generated. Not just the *Adoration* but even the later, entirely developed painting of the High Renaissance betrays that its classicism was born out of, and lives within, a Christian context.

There were phenomena of style in the early Renaissance that had distinguishable elements of classicism; there is a line of descent that we can trace, beginning in Masaccio and ending among Leonardo's contemporaries in Florence and Umbria (Perugino conspicuously but also Ghirlandaio); Piero della Francesca may be said to represent its peak. This early Renaissance classicism bears to the style of Leonardo and the classicism of the High Renaissance a relation which (in terms of analogy) is like that of early classical Greek art to the style of the Greek Golden Age. Leonardo's classicism may

similarly be considered as a maturing of what was potential in his antecedent line. None of these antecedents, however, handled even the single elements of classical style as he does, much less combined them in a comparable whole. Moreover, the style Leonardo formulated does not relate just to the fifteenth century's classicizing strain: it was the result of Leonardo's confrontation with all the possibilities available to art in Florence at the end of the third quarter of the fifteenth century, and these were various and complex, for the most part quite apart from classicism. This diversity – in some respects, quite visible divergence – in sense and style within contemporary art was the raw material on which Leonardo's power of invention worked, and which summoned that invention into being. After more

2. Leonardo da Vinci:
Adoration of the Magi, 1481. *Florence, Uffizi*

than half a century's development of the propositions that had been novel to the early Renaissance, the painters of Florence found themselves involved in a conflict between these ideas and the survival – vigorous, though often in much altered form – of conceptions that were medieval or traditionally Christian in origin. Much too summarily, it may be said that the opposition was between a view which took the first function of art to be that of rationally and objectively describing physical reality and one that held it to be the expression of spiritual – non-rational and subjective – values.[3] The problem was not just one of art; in different terms it had come to be primary among the concerns of contemporary Florentine philosophers. More than they invented a solution to the problem they recast an old one, neo-Platonism, for contemporary use. Leonardo also recognized the problem as it matured in Florence in the years in which he was being educated. The solution he felt it required, however, was of a different kind from the essentially reactionary one the neo-Platonists professed. Leonardo's object was to effect a genuine reconciliation between the values of material and spiritual experience, not a concession of one to the other. To do this it was necessary to revise the conceptions contemporary painters held of both reality and spiritual value, to devise a single principle that contained and controlled both, and to find the means for their concordance. The relation that he sought between them was equal, functional, and synthetic; the means of that relation were to be a rationality of ideas and form, and its governing mode, harmony. We have already seen, in the *Adoration*, the working elements of the solution Leonardo found.

Leonardo's accomplishment of this solution in 1481 was so precocious an event, not only in the artistic but in the general intellectual history of Florence, that it evaded the intelligence of his contemporaries. When he left the city for Milan, late this same year or very early in the next, the unfinished manifesto of the *Adoration* was left behind to bemuse the Florentines. But it was not comprehended until, some two decades later, the more ordinary processes of history caught up with it.

In Milan, where Leonardo remained, in his first long stay, for almost twenty years, his continuing development of his invention of style was still more isolated. His first painting done in Milan, the *Virgin of the Rocks* (Paris, Louvre, commissioned 1483),[4] is a more evolved demonstration of the main ideas the *Adoration* contained, but at the same time it supplies evidence with which we can adjust the effect that the unfinished state of that picture makes. It is in a descriptive skin like that of the *Virgin of the Rocks*, finely worked and rich with passages of detail, that the ideas of the *Adoration* ought to have been clothed. The precise sensibility to seen things is related to the realism of the Quattrocento, but exceeds it, for Leonardo has observed not only the object he describes but its effect of interaction with surrounding atmosphere. What was evident already in the novel use of chiaroscuro in the *Adoration* is affirmed here: that light has been raised to a role in description equal to that of drawing (which, in Leonardo's more developed sfumato, light would quite displace); still more important, it has become a major factor in the making of the whole pictorial scheme. In the *Virgin of the Rocks* chiaroscuro has begun to dominate colour and absorb it, substituting for the analytic effects of quattrocentesque colour a visual continuity, and thus a harmony – which, conversely, takes life from the play of light and dark. The details that are so finely described not only by their drawing but by light no longer stand discrete like products of a Quattrocento realism but are knit into this continuity. In any case, the illusionist details have been incorporated, in the figures, into larger forms that are still more evidently the

results of a reforming will than in the *Adoration*: fuller and more rounding in shape, making an effect of heavier, more deliberated harmony. And in the landscape background from which the picture takes its name the geological details are similarly parts within a whole construction which, though plausible at first sight, does not reproduce reality: it is instead a rearrangement of reality, based – according to Leonardo's own dictum – on observation that probes through natural appearances to find their causes and laws. Knowing exactly not only the outward forms of nature but its laws, Leonardo could re-create, according to his own requirements of expression and design, an image of nature that is at the same time believable and arbitrary; the principle is ultimately the same one that permits him to remake his images of humanity.

A decade's maturing of the new principles lies behind the *Last Supper* (Milan, S. Maria delle Grazie, *c.* 1495–8, now partly ruined),[5] and its instantly visible result is the great increase in the extent and power of Leonardo's reshaping of the evidence of nature. The Apostles, as well as Christ, have been given an extraordinary moral and dramatic stature. Their features and the reactions that their faces show to Christ's pronouncement of His imminent betrayal are boldly cast into moulds of typicality, and their bodies and gestures are generalized in strong, ample curves: their effect is magnified progressively as the figures knit together into groups and the groups into *crescendi* of formal and emotional powers that converge on Christ. These are beings who have been aggrandized in substance and idea beyond the personalities in earlier art. Their setting also remakes nature arbitrarily. The disposition to manipulate the sense of Albertian perspective that Leonardo showed much earlier in the *Adoration* is now absolute: the first effect of thorough plausibility the setting of the *Supper* makes bears proof less than the figures do. Constructed with the usual perspective means, the space is uninhabitable beyond the nearest plane in which the figures are; the devices of perspective have been more essentially applied to the use of serving and supporting what the figures mean and do. What is contained within this frame belongs so evidently to a region of superior existence that the spectator cannot but realize that the picture world, for all its seeming palpable existence, is not meant for him to share as any realist illusion. The strip of tablecloth across the front plane of the picture makes a boundary between our world and the idea.

As the *Last Supper* is related in extent and drama to the early *Adoration*, so is the *Madonna and Child with St Anne*, oppositely intimate, related to the *Virgin of the Rocks*. Still in Milan, Leonardo began to occupy himself with the St Anne theme, which he seems to have considered a vehicle particularly suited in its possibilities of content as well as form to his ideas of style – not only to their exposition but to the process of their continuing refinement. He made three distinct essays on the theme, but rather than as separate works they should be thought of as stages of development of one idea. The first, done in Milan, was carried to the point of a complete cartoon (London, National Gallery, *c.* 1499) [3], but not translated into paint.[6] The second, also a cartoon (now lost, though imitations in paint tell us, quite inadequately, something about how it looked), was the work with which Leonardo reintroduced himself to Florence in 1501, after his return the year before. Vasari tells us (IV, 38) of the astonishment and admiration with which this cartoon was received when Leonardo showed it to the Florentines in SS. Annunziata. He was working at the subject much less for the patron than for his private ends, and he did not turn this cartoon into a picture. Instead, he conceived another, more perfected version of the theme which he began, only about 1505, to set down in paint (Paris, Louvre).

3. Leonardo da Vinci: Virgin, Child, and St Anne, *c.* 1499. *London, National Gallery*

Though we can reconstruct the design of the cartoon of 1501 we cannot presume its effect as an aesthetic object. The chronologically just previous cartoon from Milan must serve in this respect for both. In its concentrated compass it exhibits an effect of unity of form and overt geometry of structure that far exceeds that made by the *Last Supper* and which, as an ideal integer, is altogether of another order from that he had conceived a decade and a half before in the *Virgin of the Rocks*. The shapes in the cartoon are suavely full, slow in rhythmic movement, and artfully interwoven in a new measure, and the relations of proportion among them instantly convey the sense of harmony. In a degree of difference that almost constitutes a new effect, the qualities of form convey a sensuous pleasure to the eye and mind of the beholder. Throughout the cartoon Leonardo demonstrates what he had implied, but not known quite so fully how to say before: that his harmony is now meant not only to impose upon the mind but to enchant the senses so that the work of art shall, literally, be lovely. Leonardo himself would speak (*Trattato*, 1, 5) of 'bellezze che . . . innamorino'. Among his works this is the first where not some portions of a picture but its entirety compels the immediate sensation in the spectator of the beautiful. It is an effect more profoundly revolutionary than may at first appear: in joining to the intellectual ideality of form the conception of a sensuous content to be derived from it Leonardo has achieved what is in effect a re-creation of the sense of beauty as classical antiquity understood and felt it. This re-creation was achieved, as far as we know, with no more specific reference to antique models than we can document for Leonardo in the past. The quality of beauty emerges in the cartoon from its finer harmony of form, but it arises still more from the sense, more pervasive here than in any of Leonardo's prior works, that this harmony is of subtly mobile relations: a new dimension of aesthetic effect has been assumed in the cartoon by what Leonardo himself might have described as a musicality. Not only the bodily forms and draperies but the heads also indicate this same development of a subtle, exquisitely movemented harmony of rounding form. The heads are of a perfection that recalls Praxitelean models which, despite the similitude of their original loveliness that he re-creates, Leonardo cannot have known. The faces wear that veiled radiance we first saw in the angel of the *Baptism*, but it is raised here to a far higher power – stronger, but also more tender, and more vibrantly differentiated in its content of expression. The emanation that is here of love, in the spirit of the persons and in their loveliness of form, makes a relation between the image and the spectator that is an ennoblement and a seduction.

Between the version of the *St Anne* cartoon, about two years later, that Florence saw and the beginning of the Louvre painting Leonardo was occupied with a project of much grander scale than the *Anne* theme, offered him in October 1503, when he was commissioned to paint the *Battle of Anghiari* (won by the Florentines against the Milanese in 1441) for the great Salone of the Palazzo Vecchio. A cartoon was finished by the end of 1504 and painting of the central – and climactic – portion of the history, the *Battle for the Standard*, was begun in June 1505. Using an experimental medium, Leonardo saw his work decay almost as soon as he laid it on the wall, and he abandoned it. The partly executed *Battle for the Standard* was soon lost; the cartoon apparently survived until the eighteenth century. Copies of varying dependability and Leonardo's own preparatory drawings help form an idea of what he planned [4].[7] Apparently the whole painting would have included, in addition to the climax of the *Battle for the Standard* in the centre, episodes subsidiary to it, converging from either side. The basic idea of design was that of a confluence of

4. Leonardo da Vinci:
The Battle of Anghiari (copy). *Florence, Uffizi*

energies upon the picture's centre, where they were interwoven as if in a knot. Leonardo has given due regard to the historical account of the actual battle of Anghiari; however, at the same time he has taken this theme in terms of its typical and essential meaning as no earlier painting of a battle scene had done: as a meeting in a climactic moment, which becomes a fusion, of opposing physical forces and spiritual wills. More than a historical report, Leonardo's *Battle* becomes the vehicle of an idea. The copies of the central portion show, despite the dissimilarity of theme, a close relation with the idea of form that Leonardo had employed for the first two *St Anne* cartoons and a development of it; and beneath the quite opposing modes the essence of expression is the same. Unlike the earlier cartoons, where movement is generated by aesthetic means, the *Standard* group depicts violent and impassioned action, which moves and turns into the space: its whole form seems to expand into a dimension resembling a sphere. This central group accumulates the contending energies of the entire battlefield and knots them in a charged, unitary, compact rotation of forces and forms which, at this moment of intensest conflict, are equal and indissoluble. The accomplishment in the *Battle of Anghiari*, four years after the opening of the new century, is an event of great significance in the history of the classical style that Leonardo had invented. It marks what we shall recognize, as we proceed, to be almost a complete realization of the possibilities of a central idea of classical style: Leonardo has conceived an absolutely compelling unity within which both form and idea work with virtually maximum complexity and at maximum intensity. It is possible to regard the history of classical style for a decade to come as a conquest of the position that Leonardo had already attained here.

Contemporaneously, Leonardo was at work on what would be his definitive formulation in another genre, antithetic to that represented by the grand endeavour of the *Battle*: the portrait – the female portrait, specifically: of Madonna Lisa, wife of Francesco del Giocondo, otherwise *Mona Lisa* (Paris, Louvre, 1503–6). Leonardo does not allow that even the specific and real person who is his sitter is a fact of nature that he may not alter: he has worked upon her appearance and expression with subtle pressures that re-shape them, gently but ineluctably, towards his artistic ends. The result is a synthesis of rare perfection between art and actuality: an image in which a breathing instant and a composure for all time are held in suspension. Sfumato, here developed for the first time in Leonardo's œuvre to the status of a primary pictorial means, supplies a unitary visual stuff in which the matter which makes up the image has been bound. The sfumato is more than a way of seeing forms or relating them to one another; it is also the carrier of an attitude towards content. The sfumato works to melt and soften, yet we may still perceive how subtly – sharply, even, underneath the filming light – the existence of particulars is felt. An almost poignant sense of individual phenomena, coming from his roots in the Quattrocento, persists in Leonardo, and it is particularly evident in some details of form, and above all in the fineness with which Leonardo describes textures, not just of substances but of the very air; and it is also evident in *Mona Lisa*'s personality. But all these are perfectly contained within the discipline of Leonardo's whole idea, and their complementary play within and against it is, finally, further matter Leonardo has suspended in the harmony he has achieved.

The third, painted, version of the *St Anne* theme was Leonardo's last important exercise in painting [5]. Begun late in this stay in Florence, much of its execution – never quite completed – post-dated Leonardo's definitive return, early in 1508, to Milan. The Paris painting is the concluding episode of its series and (except for one mysterious later work) exhausts the possibilities Leonardo was able to develop from his own long-previous invention of a classical style. Leonardo applies to this *St Anne* the breadth of form and variety of articulation in space that he had evolved for the *Anghiari*, but transposes their effects of expression into an appropriately different key. He makes a quality of movement in the forms that is unsurpassably melodious: a visible *cantilena* that ranges from full sweeping arcs to finest ornament, and in which all the rhythms are continuous or interwoven. The figures that compose the major rhythms are at the same time richly differentiated and inescapably interlocked into a larger form that is a containing integer. Its shape compounds the oval design of the first *St Anne* cartoon with the pyramidal design Leonardo worked out for the second. The effect of balance and stability, containing and controlling movement, is as sure as in the cartoons, but it is both more complex in artifice and deceptively more natural-seeming.

The setting for the figures has been worked dependently around them, an obbligato to the figured theme. Landscape space has no independent rationale, no measurable distance, and no perspective shape. Not only its forms but the content that emanates from it are ancillary to the figure group. But while the landscape is accessory to the figures, it is seen also as a matrix out of which they grow. The light and the content of colour the light carries are described as if, in natural truth, they belong to the landscape. Its muted colours, made just sufficiently more explicit, become those of the figures' draperies, making a pervasive coloristic

5. Leonardo da Vinci: Virgin, Child, and St Anne. *Paris, Louvre*

texture. This texture of colour is inextricable from the atmosphere in which it is suspended, vibrant with subtly nuanced energies of light. Colour, and the forms that half-absorb, half-emanate it, is seen as if in a living aether, muted by it but growing out of it as well. A union of setting and its contents, indeed of the whole pictorial experience of vision, is determined in the *St Anne* by this ultimate development in it of the Leonardesque sfumato – in the wholly finished passages within the painting, more sophisticated even than in the *Mona Lisa*. But where in the *Mona Lisa* the sfumato light had virtually consumed colour, in the *St Anne* colour re-emerges, renascent from the light, to claim a role again within the tissue that is woven, in Leonardo's art, into a harmony. In this tissue of a vital harmony which the *St Anne* painting makes Leonardo has projected a meaning that was, for him, partly the consequence of his science, partly the fruit of the intuition he had come to hold of the nature of the world. The *St Anne* is (in Leonardo's own language) the finally effective act of 'transmutation of the mind of the painter into the very mind of nature' and the 'commentary in art of nature's demonstrations as they are determined by its laws' (*Trattato*, I, 24v): it has acquired the virtue of a symbol of his understanding of the process and mode of functioning of nature. The close-meshed, endlessly interwoven, vitally acting and reacting harmony of this picture is the visible pattern of Leonardo's comprehension of his world: not just of the earth that he inhabits but of the universe whose laws the earth reflects in small. This image of persons and an earthly landscape is an image also of the mode of being and the mode of movement of the spheres: it is Leonardo's realization in art of his vision of the cosmos.

In one sense, the generalization that this symbol holds is vaster and higher than any that the subsequent history of classical art will attain. But in another, the matter upon which it has been made contains the limitation of Leonardo's possibilities of any different avenue of development of classical style than this one, in its own way ultimate, that he has achieved. This is an ultimate of classical thought, but it is not the only one; if Leonardo's were the only possible conception of a classicism, all other artists of the High Renaissance would have been condemned, from this time on, to uncreative recapitulation of his accomplishment. It is his very preoccupation with the world as an experience and interpretation of nature, an experience as much that of the scientist as of the humanist, that closed to Leonardo the further possible directions of development, more exclusively (in the literal sense) humanist, which the younger generation would explore. This naturalism, transformed long since beyond its origins in the Quattrocento, still relates Leonardo to the period out of which his art had come. He retains, within his prodigious capacity for inducing generalizations, the sense of the specific identity of each phenomenon of experience that is acute in the *Mona Lisa*, and of which the evidence is still ample in the last *St Anne*, and this identity is too precious a datum for him to surrender wholly. The synthesis that his painting attempts, and in fact achieves, is of an almost defeating complexity. It has, so to speak, no limits either in the cosmic or in the infinitesimal sense.

It is not only physical data to which he responded thus; it is the data of human emotion also. For Leonardo, emotion is – in his own terms of intellectual redefinition – the apt response to specified situations. There are spheres of comprehension of peculiarly human idea and aspiration – of exalted, wholly internally generated, states of spirit and of mind – that he did not invade: Michelangelo's way of a transcendent thought about humanity is closed to him. So also, in this very private communion with experience that is Leonardo's way of making art, is he closed off from the realm of public rhetoric, with its burden of grand and surpassing emotions, that was to be the basis for Raphael's highest acts of classical style. There is a touch still, within Leonardo's poetic transformation of the art of fifteenth-century Florence, of some of its familiar attitudes of mind. The style he invented would develop, still within his lifetime, into regions into which Leonardo, at last bound by generation and by place, could not move.

In Milan until 1513, Leonardo's attention was engaged in seemingly more multiple directions than ever, and especially in the pursuit of his scientific researches. He may have become less involved with painting (though he drew, of course, incessantly, his science being of phenomena he could explore by visual or graphic means). No major new work of painting was begun in these Milanese years, nor did he finish wholly any old one.[8] Late in 1513 Leonardo went to Rome, invited by Pope Leo X; but no evidence exists of the two small paintings which, according to Vasari (IV, 47), he painted during three years there. One work invented in this late time survives, the half-length *St John the Baptist* (Paris, Louvre), obscured now so that its idea, but not much else, is comprehensible. Despite the ferment of activity in art around him, Leonardo seems to have stood quite apart from the contemporary Roman scene: he worked by now, more than ever, in a private realm. In January 1517 another honorific invitation, from the new French King, François I, brought Leonardo to live near François' court, at Amboise; he died there two years later, in May 1519. The end of Leonardo's career, like its beginning, was isolated, completing the image that comes to mind of an intersection with his contemporary history like a comet's, on an eccentric orbit and only briefly coincident with it, but of extraordinary brightness.

MICHELANGELO

Born in 1475, Michelangelo was Leonardo's junior by the rough measure of a generation. The angel Leonardo painted in Verrocchio's *Baptism* is datable about the time of Michelangelo's birth, and the unfinished *Adoration* from Michelangelo's fifth year. When Michelangelo was receiving his formative education in art, first in painting with Domenico Ghirlandaio, then in sculpture under the guidance of Bertoldo di Giovanni, Leonardo was in Milan. In Florence in the 1490s only Michelangelo was competent to gather Leonardo's entire meaning, in the *Adoration* or in the other sparse evidence of new style he left behind; but Leonardo's precedents were not, in any way that we can document, instrumental in Michelangelo's creation of a comparable new classicism. The process by which Michelangelo formed his classical style was unlike Leonardo's: where Leonardo's invention was made wholly in response to the situation of contemporary art and with its data, Michelangelo's was generated out of reference to the past. In both artists, of course, the act of invention was the consequence of discontent with what their environments offered them of style, which in Florence in the interval between the seventies and nineties had become still more divergent and diffuse. Within this contemporary complexity, Michelangelo was disposed from the beginning towards a retrospective and at the same time classicizing attitude towards style. In Ghirlandaio's workshop he was exposed to an end-product, however paled and prosified, of the Florentine tradition that began in Masaccio – the origin of early classicism in Tuscan painting. In his study of the frescoes of the Carmine, obligatory for all apprentices of the time, Michelangelo found the source of this tradition and, temperamentally akin to Masaccio, regenerated it for his own art.

On his transfer to Bertoldo's school of sculpture, Michelangelo grew to know, by study of antique works, the ancient sources that had contributed to the forming of Masaccio's classicism.[9] And Michelangelo brought to his study of antique sculpture some literary knowledge of antiquity also, acquired in his frequentation of the humanists of the Palazzo Medici when, in the early nineties, he lived there as a privileged Medici protégé. Other young painters in the later eighties and the early nineties had an education with much the same classical components; only on Michelangelo, however, did it have a profoundly classical effect. In his first sculptured works he showed that his response to antique models was as if to the classic essence that they might contain, remaking it out of the intimations offered to him by an ancient copy or a ruin. His evolution of his classical style was a process in which he illuminated the meaning of the classicism in those imperfect ancient works he knew, while that illumination reciprocally helped him further to create his own.

Much in Michelangelo's early education in the arts was classicizing, but it was by no means all such, no more than were the other artistic aspects of his upbringing. He was early exposed in the Medici circle to the mixed, but eventually Christian, doctrine of neo-Platonism, with effect sufficient for his thinking later almost always to bear its impress. To the spiritual incitement of neo-Platonism there was added the impact – to that depth which Michelangelo's own confession bears witness – of the preaching of Savonarola, whose beginnings in Florence coincide with the time of Michelangelo's early art. In the field of Quattrocento artistic accomplishment that was most relevant to Michelangelo, sculpture, the most demanding precedent was that of Donatello, whose range of expression had embraced the extremes possible to the early Renaissance mentality. It seems that Michelangelo's comprehension of classical example was promoted – in an only apparent paradox – by the unclassical aspects of his education and contemporary cultural environment. It was from his intense spiritual being, initially Christian in its form and orientation, that there emerged his perception that antique art was spiritually inhabited: that it was not, as for some of his contemporaries, merely a repository of recipes for naturalism, or, as it was for others, a dictionary of quotations.

We can identify nothing certainly of Michelangelo's painting that might have belonged to his earliest years. Until the *Holy Family* for Angelo Doni [6], begun at the earliest in 1503, we know only sculpture by him and some drawings, the latter few in number. To grasp how he conceived the style of which the Doni Tondo is already rather an advanced expression we must look to some of the preceding work in sculpture and at least summarily assess the ideas that are at work in them. They contain no such striking look of novelty as is in Leonardo's early works: the retrospective route by which Michelangelo evolved the bases for his style moderates its effect of inventiveness. None the less, the invention is there from the discernible beginning, as unmistakable as it had been in Leonardo and resembling it in essence. The *Madonna of the Steps* (Florence, Casa Buonarroti, *c.* 1495)[10] makes an almost reactionary reference to precedents in Donatello, and at the same time, in heavy dignity of form and clarity of order, depends on Masaccio: the dignity of one model has been used to correct the intensity of the other. A powerful but generalized and restrained spiritual content has been synthesized effectively with a massive gravity of form. The concord between form and content is in their mutual grave power, and a device for binding them together has been found in the rhythmic mode of the design: a slow-weaving, rounding continuity, inspired with a controlled force. Details of description, for all their fineness, are subsumed within the generalization of design. The nascent but already explicit character of classicism in this relief shows little that may be specifically dependent upon ancient art, but the sense of a relation with the antique style is so strong as to have suggested the possibility of Michelangelo's knowledge of antique stelae (perhaps indirectly, in a gem). In any case it is clear that the process of reciprocal illumination between Michelangelo and antique art had already begun.

The fuller emergence of a classical style in Michelangelo depended on the completion of this illumination. What could be learned of antique art in Florence did not suffice for this; it required the experience of Rome. Michelangelo went there in mid 1496, and within the next year made the life-size *Bacchus* (Florence, Bargello): a reconstitution of an ancient classical style which is, in the same instant, the absolute constitution of a modern classicism. Because it is a creation as much as it is a re-creation, its classicism is not interchangeable with that of antiquity. Within its mould of antique form and subject matter the *Bacchus* makes a unity between things which, in the course of Christian culture, had become polarities: human substance and its content of the spirit. The spiritual presence of the *Bacchus* is felt not only in his countenance and gesture but in his flesh, which spirit seems to pervade and infuse. It makes a unity, but not the effect of an indissoluble essence we perceive in authentic ancient classic art. For all the beauty and idea of worth attached to the physical – even sensual – being of the *Bacchus*, it is still a vessel for a separable spirit, which we know here by a subtlety of psychic state – a controlled febrility – that exists in no ancient prototype. This reconstitution of a classical unity is not only different from the classicism of antiquity in the fact that it is a reconstitution; its difference will continue to be marked by the self-conscious effort needed to sustain the artifice it is and the aspiration of modern classical culture it represents.

The same conviction of spiritual presence finds easier habitation within traditionally Christian themes, as in Michelangelo's *Pietà* (Rome, St Peter's, 1498–9), which is no less sincerely Christian than the works of the Savonarolan Botticelli. The feeling Michelangelo depicts is no less profound than Botticelli's might be, but it is contained by an ennobling dignity. As in Leonardo's actors in the *Last Supper*, which is contemporary, in Michelangelo's Virgin there is the sense of a dimension of humanity grander than our own, and this is not only of a psychic but of a consonant physical presence. The sculpture is inevitably less complex than Leonardo's fresco, but it reveals in almost all essential aspects that Michelangelo has attained a stage in the formation of a classical style comparable to Leonardo's, drawing almost abreast of the older man's development of more than two decades.

Nevertheless, when on his return to Florence in May 1501 Michelangelo encountered the living and contemporary fact of Leonardo's art, he found it an important guide, less towards wholly new ideas than towards a new stage in the evolution of conceptions that Michelangelo had already entertained. He was prepared, now, as well as willing to profit from Leonardo's demonstrations, but with an essential reservation: Michelangelo could not accept – or, more exactly, could not but reject – the ideal of humanity formed by Leonardo's temperament and the tenor of expression that went with it. The attention that Michelangelo directed to Leonardo's style was to the core in it of formal structure. Probably as soon as he had seen Leonardo's *St Anne* cartoon of 1501, Michelangelo paraphrased it, with much vigour but no trace of Leonardo's grace, in a drawing (Oxford, Ashmolean) that is concerned mainly with the working of form into a compact interwoven unity. About 1504, the chief work in painting that Michelangelo was to execute in this Florentine phase, the tondo *Holy Family* for Angelo

6. Michelangelo:
Doni Holy Family.
Florence, Uffizi

Doni (Florence, Uffizi) [6], is, in all but its exact subject matter, still visibly related to Leonardo's cartoon, and the nature of the relation is at once of dependence and of rivalry. Michelangelo seems to have set himself the task of bettering Leonardo's solution to the problem of classical structure – in Leonardo's own terms first, but also in a transposition of them into the preference that Michelangelo had by now conceived, even when he might be painting, for the terms of sculpture. The cartoon of 1501 affords the basis of design of the Doni painting: in particular Leonardo's device is re-used here of including one main form not only in the silhouette but within the spatial embrace of the form behind. Michelangelo had already probably adapted it from Leonardo, but in more rudimentary fashion, for the design of his sculptured *Bruges Madonna*. As in Leonardo's model, Michelangelo imposes a continuous contour on his painted group, and further reinforces its effect by reference to the containing shape of the round frame. Then, in a way that seems more consciously aggressive than in a work of actual sculpture, he defines the plastic existence of the painted group and its parts by intensest modelling and deep excavation; he then joins these parts into a connected sequence as if they were interdependent pieces of a single mass of stone. In this sculptural language he creates an absolutely compact, deeply differentiated unity, of a force of impact far beyond that of Leonardo's model. Also exploiting a precedent in that cartoon with his sculptor's sense, Michelangelo has developed the former's mode of moving form in space into an assertive spatial contrapposto, which will reappear constantly in his succeeding works.

The structure of the Doni Tondo reveals a development, on a basis afforded by Leonardo but exceeding it, of a principle of classical style: it is a progress in the exposition of controlled energy internally articulating a unity of form. The classicism of the picture is, however, almost confined to this character of structure: it was not created with a pervasive classicism of state of mind. It is a statement only relatively meant that the expression of the subject matter, unlike that of the Roman *Pietà* or the *Bruges Madonna*, verges on the conventional. In this, the tondo seems almost to recall Michelangelo's first master, Ghirlandaio; also recollective of that first training is a hard clarity of technique and a tendency to precise description of detail. Colour, too, is based on Ghirlandaiesque precedent, but with stresses of clarity and intensity that in places make it as assertive as the plastic form to which it adheres. The ideal realized in the design of the tondo is not matched, then, either in the spiritual content of the actors or in their more specific elements of form. But these disparities cannot impede the sheer force, of idea and form, that Michelangelo has found for his design: its content, a concentrated unity of vital power, holds more and higher expressive meaning than the persons in it.[11]

The relation of Michelangelo to Leonardo, of dependence and rivalry at once, that is implicit in the Doni Tondo became overt late in 1504 and in 1505. Just as Leonardo was completing his cartoon for the *Battle of Anghiari*, Michelangelo received the commission, in August 1504, for a companion piece to decorate the great Salone of the Palazzo Vecchio: its subject, the surprise attack in 1364 of Pisans on Florentine troops bathing in the Arno near the town of Cascina, which the Florentines turned into a victory.[12] The direct confrontation with Leonardo compelled Michelangelo to study what the former had done and perhaps to make some kind of accommodation to it. The formative influence of Leonardo's battle piece on Michelangelo's is unmistakable, but the distinction between them emerges still more strongly. Michelangelo's scene betrays a persistent link with Quattrocento modes of thought, and on this account with Quattrocentesque elements of style (as in Signorelli). Unlike Leonardo, for Michelangelo the subject 'battle' held no ideal or essential sense; what he found in it was a pretext for an exercise in dealing with anatomy in action. Painting or not, he confronted this narrative with a sculptor's mind and in sculptor's terms. His conception of the *Cascina* in this most anthropocentric sense implies a kind of ideality, but one narrower than Leonardo's and also less synthetic. Instead of a meeting, as in the *Anghiari*, between artist and subject there has been a constraint of the subject to the artist's interests and will. Michelangelo confronts us with a set of virtuoso demonstrations of a sculptor's supreme formal knowledge, and it is his pride that is the most pervasive and convincing content of the picture. We feel the assertiveness of Michelangelo's genius, which wills not only to com-