

Fig. 1. Botticelli
The Birth of Venus
Florence, Uffizi (see p. 95)

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Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and *Spring*

An Examination of Concepts of
Antiquity in the Italian Early Renaissance
(1893)

*Dedicated to Hubert Janitschek and Adolf Michaelis
in Grateful Memory of Their Joint Achievement*

Prefatory Note

This work sets out to adduce, for purposes of comparison with Sandro Botticelli's celebrated mythological paintings, the *Birth of Venus*¹ and *Spring*,² the analogous ideas that appear in contemporary art theory and poetic literature, and thus to exemplify what it was about antiquity that "interested" the artists of the Quattrocento. It is possible to trace, step by step, how the artists and their advisers recognized "the antique" as a model that demanded an intensification of outward movement, and how they turned to antique sources whenever accessory forms—those of garments and of hair—were to be represented in motion. *

It may be added that this evidence has its value for psychological aesthetics in that it enables us to observe, within a milieu of working artists, an emerging sense of the aesthetic act of "empathy" as a determinant of style.³ *



* *Chapter 1: The Birth of Venus*

The *Birth of Venus*, the smaller of the two paintings, was seen by Vasari, together with *Spring*, in Duke Cosimo's Villa Castello:

*Per la città, in diverse case fece tondi di sua mano, e femmine ignude assai; delle quale oggi ancora a Castello, villa del Duca Cosimo, sono due quadri figurati, l'uno, Venere che nasce, e quelle aure e venti che la fanno venire in terra con gli Amori; e così un'altra Venere, che le Grazie la fioriscono, dinotando la primavera; le quali da lui con grazia si veggono espresse.*⁴

In several houses in this city, he painted tondi with his own hand, and also a number of female nudes. Two of these paintings are still in Duke Cosimo's villa at Castello: a Venus being born, and the breezes and winds bringing her ashore, with Cupids; and another Venus with the Graces, who deck her with flowers, denoting Spring. Both are expressed with grace.

The Italian catalog of the Uffizi gives the following description:

*La nascita di Venere. La Dea sta uscendo da una conchiglia nel mezzo del mare. A sinistra sono figurati due Venti che volando sulle onde spingono la Dea presso la riva; a destra è una giovane che rappresenta la Primavera. — T. grand nat.*⁵

The birth of Venus. The goddess is stepping out of a shell in the midst of the sea. On the left are two winds flying across the waves and propelling the goddess towards the strand. On the right a young woman representing Spring. Life-size.

Recent critical writing has adduced two separate works of literature as analogies. Julius Meyer, in the text to the Berlin Gallery volume,⁶ refers to the

* *Homeric Hymn:*

It is highly likely that Botticelli knew the ancient account of the birth of Venus in the second *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, and that he based his representation upon it. The *Homeric Hymns* were printed from a Florentine manuscript as early as 1488,⁷ and it is to be assumed that their content was known in humanist circles in Florence, and to the classically educated Lorenzo in particular, well before that date.

For his part, Gaspary, in his *Italienische Literaturgeschichte*,⁸ remarks that there are affinities between Botticelli's painting and the description of a sculptural relief of the birth of Venus in the *Giostra* of Poliziano.⁹ Both of these indications point in the same direction, since Poliziano's description was inspired by the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*.

The plausible supposition that the *concetto* was given to Botticelli by Poliziano himself, the erudite friend of Lorenzo de' Medici (for whom, according to Vasari, Botticelli painted a Pallas),¹⁰ is made into a certainty by

the fact that, as will be shown, the painter departs from the *Homeric Hymn* at exactly the same points as the poet.

Poliziano imagines a series of reliefs, masterpieces by the hand of Vulcan himself, arranged in two rows on the piers that flank the portal of Venus's palace, and framed by an ornamental border of acanthus leaves, flowers, and birds. The reliefs in the first series are allegories of cosmogony,¹¹ ending with the birth of Venus; those in the second series display the power of Venus,¹² as instanced by a dozen classic examples. The birth of Venus, and her reception on earth and on Olympus, are described in stanzas 99–103:

99 *Nel tempestoso Egeo in grembo a Teti
Si vede il fusto genitale accolto
Sotto diverso volger di pianeti
Errar per l'onde in bianca schiuma avvolto;
E dentro nata in atti vaghi e lieti
Una donzella non con uman volto,
Da' zefiri lascivi spinta a proda
Gir sopra un nicchio, e par ch'el ciel ne goda.*

100 *Vera la schiuma e vero il mar diresti,
E vero il nicchio e ver soffiâr di venti:
La dea negli occhi folgorar vedresti,
E'l ciel ridergli a torno e gli elementi:
L'Ore premer l'arena in bianche vesti;
L'aura incresparle e' crin distesi e lenti:
Non una non diversa esser lor faccia,
Come par che a sorelle ben confaccia.*

101 *Giurar potresti che dell'onde uscisse
La dea premendo con la destra il crino,
Con l'altra il dolce pomo ricoprissi;
E, stampata dal piè sacro e divino,
D'erbe e di fior la rena si vestisse;
Poi con sembiante lieto e peregrino
Dalle tre ninfe in grembo fusse accolta,
E di stellato vestimento involta.*

102 *Questa con ambe man le tien sospesa
Sopra l'umide trecce una ghirlanda
D'oro e di gemme orientali accesa:
Questa una perla agli orecchi accomanda:
L'altra al bel petto e bianchi omeri intesa
Par che ricchi monili intorno spanda,
De' quai solean cerciar lor proprie gole
Quando nel ciel guidavon le carole.*

- 103 *Indi paion levate in vèr le spere
Seder sopra una nuvola d'argento:
L'aer tremante ti parría vedere
Nel duro sasso, e tutto 'l ciel contento;
Tutti li dei di sua beltà godere
E del felice letto aver talento;
Ciascun sembrar nel volto meraviglia,
Con fronte crespa e rilevate ciglia.*
- 99 In the storm-tossed Aegean, in Tethys' lap,
Floats now the procreant stem of Uranus,
Beneath the sundry wheeling planets tossed
By waves, and with white foam encompassed round.
Within the foam is born, in joy and grace,
A maiden of no human countenance.
By wanton zephyrs driven to the shore,
She rides upon a shell, to heaven's delight.
- 100 Real the foam, and real the sea you'd say
And real the shell, and real the breezes' breath;
You'd see the goddess blaze before your eyes,
And sky and elements greet her in turn.
The Horae, all in white, now tread the strand;
The wind toys with their loose and flowing hair;
Their faces look alike, yet not the same,
Just as it seems that sisters ought to be.
- 101 And now you'd swear that from the waves came forth
The goddess; she, her right hand to her hair,
Covering the sweet apple with her left;
And everywhere her heavenly footsteps fall,
Grasses and flowers spring blooming from the sands.
Then, with a singular and joyful grace,
The three nymphs welcome her with open arms,
Wrapping her form about with starry robe.
- 102 One nymph holds high, in both her hands, aloft
Above the goddess's moist hair, a wreath
Flashing with gold and oriental gems.
The second sets a pearl on either ear;
The third now seems to coil, around her breast
And shoulders white, the same rich necklaces
That they themselves once wore about their own
Fair necks, in heaven when they led the dance.

- 103 Now they seem lifted upward to the spheres,
 Seated aloft upon a silver cloud.
 On the hard rock you seem to see the air
 Shimmer, and all the heavens are beguiled;
 You seem to see the gods admire her beauty,
 Longing to share the pleasures of her bed;
 Each seems to stare in wonder at the sight,
 With puckered forehead and with eyebrows raised.

Compare this with the description in the *Homeric Hymn*:

Aphrodite the fair, the chaste, will I sing, she with the golden wreath, who rules the towers of sea-girt Cyprus, whither she was conveyed by the swelling breath of Zephyrus, on the waves of the turbulent sea, in soft, flocculent foam; and the Horae, with golden diadems, received her with joy, and dressed her in divine garments, and set upon her head her beautiful golden chaplet, and hung in her tresses flowers wrought in metal and costly gold. Her graceful neck and her radiant, snowy bosom they hung with the chains of gold that had adorned the Horae themselves, the gold-garlanded Horae, when they attended the gracious round dance of the gods and the palace of their father.¹³

The action in the Italian poem, as will be seen, broadly follows that of the *Homeric Hymn*; in both, Venus, as she rises from the sea, is carried on shore by Zephyrus, there to be received by the goddesses of the seasons.

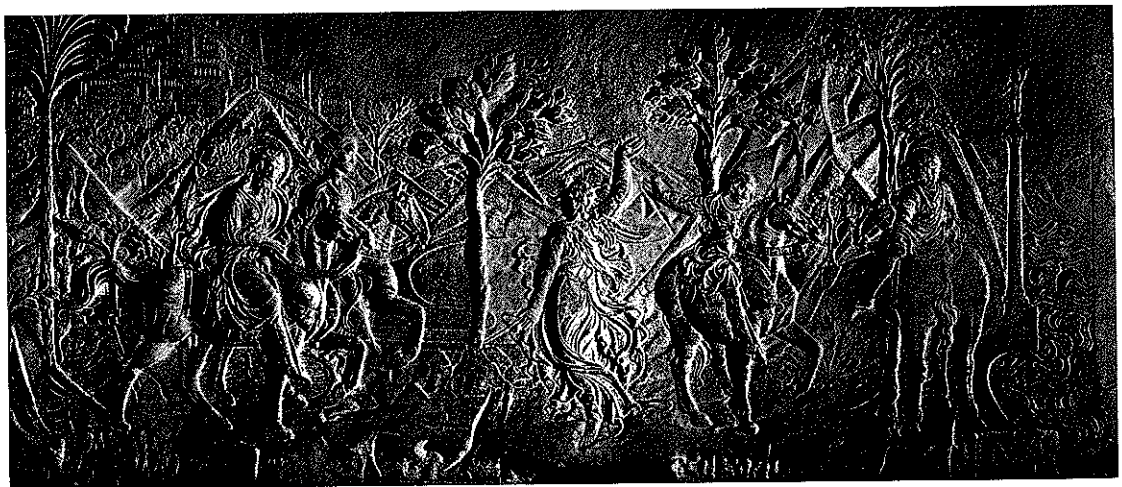
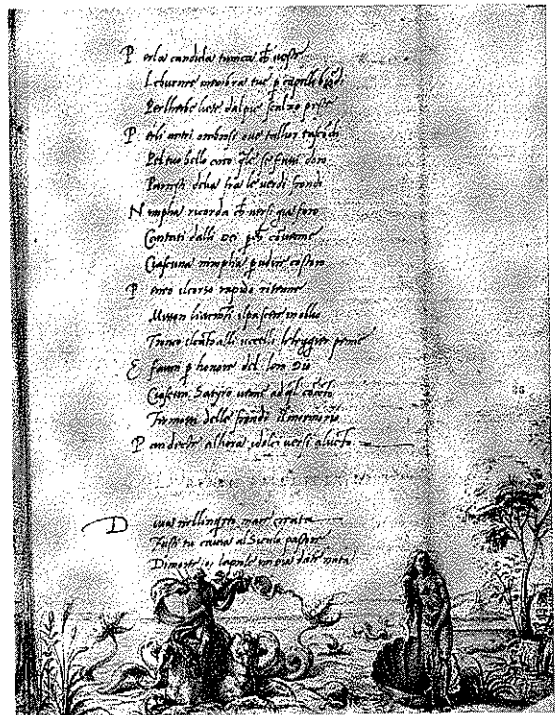
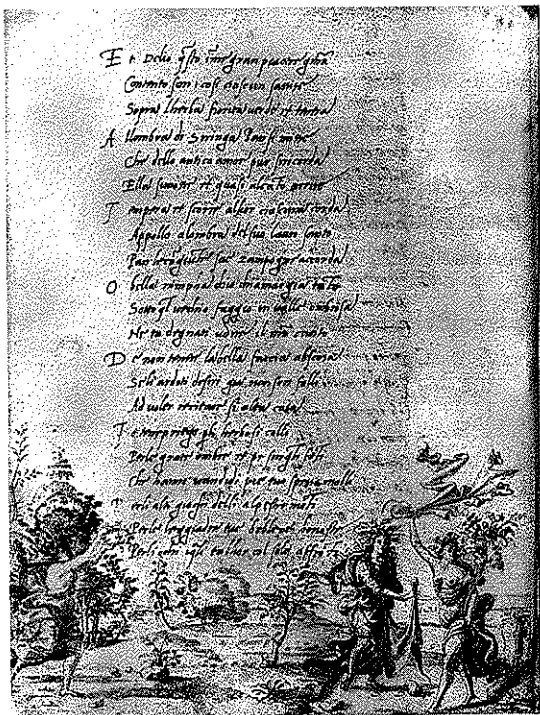
Poliziano's original additions are almost entirely limited to the delineation of details and accessories, on which the poet dwells in order to make us believe in the startling accuracy of the works of art that he is describing. These additions can be summarized as follows:

A number of winds, who are seen blowing ("*vero il soffiare di venti*"), propel Venus, who stands on a shell ("*vero il nicchio*") to the shore, where three Horae receive her and adorn her, not only with the chains and necklaces of which the *Homeric Hymn* also speaks, but with a "starry mantle." The wind plays in the white garments of the Horae and tousles their loose, flowing hair (100, 4-5). It is this windswept detail that the poet praises as the deception created by an exercise of artistic virtuosity:

100,2 ...*e ver soffiare di venti*
 (... and real the breezes' breath)

100,3 ...*vedresti*
 (... You'd see)

100,5 *L'Ore premer l'arena in bianche vesti;*
L'aura incresparle e' crin distesi e lenti
 (The Horae, all in white, now tread the strand;
 The wind toys with their loose and flowing hair)



Figs. 2a,b. Birth of Venus

Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Plut. XLI, 33, fols. 35v, 36r (see p. 95)

Fig. 3. Agostino di Duccio

Scene from the Life of Saint Sigismund
Milan, Museo Archeologico (see p. 97)

103,3 *L'aer tremante ti parría vedere*

Nel duro sasso...

(On the hard rock you seem to see the air

Shimmer...)

The action in Botticelli's painting proceeds just as in the poem, except that Venus,¹⁴ on her shell, covers her breast with her right (instead of her left) hand, holding her long hair to her with her left, and that she is greeted not by three Horae in white garments but by a single female figure in a colored, floral dress girt with a rose branch.

However, so close is the repetition of Poliziano's detailed account of accessory forms in motion that a link between the two works can be taken as certain. In the painting, not only are there two round-cheeked zephyrs, "whose blowing is seen," but the dress and hair of the goddess who stands on the shore are flying in the wind, as are Venus's own hair¹⁵ and the mantle that is to cover her.

Both works of art thus paraphrase the *Homeric Hymn*; but Poliziano's poem still contains three Horae, and in the painting they have been combined into one. This shows the poem to be chronologically earlier and closer to the original source; the painting is the later and freer version. If a direct derivation is to be assumed, the poet was thus the giver, and the painter was the receiver.¹⁶ The inference that Poliziano advised Botticelli also tallies with the tradition that he was a source of inspiration for Raphael and for Michelangelo.¹⁷

The concern—equally conspicuous in the poem and in the painting—with capturing the transitory movements of hair and garments, corresponds to a tendency prevalent among Northern Italian artists from the first third of the fifteenth century onward, which finds its most telling expression in Alberti's *Libro della pittura*.¹⁸ Springer drew attention to this passage in the context of Botticelli's wind gods in the *Birth of Venus*;¹⁹ and Robert Vischer cites it in his *Luca Signorelli*.²⁰ It reads as follows:

Dilettano nei capelli, nei crini, ne' rami, frondi et veste vedere qualche movimento. Quanto certo ad me piace nei capelli vedere quale io dissi sette movimenti: volgansi in uno giro quasi volendo anodarsi et ondeggino in aria simile alle fiamme, parte quasi come serpe si tessano fra li altri, parte crescendo in quà et parte in là. Così i rami ora in alto si torcano, ora in giù, ora in fuori, ora in dentro, parte si contorcano come funi. A medesimo ancora le pieghe facciano; et nascano le pieghe come al troncho dell' albero i suo' rami. In queste adunque si seguano tutti i movimenti tale che parte niuna del panno sia senza vacuo movimento. Ma siano, quanto spesso ricordo i movimenti moderati et dolci, piu tosto quali porgano gratia ad chi miri, che maraviglia di fatica alcuna. Ma dove così vogliamo ad i panni suoi movimenti sendo i panni di natura gravi et continuo cadendo a terra, per questo starà bene in la pictura porvi la faccia del vento Zeffiro o Austro che soffi fra le nuvole onde i panni ventoleggino. Et quindi verrà ad quella gratia, che i corpi da questa

parte percossi dal vento sotto i panni in buona parte mostreranno il nudo, dall'altra parte i panni gettati dal vento dolce voleranno per aria, et in questo ventoleggiare guardi il pittore non ispiegare alcuno panno contro il vento.

It is pleasing to see some movement in hair, locks, boughs, leafy fronds, and garments. As I said, I myself take pleasure in seeing seven different movements of the hair: hair should twist as if trying to break loose from its ties and rippling in the air like flames, some of it weaving in and out like vipers in a nest, some swelling here, some there. Branches should twist upward, then downward, outward and then inward, contorting like ropes. Folds should do the same: folds should grow like branches from the trunk of a tree. They should follow every movement, rippling, so that no part of the garment is still. These should be gentle, moderate movements, as I frequently remind you, appearing to the onlooker as something pleasurable rather than as an effort to be marveled at. Where it is required to depict billowing garments, and where these are heavy and hang down to the feet; it is a good idea to portray in that painting the heads of the winds, Zephyrus or Auster, among the clouds, blowing the garments. Therefore, a graceful touch will be for the body beneath the garments, on the side struck by the wind, to reveal its nude form; on the other side the garments will fly in the air, blown by the gentle wind; and, in this billowing, the painter must take care not to show any drapery as moving against the wind.

- * This rule of Alberti's shows both imagination and reflection in equal proportions. On the one hand, he is glad to see hair and garments in marked movement, and he gives rein to his fancy, attributing organic life to inanimate accessory forms; at such moments he sees snakes tangling, flames licking, or the branches of a tree. On the other hand, however, Alberti expressly insists that in depicting such motifs the painter keep his analogical wits about him sufficiently to avoid being tempted into unnatural excess, and that he set his accessory forms in motion only where the wind really might have caused such motion. This cannot be done, however, without one concession to the imagination: the youthful human heads that the painter is to show blowing, in order to account for the motion of hair and garments, are no more and no less than a compromise between anthropomorphic imagination and analogical reflection.

Alberti finished his *Libro della pittura*, dedicated to Brunelleschi, by 1435.²¹ Not long after that, and still in the mid-fifteenth century, Agostino di Duccio filled the hair and drapery of the figures in his allegorical reliefs for the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini with a positively Mannerist liveliness of movement.²² According to Valturi's account of Sigismondo Malatesta's attitude to the works of art in his chapel, the content and form of these should be seen as the product of learned reflection:

...amplissimis praesertim parietibus, permultisque altissimis arcibus peregrino marmore exedificatis, quibus lapideae tabulae vestiuntur, quibus pulcherrime

*sculptae inspiciuntur, unaque sanctorum patrum, virtutum quatuor, ac caelestis Zodiaci signorum, Errantiumque syderum, sybillarum deinde Musarumque et aliarum permultarum nobilium rerum imagines, quae nedum praeclaro lapicidae ac sculptoris artificio, sed etiam cognitione formarum, liniamentis abs te acutissimo et sine ulla dubitatione clarissimo huius seculi principe ex abditis philosophiae penetrabilibus sumptis, intuentes litterarum peritos et a vulgo fere penitus alienos maxime possint allicere.*²³

...especially in its generous walls and many high arches built of exotic marble, clad with tablets of stone, on which are seen beautifully sculpted images assembled together, of the holy Fathers and the four Virtues, and the signs of the heavenly zodiac and the planets, of the Sibyls and the Muses, and of a great many other fine things, which—not only through the splendid workmanship of the stone-cutter and sculptor, but also through knowledge of the forms, because you (the most intelligent and undoubtedly the most brilliant prince of our time) took their designs from the deep recesses of philosophy—most powerfully attract those beholders who are steeped in learning and almost total strangers to the common run of men.

Alberti was the architect of the whole church, whose construction he supervised in every detail;²⁴ there is nothing to bar the assumption that he was the inspirer of these figures, with their agitated motion, which is entirely in keeping with his ideas.

In the uppermost relief by Agostino di Duccio on the left-hand side of the facade of S. Bernardino in Perugia, F. Winter has pointed to an antique source for the fluttering garments of one female figure,²⁵ a Hora seen from the back. This source is the celebrated krater in Pisa,²⁶ the very same vase from which Nicola Pisano borrowed the Dionysus for his pulpit reliefs in the Pisa Baptistery;²⁷ Donatello had used the same male figure for an apostle on the principal door of S. Lorenzo.²⁸ Might not Donatello have taken the Hora on the Pisan krater, with her slightly bent head, as the source for the Cappadocian princess on the relief below his statue of Saint George on Orsanmichele?²⁹

A number of other verifiable antique allusions are to be found in the work of Agostino di Duccio. Thus, Winter considers that the episodes from the life of Saint Bernardine, in Perugia, recall the compositions on Roman sarcophagi.³⁰ Jahn, in an account of the Medea sarcophagi,³¹ illustrates a figure from the Codex Pighianus in Berlin³² in which Medea stands before the tree with the dragon; above her head is a garment billowing out spherically. The same motif, a rare one in this form, recurs in Perugia in the woman who stands on the shore, in front of Saint Bernardine and behind two women with a child. It is quite likely that the sarcophagus was already standing in front of SS. Cosma e Damiano, and that it was drawn there.

The angel on Agostino di Duccio's relief in the Brera has a classical source * in a maenad.³³ Just as Agostino as a sculptor looks to antique sculptures for

models for the representation of hair and garments in motion, Poliziano looks to the poets of antiquity for accounts of motifs of movement, which he then faithfully reproduces in his own poems.

- * Alberti's remarks may have prompted, or at least encouraged, Poliziano to concern himself with the artistic question of showing accessory forms in motion; equally, a current of ideas already present in Florentine artistic circles might have suggested his descriptions of the flying hair and draperies of the figures in his reliefs.³⁴ What is certain is that Poliziano consciously and independently confirmed this tendency by describing such forms in words modeled on those of the ancient poets, Ovid and Claudian.

On the first relief of the second series, flanking the portal of his palace of Venus, the scene shown was the rape of Europa:

105 *Nell' altra in un formoso e bianco tauro
Si vede Giove per amor converso
Portarne il dolce suo ricco tesoro,
E lei volgere il viso al lito perso
In atto paventosa: e i be' crin d'auro
Scherzon nel petto per lo vento avverso:
La vesta ondeggia, e in dietro fa ritorno;
L'una man tien al dorso, e l'altra al corno.*

The other shows us Jove, transformed for love
Into the shape of a fine, milk-white bull,
Carrying off his rich and cherished prize.
She turns her face to the deserted shore
With fearful glance; her lovely, golden hair
Sports in her bosom, caught by the opposing breeze;
Her garments flutter, wafting back behind;
Her one hand grips the bull's back, one its horn.

Not only is the exact description of Europa's flying hair and dress reproduced from Ovid's accounts of the same scene in the *Metamorphoses* (2.873) and *Fasti* (5.607 ff.);³⁵ another similar passage in the *Metamorphoses* (2.527) has also been used.

If the last five lines of the Italian are compared with their Latin sources, we are presented with the fact, seldom demonstrable in art history, of a thoughtful eclecticism combined with the ability to adopt and rework a suggestion

- * with original artistic power:

E lei volgere il viso al lito perso
(She turns her face to the deserted shore)

Met. 2.873 ... litusque ablata relictum
Respicit

(... and she looks back at the shore left behind
As she is carried away)

In atto paventosa *e i be'crin d'auro*
(With fearful glance) (her lovely, golden hair)

Met. 2.873 Pavet haec *Fast. 5.609 Flavos movet aura capillos*
(She is terrified) (The breeze stirs her golden hair)

Scherzon nel petto per lo vento avverso
(Sports in her bosom, caught by the opposing breeze)

Met. 1.528 Obviaque adversas vibrabant flamina vestes
Et levis impulsos retro dabat aura capillos.
(And the opposing breezes made her garments ripple as they met her,
And a light air sent her hair flying back)

La vesta ondeggia, e in dietro fa ritorno
(Her garments flutter, wafting back behind)

Met. 2.875 Tremulae sinuantur flamine vestes
(Her fluttering garments billow in the wind)

Fast. 5.609 Aura sinus inplet
(The breeze fills the folds on her breast)

L'una man tien al dorso, e l'altra al corno
(Her one hand grips the bull's back, one its horn)

Met. 2.874 ... dextra cornum tenet, altera dorso
imposita est.
(... with her right hand she holds a horn, the other
Is placed on its back.)

St. 106 Le ignude piante a sè ristrette accoglie
(Her naked feet she drew back to herself)

Fast. 5.611 Saepe puellares subduxit ab aequore plantas
(Often she drew back her girlish feet from the sea)

Quasi temendo il mar che lei non bagne
(As if in terror that the sea might wet her)

Fast. 5.612 Et metuit tactus assilientis aquae.
(And feared the touch of the leaping wave.)

In Poliziano's description of the sculpture of the rape of Proserpina (stanza 113), not only Ovid himself but Claudian,³⁶ in all his hyper-Ovidian descriptive detail, is summoned to the poet's aid:

*Quasi in un tratto vista amata e tolta
Dal fero Pluto Proserpina pare
Sopra un gran carro, e la sua chioma sciolta
A' zefiri amorosi ventilare.*
(Seen, loved, abducted at a single stroke
By savage Pluto, Proserpine appears
In a great chariot; her unfastened hair
The amorous zephyrs waft from side to side.)

As the source for the third line, Carducci cites, without giving a reference:³⁷

*...volucris fertur Proserpina curru
Caesariem diffusa Noto...*
(...Proserpina is borne away by the swift chariot,
Her hair spread out to the wind...)

One might expect to find that the "zefiri amorosi," at least, were invented by Poliziano in the spirit of his sources; but here, too, we find in Claudian:

* *...levibus projecerat auris
indociles errare comas.*³⁸
(...she had held out her unruly locks
To float in the light breezes.)

A juxtaposition of text and sources yields the same pattern as before:

*Quasi in un tratto amata e tolta
Dal fero Pluto*
(Seen, loved, abducted at a single stroke
By savage Pluto)

Met. 5.395 *Paene simul visa est dilectaque raptaque Diti*
(Almost in one moment she was seen and loved and carried off by
Pluto)

*...Proserpina pare
Sopra un gran carro, e la sua chioma sciolta*
(...Proserpina appears
In a great chariot; her unfastened hair)

Claud. 2.247 *volucris fertur Proserpina curru*
Caesariem diffusa Noto
(Proserpina is borne away by the swift chariot
Her hair spread out to the wind)

A Zefiri amorosi ventilare
(The amorous zephyrs waft)

Claud. 2.30 *... levibus proiecerat auris*
indociles errare comas
(... she had held out her unruly locks
To float in the light breezes)

In the course of the amorous episodes recounted in Poliziano's stanzas there are two other relevant passages:

At 1.56, lines 7–8, Giuliano stares after the nymph, uncertain whether to follow her:

Fra sè lodando il dolce³⁹ andar celeste
E'l ventilar dell' angelica veste.
(Praising the heavenly grace with which she walks,
Praising the waft of her angelic robe.)

The following verses from Ovid (*Ars amatoria* 3.299–301) should not, perhaps, be regarded as a direct source, but they show an affinity of mood:

Est et in incessu pars non contempta decoris:
Allicit ignotos ille fugatque viros.
Haec movet arte latus, tunicisque fluentibus auras
Accipit.
(There is in the way one walks no trifling part of grace:
It can attract or repel men who are unknown to you.
This girl moves her body artfully, and lets the breeze ripple through
Her sheer tunic.)

Later, in the description of the realm of Venus,⁴⁰ from stanza 1.69 onward, the reigning goddess of spring is described as follows (1.72, lines 4–8):

Jvi non volgon gli anni il lor quaderno;
Ma lieta Primavera mai non manca,
Ch'è' suoi crin biondi e crespi all' aura spiega
E mille fiori in ghirlandetta lega.
(There the years desert their usual round;
The joyful Spring is never lost to view,

Loosing her golden ringlets to the breeze
And twining a thousand flowers into a wreath.)

Here, as in the emphasis on fluttering forms in the costume of the seasonal goddesses who welcome Venus,⁴¹ no direct source can be proved. But it is safe to assume that all this Ovidian and Claudianesque description of mobile forms made the poet feel gratifyingly close to the spirit of the ancients.

The female figure who welcomes Venus, in Botticelli's painting, shows a remarkable affinity with the Horae as described by Poliziano, including the fluttering accessory forms. She stands at the water's edge, turned to face leftward in strict profile, and holds out to Venus the wind-blown mantle that she grasps in her outstretched right hand above and in her left hand below. In the critical literature she is almost unanimously described as a goddess of spring.⁴² Her gown, embroidered all over with cornflowers, clings to her body, clearly revealing the outlines of her legs. A fold curves gently downward to the right from the back of her left knee, fanning out in smaller folds below. Her narrow sleeves, puffed at the shoulders, are worn over a white undergarment of soft material. Most of her fair hair wafts back from her temples in long waves, but some has been made into a stiff braid that ends in a bunch of loose hair. She is the "Hora of Spring," as imagined by Poliziano.

Spring stands on the bank to welcome Venus; the wind plays in her dress and caresses her "golden ringlets" as she "looses them to the breeze." The goddess of spring wears a rose branch as a girdle; and this is too unusual an article of dress not to "mean" something to the scholars of the Renaissance.

Let us suppose for a moment that Poliziano was called upon to supply a suitably clear but "classical" attribute for Spring, not only through the medium of his *Giostra* but in person, as Botticelli's learned adviser; and that to this end he turned to his favorite poet, Ovid. In the *Metamorphoses* (2.27), he found this account of Spring at the throne of Apollo:

*Verque novum stabat cinctum florente corona*⁴³
(And young Spring stood wreathed with a garland of flowers)

—whereas in *Fasti* (5.217),

† *Conveniunt pictis incinctae vestibus Horae.*
(The Horae assemble, clad in many colors.)

If Poliziano chose to interpret the word *cinctum*⁴⁴ as meaning "girt," or "belted," he thus had an indication of exactly what sort of girdle to put upon this Hora, in her "colorful belted robe."

The following passage from *Le imagini dei dei*,⁴⁵ by Vincenzo Cartari, demonstrates that there were other Renaissance scholars who considered a floral girdle to be an attribute of the goddess of spring:

Le hore, lequali dicono essere i quattro tempi dell'anno, et aprire e serrare le porte del Cielo, sono date talhora al Sole, e tale altra a Cerere, e perciò portano due ceste, l'una di fiori, per la quale si mostra la Primavera, l'altra piena di spiche, che significa la età. Et Ovidio parimente dice nei Fasti⁴⁶ che queste stanno in compagnia di Jano <Apollo> alla guardia delle porte del Cielo, e quando poi racconta di Flora, in potere della quale sono i fioriti prati, dice che le hore vestite di sottilissimi veli vengono in questi talhora à raccogliere diversi fiori da farsene belle ghirlande.

The Horae, said to be the four seasons of the year, which open and close the gates of Heaven, are divided between the Sun and Ceres, and for this reason wear two girdles (*recte*: carry two baskets), one full of flowers (signifying Spring) and the other full of ears of corn (signifying Summer). Ovid says likewise in his *Fasti* that the Horae stand guard with Janus <Apollo> at the gates of Heaven; when he speaks later of Flora, beneath whose sway the flowering meadows lie, he says that the Horae come dressed in diaphanous, flowing veils to gather flowers for their beautiful garlands.

From all this confused erudition we do at least gather that here, too, the two Ovid passages quoted above are the principal sources.

An allegorical figure of Spring from learned circles in Venice belongs to the same context. In the early Renaissance archaeological romance, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*,⁴⁷ the hero, Poliphilus, witnesses the triumph of Vertumnus and Pomona;⁴⁸ and among the works of art that he sees is a "*sacra ara quadrangula*" (sacred, four-sided altar), with the personifications of the four seasons "*in candido et luculeo marmoro*" (in white and Lucullan marble):

In qualunque fronte della quale uno incredibile expresso duna elegante imagine promineva, quasi exacta. La prima era una pulcherrima Dea cum volante trece cincte⁴⁹ de rose et d'altri fiori, cum tenuissimo supparo⁵⁰ aemulante gli venustissimi membri subjecti, cum la dextra sopra uno sacrificulo de uno antiquario Chytropode⁵¹ flammula prosiliente fiori et rose divotamente spargeva, et nel altra teniva uno ramulo de olente et baccato⁵² Myrtho. Par a lei uno alifero et speciosissimo puerulo cum gli vulnerabondi insignii ridente extava, et due columbine similmente, sotto gli pedi della quale figure era inscripto:

Florido veri. S.

On every face of this was an elegant and wonderfully lifelike image. The first was of a beautiful goddess, whose flowing tresses were garlanded with roses and other flowers, her diaphanous gown clinging to her shapely limbs. With her right hand she scattered a devotional offering of flowers and roses over an antique charcoal brazier. In the other hand she held a fragrant, berried branch of myrtle. Before her appeared a pretty, winged boy, smilingly holding his traditional weapons, and two doves. Beneath the feet of this figure was the inscription:

Hail to the blossoming Spring.

The woodcut illustration shows a woman standing in profile, facing right, throwing flowers into the "*antiquario Chytropode*" with her right hand and holding a myrtle branch in her left. A great tress of hair wafts to the left. At her right side stands the naked, winged Cupid with his arrow and bow. In the air, three doves fly.⁵³ As a number of other illustrations and descriptions in the *Hypnerotomachia* make clear, its Venetian author was another who considered that a sense of surface mobility in the figures was essential to any successful revival of the most telling achievements of antique art.⁵⁴

As late as the sixteenth century, Luigi Alamanni (1495–1556) wrote of the goddess Flora:

13 *Questa dovunque il piè leggiadro muove,
Empie di frondi e fior la terra intorno,
Chè Primavera è seco, e verno altrove.
Se spiega all' aure i crin, fa invidia al giorno.*⁵⁵

Wherever now she sets her dainty foot,
The earth is filled with greenery and flowers;
For Spring is come, and Winter far away.
Her hair she loosens, and puts Day to shame.

One more drawing is here adduced as relevant to the *Birth of Venus*; as it shows, to take accessory forms in motion as the touchstone of "antique influence" may be biased, but is not unjustified. The work in question is a pen drawing from the collection of the duke of Aumale, which was exhibited in Paris in 1879 and photographed by Braun, in whose catalog (1887, p. 376) it is described as follows: "No. 20. *Etude pour une composition de Vénus sortant de l'onde pour le tableau aux Uffizi.*" (Study for a composition of Venus emerging from the waves, for the painting in the Uffizi.)

This drawing⁵⁶ is unlikely to be by Botticelli himself: the details (such as the hands and breasts of the nude female figure) are too crudely handled. It is probably by a practiced artist who was a member of Botticelli's circle of pupils toward the end of the fifteenth century. Nor should it be regarded as a sketch for the *Birth of Venus*, as the pose of the nude female figure bears only a very approximate resemblance to Botticelli's Venus.

The drawing shows five figures. To the left is the torso of a woman, seen from behind; she has wrapped herself in a cloth, which is caught together at the front. Her head is turned to her right, toward the spectator. Her hair, part of which forms a chaplet around her head, falls in a thick braid onto her bare shoulders. Her right arm is raised.

The nude female figure next to her—approximately in the pose of the Medici Venus—holds her right arm before her breast (without concealing it), with elbow bent at right angles; she covers her lower belly with her left. Her legs are crossed, and the feet are at right angles to each other: a stance that does not seem stable enough to support the trunk, with its slight backward



Fig. 4. *Spring*
Woodcut from *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice, 1499),
fol. M IV^v (see p. 104)

Fig. 5. Donatello
Saint George
Florence, Orsanmichele (see p. 97)



Fig. 6. Achilles on Skyros

Drawing after sarcophagus. Woburn Abbey (see p. 107)

Fig. 7. Botticelli (?)

Pen drawing. Chantilly (see p. 104)

tilt. Her hair is parted in the center, then gathered in a braid and wound round her head, ending in a loose, fluttering tress. The imaginary breeze swells a scarflike garment that is looped over her left shoulder.

The other three figures look as if extracted from a friezelike antique composition. They are: a woman with a lyre in her left hand, wearing a chiton and a girdle wrap; next to her the helmeted head of a youth; and finally a youth striding to the right, with his head turned back in profile. It turns out that these have been taken from a sarcophagus representing Achilles on Skyros: the woman with the lyre is one of the daughters of Lycomedes, and the striding youth is Achilles, making good his escape.⁵⁷

As the drawing does not arbitrarily restore the parts that are missing from the sculpture, the actual object that served as the visual source can be determined. It is the sarcophagus now at Woburn Abbey, which was formerly among the antique reliefs built into the stairway of S. Maria Araceli in Rome from the mid-fourteenth century onward.⁵⁸ Michaelis describes it as follows:

To the l. of Achilleus are visible four daughters of Lycomedes: one, in a chiton and a chlamys draped like a shawl, and in a position similar to that of Achilleus, is holding a cithara (restored at the top) in her l. arm; another dressed in the same way, is hurrying l. (her forearms and flute have been added by the restorer); of the two other sisters only the heads are visible in the background.⁵⁹

He goes on to say that Achilles' right arm and the spear have also been restored. Eichler's drawing⁶⁰ shows that the forearm of the female figure with the lyre is also a restoration. As all the fragmentary portions of the composition appear as such in the drawing, it follows that the latter was made from the very same sarcophagus, when it was still built into the stairway of S. Maria Araceli.

The two adjacent life studies show how a fifteenth-century artist extracts from an antique original what "interests" him. In the present case he has taken nothing but the garment, billowing out in an elliptical curve—which he has reconstituted as a scarf, dangling from left shoulder to right hip, in order to make the motif comprehensible to himself—and the coiffure of the female figure, to which he has added a flying lock of hair (not visible in the original), no doubt supposing that this was all very antique.

Later, Pirro Ligorio (died 1583) was another on whom the "dancing nymphs" on this sarcophagus made a particular impression:

16. <Achilles on Skyros> *Di Achille et di Ulysse. Veramente non è di far poco stima d'un altro monumento, di un pilo che è ancora quivi presso al sudetto, per esser copioso de figure, di huomini armati et di donne lascivamente vestite...* <lacuna in Dessau's publication> *Nel pilo sono sei donne sculpite, come vaghe Nymphæ, di sottilissimi veli vestite, alcune di esse dimostrano ballare e far baldanzosi atti con un velo, con li panni tanto sottili et trasparenti, che quasi gnude si dimostrano,*



- * *l'una delle quali suona una lyra, et l'altre havendo lasciato il ballo sono come che corse a pigliar Achille.*⁶¹

16. <Achilles on Skyros.> Achilles and Ulysses. There is another truly remarkable monument, a *pilum* still extant near the one described above, which is richly covered with figures of armed men and of women alluringly clad... <lacuna in Dessau's publication> The *pilum* bears six female figures sculptured as beautiful nymphs dressed in filmy veils. Some of them are shown dancing, and striking bold attitudes with a veil; their garments are so filmy and so transparent that they show themselves as if naked. One plays a lyre; another has ceased to dance and is chasing Achilles.

An analogous example from a different area provides further evidence that female figures with garments in motion were viewed at that time with preconceived ideas in mind. Filarete writes, after Pliny, of works of art in ancient Rome:

*Eragli ancora quattro satiri dipinti, i quali ancora per la loro bellezza furono portati a Roma, i quali l'uno portava Baccho insù la spalla; l'altro la copriua, un altro gli era che pareua che piangesse come uno fanciullo; il quarto beueua in una cratera del compagno. Eragli ancora due nimphe con panni sottili suolazzanti.*⁶²

There were four other satyrs depicted, so fine that they were taken to Rome. One was shown carrying Bacchus on his shoulder. A second was covering it. A third appeared to be weeping like a child. The fourth was quaffing from a large krater belonging to his friend. There were also two nymphs in filmy, billowing garments.

Pliny makes no mention of nymphs: he speaks of "*duaeque aurae velificantes sua veste*" (and two Breezes turning their dresses into sails).⁶³ Filarete was not the only one to assume that these *aurae* were nymphs, as is shown by the fact that the earliest editors of Pliny's text replaced the word *aurae*, the meaning of which was presumably not clear to them, with the word *nymphae*. The *editio princeps*, that of Johannes Spira (1469), still has the reading "*duaeque aurae velificantes sua veste*";⁶⁴ but the Sweynheym and Pannartz edition of 1473 has "*Dueque nimphe velificantes sua veste*."⁶⁵ Again, the Parma edition of 1481 has "*Duaeque nimphe velificantes sua veste*."⁶⁶ And in Cristoforo

- * Landino's translation of Pliny we read: "*Item due nimphe che fanno vela delle proprie veste*."⁶⁷

This concludes the series of excursions prompted by Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*. A succession of works related by content—Botticelli's painting, Poliziano's poem, Francesco Colonna's archaeological romance, the drawing from Botticelli's circle, and Filarete's ecphrasis—has revealed the tendency, shaped by what was then known of antiquity, to turn to the arts of the ancient

- * world whenever life was to be embodied in outward motion.

Appendix: The Lost Pallas

A piece of historical information supplied by Vasari, when seen in conjunction with other sources of evidence, documents a further connection between Poliziano and Botticelli that was known indirectly to the early art historians. The methodological importance of this evidence merits a brief interruption of the purely iconographical part of this study.

Ulmann's⁶⁸ remarks afford the certainty that a Botticelli drawing published by him, from the Uffizi, is a sketch for a figure of Athena on the tapestry published by Müntz;⁶⁹ and that a reference in the Medici inventory⁷⁰ to a painting by Botticelli in the "*camera di Piero*" (Piero's chamber) refers, as Ulmann conjectured, to a *Pallas*. Ulmann seeks to relate this *Pallas* to a work that Vasari described as follows:

*In casa Medici, a Lorenzo vecchio lavorò molte cose: e massimamente una Pallade su una impresa di bronconi che buttavano fuoco; la quale dipinse grande quanto il vivo.*⁷¹

In the Medici household, he made many things for old Lorenzo. In particular a *Pallas*, painted life-size, over a device of blazing firebrands.

However, it is unnecessary to connect this "*Pallas*... over a device of blazing firebrands" with the tapestry: a clearer impression of the painting emerges from the link between a passage in Paolo Giovio, an epigram by Poliziano, a drawing by Botticelli, and a woodcut illustration to Poliziano's *Giostra*. Paolo Giovio names an *impresa* of this kind as the heraldic device of Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici, and ascribes its invention to Poliziano:⁷²

*Usò il magnifico Pietro, figliuolo di Lorenzo, come giovane ed innamorato, i tronconi verdi incavalcanti i quali mostravano fiamme, e vampi di fuoco intrinseco, per significare che il suo ardor d'amore era incomparabile, poi ch'egli abbruciava le legna verdi, e fu questa invenzione del dottissimo uomo M. Angelo Poliziano, il quale gli fece ancor questo motto d'un verso latino: "In viridi teneras exurit flamma medullas."*⁷³

Piero il Magnifico, the son of Lorenzo, when he was young and in love, used as his device green sticks burning in a pile, emitting flames and inner bursts of fire, to show that the heat of his love was beyond compare, since it would burn green timber. This emblem was devised by the most learned Master Angelo Poliziano, who also made him this Latin verse as a motto: "The flame burns the tender pith within the green {stem}."

As the painting mentioned in the inventory hung in the "*camera di Piero*," the connection is clear, and it is only necessary to ask how we should visualize these "green sticks burning in a pile." The painting was about 2.44 m high and 1.22 m wide;⁷⁴ so that, if the Athena were life-size, about one third of the

picture surface was left free above or below her. As for what was depicted in the lower third, evidence is supplied by a woodcut that forms the tailpiece to the 1513 edition of the *Giostra*.⁷⁵ Giuliano is seen kneeling in adoration, hands upraised, before a goddess who stands in a niche; the goddess leans on a spear that she holds in her right hand, and before her stands a rectangular altar bearing the word "*Citarea*." In the center of its top are blazing logs. The image shows Giuliano invoking Pallas and Venus before the summons goes out for the joust. The statue is likely to represent Pallas, while the altar with its firebrands is sacred to Venus. The text of the poem does not mention the firebrands.⁷⁶

This woodcut explains Botticelli's drawing in Milan. As far as can be seen from the Braun photograph, two figures have been assembled on the page.⁷⁷ Below, a beardless youth kneels with arms imploringly upraised; his long cloak fans out in folds across the floor. Above his head, on a slip cut out in a segmental form, the figure of a woman has been added. She stands on a plinth recalling that of an antique vase. In her right hand she holds a mace, and in her left she holds the upper edge of a shield with a gorgoneion in its center.

A glance at the woodcut enables the relative positions of the figures to be corrected and the pictorial content recognized. The goddess ought to be standing further to the right of the kneeling youth, with the altar and its blazing brands beneath her. For, in spite of some discrepancies of detail (in the garments of the kneeling figure, and in the simplified draperies and different weapons of the *Pallas*), the drawing in Milan can be assumed to be a preliminary drawing for the illustration of the closing scene of the *Giostra*.⁷⁸

The format of Botticelli's lost painting makes it unlikely that it included the kneeling figure of Giuliano; so the drawing cannot be regarded as a sketch for it. Even so, enough has been said to allow us a reasoned conjecture as to the look of that work. In the chamber of Piero di Lorenzo,⁷⁹ there hung an *Athena* with a spear in her right hand and a shield in front of her; beneath her, and occupying about one third of the area of the canvas, was an altar bearing a burning firebrand.

The tracing of accessory forms in motion to their antique sources is once more the basis of the study that follows, of the painting known as *Spring*; and here, too, in the search for the person who supplied the *concetto* and for those who commissioned the work itself, the first names to come to mind are those of Poliziano and of the Medici.

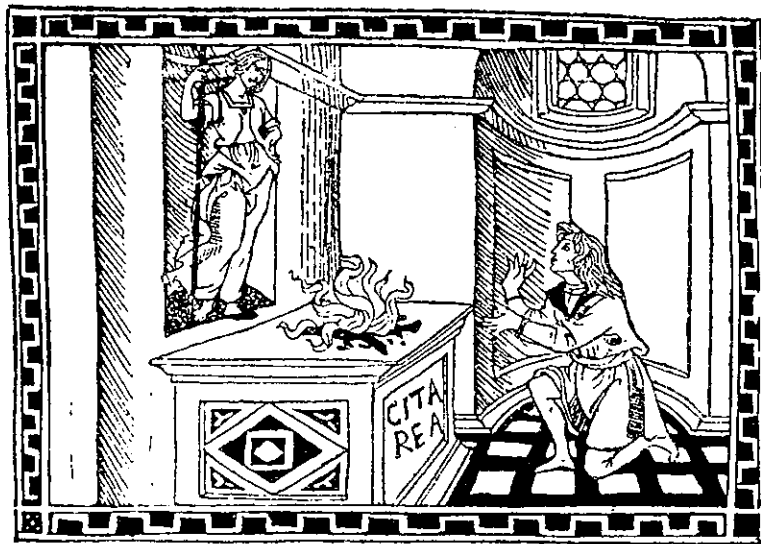
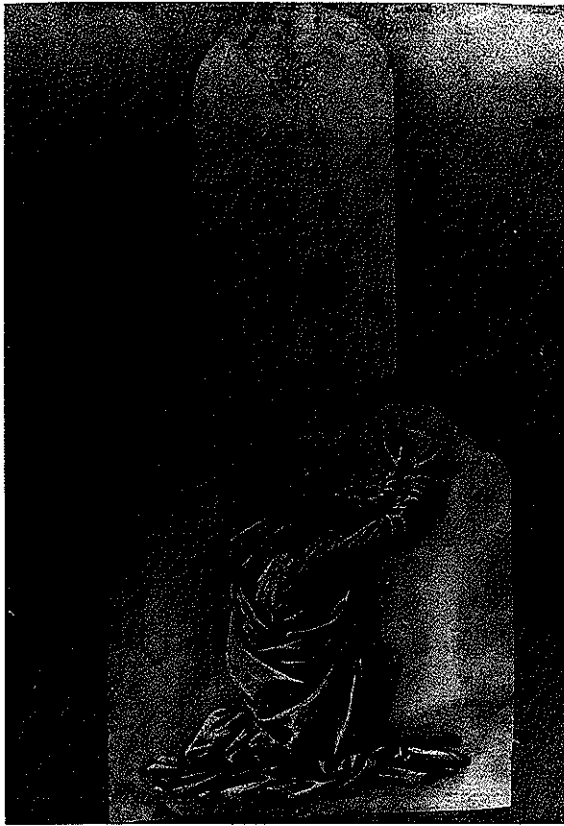


Fig. 8. Botticelli (?)
Drawing. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana (see p. 110)

Fig. 9. Giuliano at the Feet of Pallas
Woodcut from Poliziano, *Giostra* (Florence, 1513),
fol. v (see p. 110)

Chapter 2: Spring

* ... What mystery here is read
Of homage or of hope? But how command
Dead Springs to answer? And how question here
These mummers of that wind-withered New Year?
—Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "For *Spring* by Sandro Botticelli"

Vasari mentions the so-called *Spring* together with the *Birth of Venus*:

...oggi ancora a Castello, villa del Duca Cosimo, sono due quadri figurati, l'uno, Venere che nasce, e quelle aure e venti che la fanno venire in terra con gli Amori; e così un'altra Venere, che le Grazie la fioriscono, dinotando la Primavera.⁸⁰

...Two paintings are still in Duke Cosimo's villa at Castello: a Venus being born, and the breezes and winds bringing her ashore, with Cupids; and another Venus with the Graces, who deck her with flowers, denoting Spring.

Vasari thus emphatically links the two paintings by identifying the central figure in each as Venus: "a Venus being born... and another Venus with the Graces, who deck her with flowers..." And yet this work is almost invariably described in the critical literature as an "Allegory of Spring," a view that is fostered by the difference in size between the two paintings⁸¹ and by their separate locations.⁸²

A detailed interpretation was recently supplied by Bayersdorfer, in his text for the *Klassischer Bilderschatz* series:

Allegory of Spring. In the center stands Venus, above whose head flies Cupid, who shoots blazing arrows at the dancing Graces on the left. Next to him is Mercury, dispersing the mists from the treetops with his caduceus. In the right-hand half of the painting, Flora makes her way through the countryside strewing roses;⁸³ at the touch of Zephyrus, flowers sprout from the lips of the earth nymph as she flees. Painted for Cosimo's Villa Careggi,⁸⁴ now in the Accademia in Florence.

The identifications that emerge from the present study are in agreement with those given here, except that the "earth nymph" is probably Flora, and the girl who strews roses is not Flora but the goddess of spring. We shall return to both these points in the course of the discussion that follows.

The approach of interpreting the design of the painting through analogies with the critical literature, art, and poetry of the period reveals itself to be fruitful as soon as we take the obvious first step of referring to Alberti.⁸⁵ After commending the subject of the *Calumny of Apelles* (which Botticelli also painted)⁸⁶ to painters as a particularly felicitous invention, Alberti goes
* on to suggest that of the three dancing Graces:



Fig. 10. Botticelli
Primavera
Florence, Uffizi (see p. 112)

Piacerebbe ancora vedere quelle tre sorelle, a quali Hesiodo pose nome Eglie, Heufronesia et Thalia, quali si dipignievano prese fra loro l'una l'altra per mano, ridendo, con la vesta scinta et ben monda; per quali volea s'intendesse la liberalità, chè una di queste sorelle dà, l'altra riceve, la terza rende il beneficio, quali gradi debbano in ogni perfetta liberalità essere.

It would also be pleasing to see the three sisters whom Hesiod named Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia; they are generally depicted holding hands and laughing, their robes ungirt and spotless. He meant them to stand for liberality: one of them is shown giving, the second receiving, and the third returning the boon; these are the degrees that must exist in all true liberality.

Just as Alberti concludes his account of the *Calumny of Apelles* by saying:

*Quale istoria, se mentre che si recita, piace, pensa quanto essa avesse gratia et amenità ad vederla dipinta di mano d'Apelle*⁸⁷

If this story gives pleasure now, in the telling, imagine the grace and pleasure of it when painted by Apelles himself

—he adds to this second *concetto*, with the pride of discovery:

Adunque si vede quanta lode porgano simile inventioni al artefice. Pertanto consiglio, ciascuno pictore molto si faccia familiare ad i poeti, rhetorici et ad li altri simili dotti di lettera, sia che costoro doneranno nuove inventioni o certo ajuteranno ad bello componere sua storia, per quali adquisteranno in sua pictura molte lode et nome.

It is clear, therefore, what praise such inventions bestow on the artist. I advise all painters to become friendly with poets, rhetoricians, and other such lettered men, because these will provide new inventions or at least enrich the composition of their works, assuring them of great praise and renown for their painting.

The fact that Botticelli has chosen to paint the very subjects singled out by Alberti goes to prove how much he, or his humanist adviser, was "influenced" by Alberti's ideas.

Janitschek (in his Alberti, note 62), points out that this allegory is derived from Seneca, *De beneficiis* 1.3, who follows Chrysippos. The passage reads as follows:

...quare tres Gratiae et quare sorores sint et quare manibus inplexis et quare ridentes et iuvenes et virgines solutaeque ac perlucida veste. Alii quidem videri volunt unam esse quae det beneficium, alteram quae accipiat, tertiam quae reddat; alii tria beneficiorum esse genera, promerentium, reddentium, simul accipientium reddentiumque.

...why there are three Graces and why they are sisters, and why their hands are intertwined, and why they are smiling and young and maidens and their garments are loose and transparent. Some, indeed, would have it that there is one to bestow a benefit, a second to accept it, a third to return it; others maintain that there are three kinds of benefactors: those who deserve a benefit, those who return it, and those who simultaneously accept and return it.

Seneca concludes:

Ergo et Mercurius una stat, non quia beneficia ratio commendat vel oratio, sed quia pictori ita visum est.

Therefore, Mercury appears together with them not because good deeds are improved by reason or eloquence, but because that was how the painter saw it.

That the ungirt, diaphanous garments of the three Graces were treated by the painter as an indispensable attribute emerges from the dress of the Grace on the left. Although the folds over her right thigh can only have been produced by tying the garment with a cord, there is no girdle to be seen: for the sake of the motif, he omits to account visibly for the lie of the drapery.

In the Codex Pighianus,⁸⁸ that celebrated volume of drawings from the antique, made in the mid-sixteenth century, there is a drawing (from an antique relief now in the Uffizi in Florence) of three women dancing in long dresses.⁸⁹ Beneath it the artist has written "*Gratiae Horatii Saltantes*" (The Graces of Horace, dancing).

Jahn thought that this referred to *Carmina* 1.4.6-7: "*junctaeque Nymphis Gratiae decentes / Alterno terram quatiant pede*" (And joined with the Nymphs, the lovely Graces / Stamp the ground in rhythm). But might not Pighius have been thinking rather of the description in *Carmina* 1.30: "*Fervidus tecum puer et solutis / Gratiae zonis*" (The glowing boy with you, and the Graces / With their girdles undone), which would correspond to Alberti's (and Seneca's) visualization of the Graces in loosened and ungirt garments?

In the Louvre there is a fresco fragment from the Villa Lemmi, not far from the Villa Careggi, that is ascribed to Botticelli.⁹⁰ It shows the three Graces approaching Giovanna degli Albizzi on the day of her wedding to Lorenzo Tornabuoni in 1486, led by Venus and bearing gifts. The three Graces, walking in file, have the same loose, ideal costume as those in the *Spring*, except that over this shiftlike garment the second and third (from the left) wear a cloak whose upper edge billows out from the hindmost Grace's right shoulder and forms a swag across the lower part of her torso, without any evident means of support.

Whether these frescoes are autograph works by Botticelli, as Cosimo Conti * asserts, or were at least partly carried out by assistants, as Ephrussi believes, would be hard to determine from the reproductions alone. There is an occasional harshness in the drawing that argues for the latter hypothesis.⁹¹



Fig. 11. Niccolò Fiorentino
The Three Graces
Reverse of medal for Giovanna Tornabuoni (see p. 117)



Fig. 12. Niccolò Fiorentino
Venus Virgo
Reverse of medal for Giovanna Tornabuoni (see p. 117)

Cosimo Conti adduced two medals to support his identification of the lady in contemporary costume as Giovanna Tornabuoni.⁹² Both of these show her portrait on the obverse, but the reverses show two different mythological scenes, whose formal treatment, again, is iconographically remarkable.

The reverse of the first medal shows the three Graces nude, in their familiar entwined pose. Along with a description by Filarete of a painting in his imaginary hall of fame for artists (book 19, ed. Oettingen, 735), it shows that fifteenth-century artists knew the Graces in this guise.⁹³ The lettering around the figures reads: "*Castitas. Pul<chr>itudo. Amor.*" (Chastity. Beauty. Love.) [fig. 11].

The first medal thus shows these antique goddesses as we have been accustomed to see them since Winckelmann,⁹⁴ namely, "in the spirit of antiquity," nude and in a stable pose; but the second⁹⁵ shows a female figure whose hair and garments again show an unexplained but agitated movement [fig. 12]. She stands on clouds, with her head turned slightly to the right and her hair flying on both sides. Her dress is kilted up and girdled; its hem, and that of a pelt that she wears over it, flutters in the wind. The arrow in her raised right hand, the bow in her lowered left hand, the quiver of arrows slung behind her right hip, and the short boots, identify her as a huntress. The inscription from Virgil's *Aeneid* (1.315) identifies her: "*Virginis os habitumque gerens et Virginis arma*" (Wearing the face and the dress of a maiden and bearing a maiden's arms). This is the disguise in which Venus appears to Aeneas and his companion:

*Cui mater media sese tulit obvia silva,
Virginis os habitumque gerens et Virginis arma
Spartanae vel qualis equos Threissa fatigat
Harpalyce volucremque fuga praevertitur Hebrum.
Namque umeris de more habilem suspenderat arcum
Venatrix, dederatque comam diffundere ventis,
Nuda genu nodoque sinus collecta fluentis.*

His mother went to meet him, confronting him in the depths of the woods,
Wearing the face and the dress of a maiden and bearing a maiden's arms—
Of a Spartan girl, or like Thracian Harpalyce who urges on her horses
And outraces the swift-flowing Hebrus in her flight.
For from her shoulder she had hung a light bow, in the usual way—
A huntress—and loosed her hair to the winds,
With her knees bare and the flowing folds of her garment gathered into a knot.

The last two lines give the cue that is faithfully followed in the handling of the accessory forms in motion—the token, here as elsewhere, of "antique-inspired" design.

One of the long sides of an Italian *cassone*,⁹⁶ made around the middle of the fifteenth century, illustrates the same scene from the *Aeneid*. On the left,

Venus appears to Aeneas and his companion in the countryside; somewhat
 * further to the right, she vanishes into thin air before his eyes. As on the medal, she stands on clouds and wears a winged helmet, short boots, a quiver on her left side, and her bow on her left shoulder; her garment, gathered up all around, is red, and is adorned with gold patterns in relief; her hair flutters loose in the wind. The other figures wear contemporary costume.

On the opposite side of the same *cassone*, Aeneas is shown with Dido, on the hunting expedition that ended with the fateful storm. Here, too, the impulse to illustrate the classics has borne fruit: above right are half-length figures of three Negroid wind gods,⁹⁷ with spherical, bouffant hairstyles,⁹⁸ who blow from their curved horns "*nigrantem commixta grandine nimbum*"⁹⁹ (a black storm cloud mixed with hail) [fig. 13].

For the group of the Graces, it has been necessary to go far afield in pursuit of our specific artistic theme; but another group in the *Spring* can be much more simply accounted for, with a direct reference to Poliziano. On the far
 * right is an amorous pursuit scene. The grove is flanked by orange trees that bend in a gust of wind; and among them, we see the torso of a winged youth. In his rapid flight—his hair and cloak flutter in the wind—he has caught up with a (leftward) fleeing girl; he has already laid hands on her, and with furrowed brows and bulging cheeks he blows a powerful gust of wind at the nape of her neck. In her flight, the girl turns her head toward her pursuer as if in a plea for help; her hands and arms make a defensive movement; the wind plays in her loose hair and causes her diaphanous white dress to ripple in some places and fan out in others.¹⁰⁰ From the right-hand corner of the girl's mouth issues a varied stream of flowers: roses, columbines, and others.

In Ovid's *Fasti*, Flora tells how she was pursued, caught, and overpowered by Zephyrus. As his bridal gift, she has received the ability to turn whatever she touched into flowers:

*Sic ego, sic nostris respondit diva rogatis.
 Dum loquitur, vernas efflat ab ore rosas.
 Chloris eram, quae Flora vocor. Corrupta Latino
 Nominis est nostri littera Graeca sono.
 Chloris eram, Nymphæ campi felicitis, ubi audis
 Rem fortunatis ante fuisse viris.
 Quae fuerit mihi forma, grave est narrare modestae.
 Sed generum matri repperit illa deum.
 Ver erat, errabam. Zephyrus conspexit; abibam.
 Insequitur, fugio. Fortior ille fuit.
 Et dederat fratri Boreas jus omne rapinae,
 Ausus Erechthea praemia ferre domo.
 Vim tamen emendat dando mihi nomina nuptae:
 Inque meo non est ulla querela toro.
 Vere fruor semper; semper nitidissimus annus.
 Arbor habet frondes, pabula semper humus.*



Fig. 13. Wind Gods
Detail of cassone. Hanover, Kestner-Museum (see p. 118)

Fig. 14. Venus and Aeneas
Cassone. Hanover, Kestner-Museum (see p. 117)

*Est mihi fecundus dotalibus hortus in agris
 Aura foveat; liquidae fonti rigatur aquae.
 Hunc meus implevit generoso flore maritus:
 Atque ait, Arbitrium tu, dea, floris habe.
 Saepe ego digestos volui numerare colores
 Nec potui: Numero copia major erat.¹⁰¹*

Thus I spoke, and thus did the goddess answer my questions.
 As she spoke, she breathed spring roses from her mouth.
 "I was Chloris, who am called Flora. A Greek letter of
 My name has been corrupted by the Latin speech.
 I was Chloris, a nymph of the happy fields where,
 As you hear told, fortunate men once dwelt.
 To describe what my figure was is hard, for a modest girl,
 But it found my mother a god for a son-in-law.
 It was spring, I was roaming. Zephyr saw me; I withdrew.
 He follows, I flee. He was the stronger.
 And Boreas had given his brother full license to rape
 By daring to carry off his prize from the house of Erechtheus.
 But he makes amends for his violence by giving me the name of bride:
 And in my marriage-bed there is no complaining.
 I enjoy perpetual spring; the season is eternally fertile.
 Trees always bear leaves; the ground has fodder.
 I have a thriving garden in the fields of my dowry:
 The breeze warms it; it is watered by a clear spring.
 My husband filled this garden with excellent flowers:
 And he said, "You, goddess, become the arbiter of flowers."
 Often have I wished to count the colors arranged about,
 But I could not: there were more colors than there are numbers.

This description supplies the nucleus of the composition; and the accessory forms in motion might have been regarded as Botticelli's spontaneous contribution, if he had not already given more than one instance of his tendency to refer to established sources when depicting draperies in motion. The group * turns out to be precisely based on Ovid's description of Daphne's flight from Apollo.¹⁰² This becomes clear if we assemble the relevant lines together:¹⁰³

497 *Spectat inornatos collo pendere capillos*
Et "quid, si comantur?" ait.¹⁰⁴
 (He looks at her hair, hanging unkempt about her neck,
 And says, "What if it were nicely arranged?")

527 *...nudabant corpora venti,*
Obviaque adversas vibrabant flamina vestes,
Et levis impulsos retro dabat aura capillos.

(...the winds laid bare her figure,
And the opposing breezes made her garments ripple as they met her;
A breath of air sent her tresses flying back.)

540 *Qui tamen insequitur, pennis adiutus Amoris*
Ocior est requiemque negat tergoque fugacis
Imminet et crinem sparsum cervicibus adflat.
(But her pursuer, aided by the wings of Love,
Is swifter and permits no rest; hard behind the fleeing girl,
He breathes on the hair strewn over her neck.)

553 *Hanc quoque Phoebus amat positaque in stipite dextra*
Sentit adhuc trepidare novo sub cortice pectus.
(This too Apollo loves, and with his hand on the trunk
He feels her heart still quivering beneath the new bark.)

If we recall that Poliziano had taken this very passage from Ovid and used it for the description of the flying hair and garments on his imagined relief of the rape of Europa, then we are entitled to assume that this painting too reflects the influence of Poliziano.¹⁰⁵

Furthermore, in Poliziano's *Orfeo*, "the first Italian tragedy,"¹⁰⁶ Aristeo, pursuing Euridice, borrows the words that Ovid's Apollo speaks to Daphne:

Non mi fuggir, Donzella;
Ch'i' ti son tanto amico,
E che più t'amo che la vita e'l core.
Ascolta, o ninfa bella,
Ascolta quel ch'io dico:
Non fuggir, ninfa; ch'io ti porto amore.
Non son qui lupo o orso;
Ma son tuo amatore:
Dunque raffrena il tuo volante corso.
Poi che 'l pregar non vale
Et tu via ti dilegui,
El convien ch'io ti segui.
*Porgimi, Amor, porgimi or le tue ale.*¹⁰⁷

Fly not from me, fair Damsel,
For I do love you so;
I love you more than heart and life.
Harken, O lovely nymph,
Harken to what I say,
Fly not, O nymph, I bring you love.
I am no wolf or bear,
But one who loves you true;

And so restrain your headlong flight.
Now my entreaties fail –
I see you vanish hence –
So I must follow you.
O Cupid, lend me now your wings!

Even more significantly, Poliziano took the pursuit of Daphne as the subject of one of the reliefs on the gate of Venus's realm; and here, too, Ovid's words ran through his memory:¹⁰⁸

*Poi segue Dafne, e'n sembianza si lagna
Come dicesse: O ninfa, non ten gire:
Frema il piè, ninfa, sovra la campagna,
Ch'io non ti seguo per farti morire.
Così cerva leon, così lupo agna,
Ciascuna il suo nemico suol fuggire
Me perchè fuggi, o donna del mio core,
Cui di seguirti è sol cagione amore?*¹⁰⁹

He follows Daphne with a stricken look,
As if to say: O nymph, turn not away:
Suspend your flying foot above the ground,
For I do not follow you to take your life,
Like lion after deer, wolf after lamb.
A girl is wont to flee her enemy:
Why fly from me, O lady of my heart?
I follow you for love, and love alone.

Ovid's *Fasti* were also a principal theme of Poliziano's public lectures in Florence from 1481 onward.¹¹⁰ All this taken together supports the notion that Poliziano was Botticelli's humanist adviser.

* Even before Poliziano, Boccaccio, in his *Ninfale fiesolano*,¹¹¹ had drawn on Ovid's imagination in writing a pursuit scene. Affrico calls after the fleeing Mensola:

100 *De, o bella fanciulla, non fuggire
Colui, che t'ama sopr' ogn' altra cosa:
Io son colui, che per te gran martire
Sento di e notte sanz' aver ma' posa:
I non ti seguo per farti morire*¹¹²
*Nè per far cosa che ti sia gravosa
Ma sol amor mi fa te seguitare
Non nimistà, nè mal ch'i voglia fare.*

O lovely maiden, do not take your flight
From him who loves you more than all the world;

For I am he who suffers agonies
Each restless night, without a moment's peace.
I do not follow you to take your life,
Or to do anything that might displease you.
For love, and love alone, I dog your steps—
Not enmity, or wish to do you harm.

In stanza 109, Boccaccio minutely describes Mensola's flight, hampered by her dress:

*La Ninfa correa sì velocemente,
Che pareva che volasse, e' panni alzati
S'avea dinanzi per più prestamente
Poter fuggir, e aveaglisi attaccati
Alla cintura, sì che apertamente
Di sopra a' calzerin, ch'avea calzati
Mostrò le gambe, e'l ginocchio vezzoso,
Che ognun ne diverria desideroso.*¹¹³

So swiftly did the nymph take to her heels,
She seemed to fly. She'd kilted up her skirts
In front, to lend her terror greater speed,
And tied them to her belt in such a way
That openly, above the shoes she wore,
It showed her legs, and such a charming knee
As must arouse desire in anyone.

Lorenzo de' Medici, too, "il Magnifico," Poliziano's powerful friend and like-minded "brother in Apollo," incorporates a very similar pursuit scene in his idyll *Ambra*.¹¹⁴ The nymph Ambra is fleeing:

27 *Siccome pesce, allor che incanto cuopra
Il pescator con rara e sottil maglia,
Fugge la rete qual sente di sopra,
Lasciando per fuggir alcuna scaglia;
Così la ninfa quando par si scuopra,
Fugge lo dio che addosso se le scaglia:
Nè fu sì presta, anzi fu sì presto elli,
Che in man lasciolti alcun de' suoi capelli.*¹¹⁵

Just as a fish, when soft, insidious net—
As if enchanted—clings about its form,
Feeling itself entrapped, contrives to flee,
Leaving some scales behind in its escape:
Thus did the nymph, her hiding place revealed,

Flee from the god, who hurled himself upon her.
Her flight was swift; but he was swift enough
To capture from her some few strands of hair.

The river god Ombrone, in his ardor, snatches at her too roughly; and is soon left ruefully contemplating the maiden's crowning glory:

... e queste trecce bionde,
*Quali in man porto con dolore acerbo.*¹¹⁶

...and those fair locks,
That here I hold with bitter pain and grief.

In Poliziano's *Orfeo*—the first attempt to confront an Italian audience with flesh-and-blood characters from classical antiquity—the shepherd Aristeo, in hot pursuit of Euridice, uses the very words that Ovid places in the mouth of Apollo when he strives in vain to catch Daphne. Nor was this the only play in which artists could have seen amorous pursuit scenes of this kind on the stage: such scenes seem to have been much liked, for several of them appear in the few surviving examples of early mythological drama.

In Niccolò da Correggio's *Fabula di Caephalo*, performed in Ferrara on 21 January 1486,¹¹⁷ Procris is fleeing from Cefalo: an old shepherd tries to stay her flight with these words:

*Deh non fuggir donzella
Colui che per te muore.*

O Damsel, do not flee
The one who dies for you.

Preserved together with the Mantua manuscript of *Orfeo* is that of another mythological *rappresentazione*, known by various titles: *Di Phebo et di Phetonte*, or *Phebo et Cupido*, or *Dafne*. As far as can be made out from d'Ancona's summary,¹¹⁸ the piece is closely based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. It includes a pursuit scene:

*Dopo di che, Apollo va pei boschi cercando Dafne, che resiste ai lamenti amorosi di lui, esposti in un lungo ternale.*¹¹⁹

Whereupon Apollo ranges through the woods in search of Daphne, who resists his amorous lament, as voiced in a long triple stanza.

The third interlude in the *Rappresentazione di S. Uliva* (first printed 1568) also begins with a pursuit scene:

... e in questo mezzo esca in scena una Ninfa adornata quanto sia possibile, e vada vestita di bianco con arco in mano, e vada per la scena. Dopo lei esca un giovanetto pur di bianco vestito con arco, e ornato leggiadramente senza arme, il quale giovane, andando per la scena, sia dalla sopradetta ninfa seguito con grande istanza senza parlare, ma con segni e gesti, mostri di raccomandarsi e pregarlo; egli a suo potere la fugga e sprezzi, ora ridendosi di lei e or seco adirandosi, tanto ch'ella finalmente fuori di ogni speranza rimossa, resti di seguirlo.

... during this interlude a nymph appears, decked out as beautifully as possible; she crosses the stage, clad in white and carrying a bow and arrow. Behind her enters a young man, also clad in white and carrying a bow and arrow; he is lightly accoutred and unarmed. He crosses the stage and is hotly pursued by the nymph, who does not speak, but makes plain, by signs and gestures, that she is wooing and entreating him. He flees and spurns her, alternately laughing at her and giving her angry looks. Finally, she loses all hope and ceases to pursue him.

If we look for direct artistic reflections of dramatic scenes of this kind, our attention is once more drawn to *Orfeo*. The scenes from the Orpheus legend shown on a set of plates in the Museo Correr in Venice, attributed to Timoteo Viti, derive directly from Poliziano's poem.¹²⁰

It is also worth suggesting that a number of works of art showing maenads in a nymphlike costume of antique inspiration, about to strike at the recumbent figure of Orpheus—a drawing from the school of Mantegna, an anonymous copper engraving in the Kunsthalle, Hamburg, and a drawing after the latter by Dürer—may very well be directly or indirectly based on the concluding scene of *Orfeo*.¹²¹ This would also explain the mixture of idealized and contemporary costume.

Once we assume that festive performances set the characters before the artist's eyes as living, moving beings, then the creative process becomes easier to follow. The program supplied by the humanist adviser loses its taint of pedantry: the inspirer is not imposing an object to be imitated, but simply facilitating its articulation.

As Jacob Burckhardt—anticipating future discoveries in one of his unerring intuitive generalizations—once said: "Italian festive pageantry, in its higher form, is a true transition from life into art."¹²²

Three more individual figures in the painting remain to be identified and precisely located.

The girl who scatters roses as she advances toward the viewer—although she differs from the corresponding figure in the *Birth of Venus* in a number of ways—is the goddess of spring. Like her counterpart, she wears a rose branch as a girdle round her floral dress. But the garland of leaves around her neck has now burst into varied bloom, and on her head is a chaplet of flowers; even the cornflowers (if that is what they are) embroidered on her dress are more full-blown. The roses that she scatters bring forth Zephyrus and Flora, whose precursor she is.¹²³ Her dress clings to her left leg, which she advances in

walking, and flutters down from the back of her knee in a shallow curve, fanning out at the hem.

For the costume of Spring, too, a specific antique analogy presents itself; although Botticelli's knowledge of it can only be made plausible, not affirmed—as it can be for the examples just given—with a degree of certainty.

† In the Uffizi there is a figure of *Flora* which, according to Dütschke, Vasari saw in the Palazzo Pitti in the second half of the sixteenth century.¹²⁴ Vasari's description of this makes especial reference to the costume:

*Una femmina con certi panni sottili, con un grembo pieno di varj frutti, la quale è fatta per una Pomona.*¹²⁵

A woman in certain filmy draperies, with her lap full of assorted fruits, representing Pomona.

* Bocchi saw it in the Uffizi in 1591, with the restored parts that it now has:

*A man destra poscia si vede una Dea Pomona, velata di panni sottilissimi; di bellissima grazia, con frutta in mano, con ghirlandetta in testa, ammirata dagli artefici sommamente.*¹²⁶

On the right-hand side can be seen the goddess Pomona, clad in most filmy draperies; exquisitely graceful, with fruits in her hand and a garland on her head, she is greatly admired by artists.

There is an undeniable similarity in the treatment of the draperies, which—in the statue as in the painting—cling to the left leg and hang from the back of the knee. A derivation from this (or a similar) source is all the more likely because the subject is the same: the figure of a girl, her head garlanded with

* flowers, carrying blossoms and fruits in the lap of her dress, treated as a personification of seasonal recurrence.¹²⁷

An approximate analogue for the figure of Hermes is the reverse of a medal designed by Niccolò Fiorentino for Lorenzo Tornabuoni,¹²⁸ a student of Poliziano's,¹²⁹ for whose wedding the Villa Lemmi fresco, mentioned above, was painted. Here, too, Hermes is probably meant to be seen as the leader of the Graces, who are depicted on the companion medal struck for Giovanna

* Tornabuoni.

The superficial similarities in Hermes' costume—the chlamys, the curved sword, the winged boots—are not so noteworthy as the presence of the figure on medals by Niccolò, whose work seems to have been done particularly for the Poliziano-influenced¹³⁰ section of Florentine society.¹³¹

Spring stands at the left hand of her mistress, Venus, who forms the central focus of the painting.¹³² But before we approach the ruler of the scene we must inquire into the origins of one more member of her retinue, the Hermes on the far left-hand side of the painting.



Fig. 15. *Pomona*
Florence, Uffizi (see p.126)



Fig. 16. *Pallas*
Intarsia. Urbino, Palazzo Ducale (see p. 144)

The wings on his boots mark him out as the messenger of the gods; but it is no longer clear precisely what he is doing with the caduceus, which he holds in his upraised right hand. In the color print put out by the Arundel Society, he is using it to dispel a skein of cloud—which is how Bayersdorfer * describes him in his *Klassischer Bilderschatz* text.¹³³ The grounds for this conjectural reconstruction are not immediately evident; but it makes more sense than the often-mooted idea that Hermes is doing something to the fruit on the trees.¹³⁴

The present writer has had no success in finding analogies for this Hermes in the productions of the contemporary imagination. In this, he shares the predicament of Seneca, whose historical knowledge failed him in interpreting a pictorial allegory of the Graces:

Ergo et Mercurius una stat, non quia beneficia ratio commendat vel oratio sed quia pictori ita visum est.

Therefore, Mercury appears together with them not because good deeds are improved by reason or eloquence, but because that was how the painter saw it.

Might not these very words of Seneca's, which appear immediately after a passage vital to the program of the painting, have somehow prompted or eased the inclusion of this figure of Hermes?¹³⁵

We already know enough to suppose that Hermes would never have found his way into the painting without a literary precedent known to Botticelli's advisers. A similar combination of deities, with the Cyprian Venus at the center, is supplied, for example, by one of the Odes of Horace:¹³⁶

*O Venus, regina Cnidi Paphique
Sperne dilectam Cypron et vocantis
Ture te multo Glycerae decoram
Transfer in aedem.
Fervidus tecum puer et solutis
Gratae zonis¹³⁷ properentque Nymphae
Et parum comis sine te Juventas
Mercuriusque.*

O Venus, queen of Cnidos and Paphos,
Spurn your beloved Cyprus and come
To the fair shrine of Glycera, who calls you
With abundant incense.
Let the glowing boy hasten with you, and the Graces
With their girdles undone, and the nymphs,
And Youth (graceless without you),
And Mercury.

If we assume that Spring has been included in place of Juventas (Youth), and that "*properentque Nymphae*" is elaborated and classically illustrated by Zephyrus's pursuit of Flora, then we have the same supporting cast as in Botticelli's painting. This kind of free imitation of the Odes of Horace was a familiar idea to Poliziano and his friends: thus, there is an ode by Zanobio Acciaiuoli,¹³⁸ entitled "*Veris descriptio*" (Description of Spring), that is even written in the same meter as the Horace ode just quoted. In it, Flora and the Graces pay homage to Venus:

*Chloris augustam Charitesque matrem
Sedulo circum refovent honore
Veris ubertim gravido ferentes
Mumera cornu.*¹³⁹

Chloris and the Graces surround their august mother
And revive her with solicitous homage,
Bringing a horn of plenty overflowing with
The gifts of Spring.

In the center of Botticelli's painting stands Venus as "Lady of the Grove, surrounded by the Graces and the nymphs of the Tuscan spring."¹⁴⁰ Like the Venus of Lucretius, she is the "symbol of the annual renewal of nature";¹⁴¹

*Te, dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila coeli
Adventumque tuum, tibi suavis daedala tellus
Summittit flores, tibi rident aequora ponti
Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine coelum.*¹⁴²

Goddess, the winds flee from you, the clouds in the heavens
Flee your coming; for you the inventive earth
Puts forth sweet flowers; for you the broad expanses of ocean smile,
And the sky becomes tranquil and glows with diffuse light.

Later in Lucretius's poem (5.737 ff.), there is a description of the arrival of Venus with her train:

*It Ver et Venus et veris praenuntius ante
Pennatus graditur Zephyrus, vestigia propter
Flora quibus mater praespargens ante vias
Cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet.*

†

Spring comes, and Venus, and before them walks the herald of Spring,
Winged Zephyrus; close on his footsteps
The Lady Flora, scattering flowers everywhere before them,
Filling the way in front with wonderful colors and perfumes.

A passage in Poliziano's *Rusticus* (a bucolic poem in Latin hexameters, written in 1483)¹⁴³ shows that Poliziano not only knew this passage in Lucretius but added to it almost exactly the same figures that are found in Botticelli's painting. This alone would be enough to prove that Poliziano was Botticelli's adviser for this as well as for the former work. Poliziano describes the gods assembling in spring:¹⁴⁴

*Auricomae, jubare exorto, de nubibus adsunt
Horae, quae coeli portas atque atria servant,
Quas Jove plena Themis nitido pulcherrima partu
Edidit, Ireneque Diceque et mixta parenti
Eunomie, carpuntque recenteis pollice foetus:
Quas inter, stygio remeans Proserpina¹⁴⁵ regno,
Comptior ad matrem properat; comes alma sorori
It Venus, et Venerem parvi comitantur Amores:
Floraque lascivo parat oscula grata marito:
In mediis, resoluta comas nudata papillas,
Ludit et alterno terram pede Gratia¹⁴⁶ pulsat:
Uda choros agitat nais...*

Dawn's rays having risen, the golden-haired Horae appear,
Who guard the gates and courtyards of heaven,
Whom lovely Themis bore to Jupiter—beautiful offspring,
Peace and Justice and (blending her parents' names) Good Governance—
And pluck fresh fruit from well-pruned branches.
In their midst, Proserpina, back from the Stygian realm,
Hastens more lovely to her mother; Venus comes,
Her sister's bountiful companion, and the little Loves accompany Venus;
And Flora makes ready the kisses that delight her lusty husband.
In the midst, with hair let loose, bare-breasted,
One of the Graces frolics and stamps the ground in time to the beat;
A damp Naiad urges on the dancers...

If the title of the work known as *Spring* is to be taken from the repertoire of ideas current in the artist's own time, then it ought to be called *Il regno di Venere* (The realm of Venus).

Here, too, the arguments are supplied by Poliziano and Lorenzo. Poliziano, *Giostra I*, st. 68–70:

68 *Ma fatta Amor la sua bella vendetta
Mossei lieto pel negro aere a volo;
E ginne al regno di sua madre in fretta
Ov' è de' picciol suo' fratei lo stuolo
A regno ove ogni Grazia si diletta,
Ove Beltà di fiori al crin fra brolo,*

*Ove tutto lascivo drieto a Flora
Zefiro vola e la verde erba infiora.*¹⁴⁷

69 *Or canta meco un po' del dolce regno,
Erato bella che 'l nome hai d'amore...*

68 When Cupid had enforced his sweet revenge,
Through the dark air he joyously took flight,
Hastening away toward his mother's realm,
Where bands of his young brothers have their home:
That realm in which the Graces all delight,
Where Beauty weaves a garden in their hair,
And lustful Zephyr flying after Flora
Scatters the greensward with a host of flowers.

69 Now sing a little of this joyful realm,
Lovely Erato, named for Love himself...

There follows, in stanza 70, a description of the realm of Venus, closely based on Claudian:

*Vagheggia Cipri un diletto monte
Che del gran Nilo i sette corni vede...*¹⁴⁸

Cyprus adores a mountain of delight
Which sights the seven horns of mighty Nile...

A sonnet by Lorenzo (Sonnet 27) sounds like a free imitation of the ode by Horace cited above:

*Lascia l'isola tua tanto diletta
Lascia il tuo regno delicato e bello,
Ciprigna dea; e vien sopra il ruscello
Che bagna la minuta e verde erbetta.
Vieni a quest' ombra ed alla dolce aurette
Che fa mormoreggiar ogni arbuscello,
A' canti dolci d'amoroso augello.
Questa da te per patria sia eletta.
E se tu vien tra queste chiare linfe,
Sia teco il tuo amato e caro figlio;
Chè qui non si conosce il suo valore.
Togli a Diana le sue caste ninfe,
Che sciolte or vanno e senz'alcun periglio,
Poco prezzando la virtù d'Amore.*

Leave your beloved isle and all its charms;
 Leave now your delicate and lovely realm,
 O Cyprian goddess; come down to the brook
 That laps the edge of close-cropped, verdant turf.
 Come to this shade, and to the gentle breeze
 That rustles through the bushes all around,
 To the sweet chorus of the mating birds,
 Choosing this country for your very own.
 But if you visit these pellucid streams,
 Be sure to bring along your darling son;
 For here his power is still unrecognized.
 Steal from Diana her unsullied nymphs,
 Who safe from danger freely range the land,
 Paying scant heed to Cupid's mighty power.

For Lorenzo, too, Zephyrus and Flora are part of the scene. In the *Selve d'amore* we find:

*Vedrai ne' regni suoi non più veduta
 Gir Flora errando con le ninfe sue:
 Il caro amante in braccio l' ha tenuta,
 Zefiro; e insieme scherzan tutti e due.*¹⁴⁹

No longer seen in her own realm, but here
 Is Flora, roaming with her band of nymphs;
 About her is the arm of her true love,
 Her Zephyr, as together now they play.

Similarly, we read in the *Ambra*:

*Zeffiro s' è fuggito in Cipri, e balla
 Co' fiori ozioso per l' erbetta lieta.*¹⁵⁰

Zephyr has fled to Cyprus, there to dance
 With flowers in idle dalliance on the grass.

Compare Sonnet 15:

*Qui non Zeffiro, qui non balla Flora.*¹⁵¹
 Zephyrus and his Flora dance not here.

There can be no doubt that the *Birth of Venus* and *Spring* are complementary. The *Birth of Venus* shows Venus coming into the world, rising from the sea to be wafted by zephyrs to the Cyprian shore. The so-called *Spring* shows the moment that follows: Venus, in full regalia, makes her appearance in her own realm. In the branches of the trees above her, and on the ground beneath

her feet, the earth's new floral garment spreads out in all its immeasurable splendor. The Lady is surrounded by her faithful helpers in all that pertains to blossom time: Hermes, who dispels the clouds; the Graces, personifications of youth and beauty; Cupid; Spring; and the West Wind, whose love makes Flora into a bounteous dispenser of flowers.

Chapter 3: How the Works Came to Be Painted

Botticelli and Leonardo

On the most cautious estimate, the composition of Poliziano's *Giostra* cannot be dated before January 1475 (when Giuliano de' Medici held his first tournament) or after 26 April 1478 (the day of Giuliano's death). Book 2 of the poem, which concludes with Giuliano's oath, must have been composed after 26 April 1476, as it refers (st. 10, l. 8 [and st. 33]) to the death of the "nymph" Simonetta, in real life Simonetta Cattaneo, the beautiful Genoese-born wife of the Florentine Marco Vespucci, who died of consumption on 26 April at the age of twenty-three.¹⁵² It is likely, as will be seen, that Botticelli's two antique-inspired allegorical paintings were also painted at about this time, a supposition corroborated on stylistic grounds by the work of Julius Meyer.

The following considerations also apply. In both paintings, the goddess Spring is an indispensable part of the whole. In the poem she is no more than an allusion; even so, Poliziano's stanzas incorporate all the imagery and descriptive attributes required to define Spring exactly as—at his suggestion—Botticelli showed her. As has already been shown, the figure of Spring in Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* is similar in costume and pose to the three Horae who welcome Venus in the imaginary work of art described by the poet. In exactly the same way, "Spring" in the *Realm of Venus* tallies with Poliziano's nymph Simonetta. *

If we suppose that Poliziano was asked to point out to Botticelli how to enshrine Simonetta's memory in a pictorial allegory, then he must have had to take account of the specific representational requirements of painting. This has led him to assign the individual traits stored in his imagination to a number of specific mythological characters, in order to suggest to the painter the idea of a more clearly defined and therefore more readily paintable single figure, that of Venus's companion, Spring. *

That Botticelli was acquainted with Simonetta herself we know from Vasari, who saw a profile portrait of her by Botticelli in the collection of Duke Cosimo:

*Nella guardaroba del signor Duca Cosimo sono di sua mano due teste di femmina in profilo, bellissime: una delle quali si dice che fu l'innamorata di Giuliano de' Medici, fratello di Lorenzo.*¹⁵³

In Duke Cosimo's dressing room there are two profile heads of women by his hand, both very beautiful: one of them is said to have been the lady-love of Giuliano de' Medici, Lorenzo's brother.

In the *Giostra*, Giuliano comes upon her unawares:

She sits on the grass, twining a garland, and as she espies the youth, she timidly rises and, with a graceful movement, catches up the hem of her dress, the lap of which is full of the flowers she has plucked.¹⁵⁴

Golden locks cluster around her brow;¹⁵⁵ her dress is strewn all over with flowers;¹⁵⁶ and, as she walks, with flowers springing up beneath her feet—

*Ma l'erba verde sotto i dolci passi
Bianca gialla vermiglia azzurra fassi*¹⁵⁷

The verdant grass beneath her precious feet
Turns white and gold, vermilion and blue

— Giuliano gazes after her:

*Fra sè lodando il dolce andar celeste
E'l ventilar dell'angelica veste.*¹⁵⁸

Praising the heavenly grace with which she walks,
Praising the waft of her angelic robe.

The Hora of Spring in the painting thus resembles the poet's Simonetta in every feature; might not she, too, be an idealized portrait of Simonetta Vespucci?

There are two paintings to which Vasari's statement might refer: one is in the Königliches Museum in Berlin,¹⁵⁹ and the other is in the collection of the Städelsches Institut in Frankfurt am Main.¹⁶⁰ Both show the head of a woman in profile. The neck is long, and the shallow arch of the chin begins almost at right angles to it. The mouth is closed; the lower lip droops very slightly. The nose, again, is almost at right angles to the steep slope of the upper lip. The nose turns up slightly at the tip, and the nostrils are crisply outlined; this, and the drooping lower lip, lend the face a look of resignation. The high forehead, fronting a long skull, gives the head a square look. Both women wear a fantastic "nymph coiffure": parted in the center, the mass of hair is partly woven into beaded braids, partly left to hang loose on the temples and the nape. A lock of hair flies out behind, unmotivated by any bodily movement.

As early as 1473, in an elegy,¹⁶¹ Poliziano had likened Albiera degli Albizzi, another who died young, to one of Diana's nymphs: here, too, the *tertium comparationis* was the hair:

*Solverat effusos quoties sine lege capillos,
Infesta est trepidis visa Diana feris.*¹⁶²

Whenever she let her hair tumble loose without restraint,
She seemed a Diana, feared by the timorous beasts.

Again:

*Emicat ante alias vultu pulcherrima nymphas
Albiera, et tremulum spargit ab ore jubar.
Aura quatit fusos in candida terga capillos,
Irradiant dulci lumina nigra face.*¹⁶³

Albiera with her lovely face outshines the other nymphs,
And a tremulous ray of light sparkles from her mouth.
The breeze tosses her hair, spread out over her fair back;
Her black eyes shine with sweet fire.

Poliziano seems to have had a particular fondness for women's hair, as witness these lines from his ode "In puellam suam":

*Puella, cujus non comas
Lyaeus aequaret puer,
Non pastor ille amphrysus
Amore mercenarius,
Comas decenter pendulas
Utroque frontis margine,
Nodis decenter aureis
Nexas, decenter pinnulis
Ludentium Cupidinum
Subventilantibus vagas,
Quas mille crispant annuli,
Quas ros odorque myrrheus
Commendat atque recreat.*¹⁶⁴

A girl whose hair
The Lyaeon boy could not match,
Nor that famous Amphrysian shepherd
Who was a mercenary for love;
Hair that hangs becomingly down
On each side of her face,
Becomingly braided in golden knots,
Becomingly straying when the little wings
Of Cupids at play
Fan it gently;
Hair that a thousand rings curl,
Hair that the liquid perfume of myrrh
Graces and refreshes.

The Frankfurt painting (which at once suggests a Medici connection on the sitter's part, through the fact that she wears a gem showing the punishment of Marsyas)¹⁶⁵ depicts the same face as the Berlin painting, except that the enlargement of the head (it is over life-size) lends a certain vacuity to the features. The picture gives the impression of having been painted in Botticelli's workshop, perhaps later than the Berlin Simonetta, as a reproduction of a popular ideal head.

In her hair she wears a clip with feathers in it; and just such "nymphs" with feathers in their loose hair were seen, bearing bows and arrows, at a *giostra* in Padua in June 1466.¹⁶⁶ They walked in procession before a float that bore Mercury atop Parnassus; at the foot of the mountain the Muses sat around the Castalian Spring. In an eyewitness description we read:

Vedeansi poscia venire dieci Ninfe in bianca veste colle chiome sparse sul collo, con pennacchi d'oro in capo, armate d'arco e faretra, a foggia di cacciatrici.

Then ten nymphs appeared in white gowns, their hair loose on their shoulders and golden plumes on their heads. They were armed with bows and quivers, in the guise of huntresses.

If we compare the profile of the Spring figure in the *Birth of Venus* with the two Simonetta portraits just mentioned, there is nothing to prevent our concluding that the painting shows us not simply an idealized depiction of Simonetta as a nymph but the likeness of her very face. As in the portraits, the head is square, on a long neck, and the profile line is divided into three equal parts consisting of forehead, nose, and mouth-with-chin. The mouth is closed, and the lower lip protrudes slightly.

The identification of this figure with the woman shown in the Berlin portrait might even more safely be made, were it not that Spring has her head slightly raised, and were the head in the Berlin portrait more strictly seen in profile: the mouth would then be smaller, the eyebrows would seem more arched, and the full curve of the eyeball would no longer be visible.

A profile portrait with the inscription *Simonetta Januensis Vespuccia*, now in the collection of the duke of Aumale,¹⁶⁷ would be a fair basis for comparison, had it not been firmly attributed to Piero di Cosimo,¹⁶⁸ who was born in 1462; it cannot, therefore, have been painted from life. The sitter is shown
* as Cleopatra, at the fatal moment when the asp strikes. Even the poor reproduction in *L'art* (1887, 60) makes it clear that the type in this case is the same, except that the rendering is softer; the coiffure is again "fantastic" and adorned with pearls, but it starts further back on the head, and there are no flying locks of hair.

It seems likely that Spring in the *Realm of Venus*, who faces the viewer directly, also bears the—idealized—features of Simonetta: the departure from the usual Botticelli facial type suggests this, but conclusive proof waits upon a study of the proportions.¹⁶⁹

Four sonnets by Lorenzo give eloquent testimony to the deep impression caused by Simonetta's death.¹⁷⁰ Such was the importance that Lorenzo attached to this event, and to his own poetic response to it, that he supplied the sonnets with a commentary, like Dante's for the *Vita nuova*, in which he gave a detailed account of the feelings that had prompted each poem in turn.

In the first sonnet, Lorenzo sees Simonetta in a bright star that he notices one night while sunk in a grief-stricken reverie. In the second, he likens her to the flower Clytië, waiting in vain for the Sun to return and restore her to life. In the third, he bewails her death, which has robbed him of all joy; Muses and Graces must help him to lament. The fourth sonnet is the expression of his deepest anguish. He sees no escape from racking pain but death.

If we bear in mind that the *Realm of Venus* had its origin in a sad event, this makes the pose and bearing of Venus more readily comprehensible: she gazes earnestly at the viewer, her head inclined toward her right hand, which she raises in an admonitory gesture. Botticelli devised a similar illustration for the words that Dante places in the mouth of Mathilde, when she draws his attention to the approach of Beatrice:

*Quando la donna tutta a me si torse,
Dicendo: frate mio, guarda ed ascolta.*¹⁷¹

... when to me at once
She turned, and cried: "My brother! Look and hearken."

Just so might Venus, amid the eternally youthful denizens of her realm, point to the transient earthly reflection of her power. In Lorenzo's words:

*Quant' è bella giovinezza
Che si fugge tuttavia!
Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:
Di doman non c' è certezza.*¹⁷²

How beautiful is youth,
Fleeting though it is!
Rejoice who will today,
Tomorrow's never sure.

In similar vein, Bernardo Pulci, in his elegy for Simonetta,¹⁷³ calls on the Olympians to send back to earth the "nymph" who now dwells with them: *

1 *Venite, sacre e gloriose dive
 Venite Gratie lagrimose e meste
 Acompagnar quel che piangendo scrive.*

- 10 *Nymphhe se voi sentite i versi miei*
Venite presto et convocate Amore
Prima che terra sia facta costei.
- 145 *Ciprigna, se tu hai potenza in celo,*
Perchè non hai col tuo figliuol difesa
Costei, de' regni tuoi delitia e zelo?
- 166 *Forse le membra caste e peregrine*
Solute ha Giove, e le nasconde e serra,
Per mostrar lei fra mille altre divine;
- 169 *Poi ripor la vorrà più bella in terra,*
Sì che del nostro pianto il cel si ride
Et vede el creder nostro quanto egli erra.
- 191 *Nympha, che in terra un freddo saxo copre*
Benigna Stella hor su nel ciel gradita
Quando la luce tua vi si scopre
 * *Torna a veder la tua patria smarrita.*¹⁷⁴
- 1 Come, holy and resplendent goddesses,
 Come, weeping Graces, in your solemn grief,
 Keep company with one who writes in tears.
- 10 Nymphs, if my verses now do reach your ears,
 Make haste to come to me, and call on Love
 To come before she turns to lifeless clay.
- 145 Cyprian, if any power in heaven you hold,
 Why did you not defend, you and your son,
 This girl, the joy and passion of your realm?
- 166 Perhaps those rare, chaste limbs are swept away
 By Jupiter, who holds and hides them close,
 To show her off amid her heavenly peers
- 169 And then restore her, lovelier than before,
 Once more to earth; so that all heaven laughs
 At our laments, and sees how far we err.
- 191 O Nymph, interred beneath a cold, hard stone,
 You kindly Star, who now adorn the skies,
 As soon as your own light begins to shine
 Turn back, see your forsaken native land.

It may be—and this is offered by way of hypothesis—that to Lorenzo and his friends the image of the personified Spring, the companion of Venus, who recalls the earth to life, the consolatory personification of renewal, represented the memory of “*la bella Simonetta*.” *

P. Müller-Walde, in the first part of his *Leonardo*,¹⁷⁵ hints that he views certain drawings by Leonardo as the products of a milieu very like the one here ascribed to Botticelli; with this difference, that he traces the artistic stimulus to the spectacle of the joust (*giostra*) itself, rather than to Poliziano's poem on the subject. And yet these very drawings, now in Windsor, *Girl in Armor*, *Youth with Spear*, *Beatrice* (see Müller-Walde, illustrations {36,} 38–39), can be adequately explained by reference to figures who appear in Poliziano's commemorative poem, but not in relation to the joust itself.

The *Youth with Spear* is the Giuliano of Poliziano's *Giostra*, shown at the moment when, as a hunter, with horn and spear, he gazes at the “nymph” whom he pursues, and she turns back to look at him.¹⁷⁶ The “Simonetta” of the poem is surely the female figure whom Müller-Walde calls “Beatrice.”¹⁷⁷ She has gathered up her skirt as she walks; her hair and dress still flutter in the wind; and she turns her head to look back at Giuliano and say to him, pointing to Florence:

*Io non son qual tua mente in vano auguria
Non d'altar degna non di pura vittima;
Ma là sovr' Arno nella vostra Etruria
Sto soggiogata alla teda legittima.*¹⁷⁸

I am not as you vainly guess I am:
Not worth an altar, or a spotless sacrifice.
For there, beside your Tuscan Arno's stream,
I live in thrall to lawful marriage vows.

The *Girl in Armor* might be Simonetta as she appears to Giuliano in a dream:

*Pargli veder feroce la sua donna
Tutta nel volto rigida e proterva...
Armata sopra alla candida gonna,
Che 'l casto petto col Gorgon conserva.*¹⁷⁹

He seemed to see his love in fierce array;
Her face was set in proud and haughty lines...
Armor she wore above her pure, white gown,
Chaste bosom sheltered by the Gorgon's head.

The mounted *Youth* (fig. 38 [Müller-Walde]) would thus be Giuliano riding out to the tournament; and in this drawing it is altogether possible—as M.-W. would have it—that the memory of the tournament itself contributed details to the depiction.

The clinging dress, with ends aflutter, worn by Simonetta ("Beatrice"), not only corresponds to Poliziano's description but represents for Leonardo, as for others, the proper garb for an antique nymph. This emerges from a passage in his *Trattato*:

*...ma solo farai scoprire la quasi vera grossezza delle membra à una ninfa, o' uno angello, li quali si figurino vestiti di sotili vestimenti, sospinti o' impressi dal soffiare de venti; a questi tali et simili si potra benissimo far scoprire la forma delle membra loro.*¹⁸⁰

...reveal as it were the true size of the limbs only in a nymph or an angel, who is represented in filmy garments that flutter and cling in the breeze; with these, and their like, the form of their limbs may very well be revealed.

Elsewhere, Leonardo even more clearly presents antiquity as the appropriate source for motifs of movement:

*...et imita, quanto puoi, li greci e latini co 'l modo del scoprire le membra, quando il uento apoggia sopra di loro li panni.*¹⁸¹

...and imitate, as far as you can, the Greeks and Latins in their way of revealing the limbs when the wind presses the garments against them.

This view of the antique bears fruit in the agitated female figure on the stucco relief in the Kensington Museum;¹⁸² her source lies in an antique maenad (such as Hauser's Type 30). That Leonardo had seen a neo-Attic relief of this kind emerges from a sanguine drawing in the Ambrosiana, showing a satyr with a lion (corresponding roughly to Hauser's Type 22).¹⁸³

Proof of the relatedness of all the various images of Simonetta can be supplied, ultimately, only by a thorough study of the influence of antiquity on proportions—a pendant to the present work. The point of departure for this second essay is once more supplied by Botticelli (in the Frankfurt painting of Simonetta); but in the course of the exposition it is Leonardo who emerges as the artist most closely concerned with the problem.

There is just one other place in which Leonardo invokes the authority of antiquity: his reference to Vitruvius in connection with the proportions of the human body.¹⁸⁴ If the influence of antiquity on early Renaissance ideas of proportion could ever be successfully clarified, corroboration would be found in the words of this artist, who combined an unexcelled grasp of the particular and the unique with an equally powerful capacity to see general truths and laws, and who—totally self-reliant as he was—undoubtedly accepted the authority of ancient writers only where he saw it as a precedent that demanded respect, a living force both to him and to his contemporaries.

For every sharply demarcated, static object, Sandro Botticelli had the keen eye of the Florentine "goldsmith-painter"; in his accessory forms, this appears in the loving exactitude with which every detail is observed and reproduced. Lucid detail was basic to his art, so much so that he paid no heed to the "mood-creating" qualities of landscape. According to Leonardo, he was in the habit of saying "that landscape painting had no point; that one had only to throw a sponge, soaked in different colors, against the wall, and a fine landscape might be seen in the resulting stain."¹⁸⁵

Leonardo, who denied Botticelli the rank of a *pittore universale* (universal painter) on the grounds of this defective feeling for landscape, adds: "*e queste tal pittore fece tristissimi paesi*" (and that was a painter who painted sorry landscapes).

Most of Botticelli's artistic contemporaries shared his attention to detail; but it was a personal liking for tranquil moods that gave his human figures the dreamy, passive beauty that is still admired as the especial mark of his creations.¹⁸⁶ One is tempted to say, of many of Botticelli's women and boys, that they have just woken from a dream to become aware of the world around them; however active they may be in that world, still their minds are filled with images seen in dreams.

It is clear that Botticelli's artistic temperament, dominated by a love of tranquil beauty,¹⁸⁷ requires some external prompting before it is likely to turn to the depiction of scenes of passionate agitation; and he is all the more willing to illustrate the ideas of others because this offers the most perfect scope for the other side of his character, his feeling for detailed depiction. But this was not the only reason why Poliziano's inventions found a sympathetic ear and a willing hand in Botticelli: the surface mobility of inanimate accessory forms, draperies and hair, which Poliziano commended to him as characteristic of antique works of art, was an easily manipulated external sign that could be added wherever he needed to create the semblance of intensified life. Botticelli readily made use of this expedient to show human figures in a state of excitement, or even of inner emotion.

In fifteenth-century art, "the antique" does not necessarily require artists to abandon expressive forms derived from their own observation—which is what the sixteenth century does demand, wherever antique themes are treated in the antique manner—but only directs their attention to the most difficult problem in all art, which is that of capturing images of life in motion.

Firmly persuaded of their own equality with the ancients, the artists of the Florentine Quattrocento made vigorous efforts to extract from the life around them analogous forms that they could work into art in their own way. If the "influence of antiquity" then led to the unthinking repetition of superficially agitated motifs of motion, this was not the fault of "the antique" (which has subsequently inspired others, ever since Winckelmann, to describe it with equal conviction as the fountainhead of "tranquil grandeur"): the fault lay in the artists, and in their lack of mature artistic discretion.

Botticelli was one of those who were all too pliable.

"The more one succeeds," says Justi,

...in coming truly close to a great artist, and in inducing him to respond to one's tireless questioning, the more he appears to be strictly confined within his own work, as if in a world of his own. To put it in scholastic terms, the *general*—that which he derives from his ancestry, school, and period; that which he shares with others; and that which he bequeaths to others—is only his secondary essence (δευτέρα οὐσία): the *individual*, the idiosyncratic, is his primary substance (πρώτη οὐσία). The hallmark of genius is therefore initiative.¹⁸⁸

To show how Sandro Botticelli dealt with contemporary views of antiquity, as a force that demanded resistance or submission, and how much of that force
* became his "secondary substance," has formed the purpose of this inquiry.

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* *Four Theses*

- I In autonomous, "major" art, the artistic manipulation of dynamic accessory forms evolves from an image of specific dynamic states originally perceived in reality.
- II The artist's self-distancing from the true context of the object fosters the addition of "dynamic" forms; in so-called symbolic or allegorical works of art, the latter are the first to appear, because from the outset the context of reality is eliminated, rendered "metaphorical."
- III The remembered image of generalized dynamic states, through which the apperception of the new impression takes place, is later unconsciously projected, in the work of art, as an idealizing outline.
- IV Mannerism or idealism in art is only a special case of the automatic reflex of the artistic imagination.

Extract from L'arte, Vol. 5, Fasc. 11-12 (1902) on Botticelli's Pallas

To accompany my article "La Giostra medicea del 1475 e la Pallade del Botticelli," printed on page 71 of the current volume of this journal, I publish a photograph of an intarsia in the Palazzo Ducale, Urbino, kindly pointed out to me by Dr. Warburg [fig. 16]. The analogy between the Pallas in the intarsia and the Pallas described in the narration of the *Giostra* of 1475 is such as to be evident at a glance.

It is not without interest to note, in addition, that Baccio Pontelli, to whom are ascribed "the designs and the intarsias that adorn the magnificent doors of the rooms" of the palace in Urbino—a Florentine and a pupil of Francesco Giovanni, alias Francione—was probably in Florence in 1475, assisting his master at the Palazzo della Signoria.¹⁸⁹ Only on the death of Luciano Laurana (in 1479) did he succeed Laurana in the work on the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino.¹⁹⁰

—Giovanni Poggi

Notes

1. Florence, Uffizi, Sala di Lorenzo Monaco, no. 39 [now Sala VI, no. 878]; see fig. 1. *Klassischer Bilderschatz* 3, viii, no. 307.
2. Florence, Accademia, Sala Quinta, no. 26 [now Uffizi, Sala VI, no. 8360]. *Klassischer Bilderschatz* 1, x, no. 140.
3. See R. Vischer, *Über das optische Formgefühl* (1873); on this, F. T. Vischer, "Das Symbol," in *Philosophische Aufsätze für Zeller* (1887), 153 ff.
4. Vasari, [Vite, ed.] Milanesi, 3:312.
5. (1881), 121; precise dimensions not given there or in *Klassischer Bilderschatz*. [Catalog 1927: 1.75 × 2.785 m.]
6. *Die Florentinische Schule des XV. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1890), 50 n. Also

adduced as an analogy by Woermann, "Sandro Botticelli," in Dohme, *Kunst und Künstler* (1878), 2.49, 50.

7. Preface reprinted by Bernard Botfield, *Praefationes et epistolae editionibus principibus auctorum veterum praepositae* (Cambridge, 1861), 180.

8. (Berlin, 1888), 2:232–33. Poliziano's *Giostra* was the poem written to commemorate the tournament held by Giuliano in 1475; it was composed between 1476 and 1478 and left unfinished on Giuliano's murder in 1478. The first book describes the realm of Venus; the second (and last) describes the apparition of the nymph whose task it is, at Venus's command, to convert Giuliano from a rough hunter to a votary of Love. See Gaspary, 2:228–33. G. Carducci's edition, *Le stanze, l'Orfeo e le rime di M. A. A. Poliziano* (Florence: Barbèra, 1863), from which the quotations here are taken, with its extensive critical apparatus, has been an essential foundation for the present work.

9. Bk. 1, st. 99–103. See Carducci [note 8], 56.

10. See Vasari, Milanese [note 4], 312; also Ulmann, "Eine verschollene Pallas Athena des Sandro Botticelli," *Bonner Studien für Kekulé* (Leipzig, 1890), 203–13.

11. These are (1) the castration of Saturn; (2) the birth of the nymphs and giants; (3) the birth of Venus; (4) Venus welcomed to the earth; (5) Venus welcomed to Olympus; (6) Vulcan himself.

12. These are (1) the rape of Europa; (2) Jupiter as swan, shower of gold, serpent, and eagle; (3) Neptune as ram and bull; (4) Saturn as horse; (5) Apollo pursuing Daphne; (6) Ariadne forsaken; (7) the arrival of Bacchus and (8) of his train; (9) the rape of Proserpina; (10) Hercules dressed as a woman; (11) Polyphemus; (12) Galatea.

13. German translation by Schwenk (Frankfurt, 1825).

14. On its relationship to the Medici Venus, see the following: Michaelis, *Archäologische Zeitung*, 1880: 13 ff., and *Kunstchronik*, 1890, cols. 297–301; Müntz, *Histoire de l'art pendant la Renaissance* (1889), 224–25. Also significant is the illustration to a poem by Lorenzo de' Medici in Ms. Plut. XLI, cod. 33, f. 31 [fig. 2; see added text on p. 410]. See Vasari, Milanese [note 4], 3:330. For Poliziano's epigrams on the *Birth of Venus*, see del Lungo, ed., *Prose volgari inedite e poesie latine e greche edite e inedite di A. A. Poliziano* (Florence: Barbèra, 1867), 219.

15. Just as it does in Botticelli's Berlin *Venus* (1883 catalog, no. 1124), illustrated by Meyer [see note 6], 49. The hair blows to the left, and two little braids rest on the shoulder.

16. Gaspary [see note 8], 2:232, seems to think that it was the other way around.

17. Vasari, Milanese [see note 4], 7:143. Ludovico Dolce, *Aretino*, *Quellenschriften für die Kunstgeschichte* 2, 80. See R. Springer, *Raffaël und Michelangelo*, 2d ed. (1883), 2:58; R. Foerster, *Farnesina-Studien* (1880), 58. E. Müntz, *Précurseurs de la Renaissance* (1882), 207–8, concludes a detailed analysis of the *Giostra* with the words: "en cherchant bien on découvrirait certainement que Raphaël n'est pas le seul artiste qui s'en soit inspiré" (on close scrutiny, it would certainly be found that Raphael was not the only artist who drew inspiration from it). On the connection between Leonardo and the *Giostra*, as proposed by Müller-Walde, *Leonardo* (1889), see below, p. 139.

18. Ed. Janitschek, *Quellenschriften für die Kunstgeschichte*, no. 11 (Vienna, 1877), 192 ff.

19. Lützow, *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 14 (1879): 61.

20. (1879), 157.
21. See Janitschek [note 18], iii.
22. Especially apparent where the zodiac and the planets are concerned. Individual illustrations in C. Yriarte, *Rimini* (Paris, 1882): see, e.g., the *Mercury* (his fig. 105), 216, and *Mars* (his fig. 107), 217. These depictions recently discussed by Burmeister, *Der bildnerische Schmuck des Tempio Malatestiano zu Rimini* (Inaugural diss., Breslau, 1891).
23. In *De re militari* [12.12] (first printed in Verona, 1472). The passage is quoted by Janitschek, *Die Gesellschaft der Renaissance* (Stuttgart, 1879), 108.
24. See the letter written in 1454 to his clerk of works, Matteo de' Pasti, printed in Guhl-Rosenberg, *Künstlerbriefe*, 2d ed. (1880), 33.
25. *Über ein Vorbild neu-attischer Reliefs*, Winckelmannsprogramm (Berlin, 1890), 97-124.
26. See Hauser, *Die Neu-Attischen Reliefs* (Stuttgart, 1889), 15, no. 17.
27. See, among others, E. Müntz, *Précurseurs* [note 17], 9.
28. Illustrated in Müntz [see note 17], 68. Second relief of the left-hand leaf of the door. [*Klassiker der Kunst: Donatello*, 74, 78.]
29. [Fig. 5.] Semper, *Donatellos Leben und Werke* (1887), 38, already had in mind a source in the "manner of Scopas."
30. [See note 25], 123.
31. *Archäologische Zeitung* (1866): plate 216; Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs* (1890), 2:xli, 190'. Might not the two other women be modeled, however freely,
 * on the women with the child on the sarcophagus?
32. No. 211, fol. 251; see Jahn, *Sächsische Berichte* (1868), 224.
33. [Fig. 3.] See Yriarte [note 22], fig. 112, 222.
34. *Giostra*: see the birth of Venus (1.200.2), her welcome to earth (1.100.5-6) and to Olympus (1.103.3-4), the rape of Europa (1.105.5-7), the rape of Proserpina (1.113.3-4), Bacchus and Ariadne (1.110.5).
- † 35. In the *Fasti*, based on Moschus: see Haupt's note to *Metamorphoses* 2.874-75 [(Berlin, 1857), 94].
36. Just as Claudian's *Epithalamia* are Poliziano's favored source in general. See Gaspari [note 8], 229.
37. The passage is from Claudian, *De raptu Proserpinae* 2.247-48.
38. Ibid. 2.30; the person referred to is Apollo.
39. See Alberti, quoted above, p. 96, "*dal vento dolce voleranno*."
40. Almost entirely after Claudian, *De nuptiis Honorii et Mariae*. See Carducci [note 8] on the verses cited.
41. On Venus and her coiffure, it is worth recalling Ovid's lines (*Amores* 1.14.31 ff.):
Formosae periere comae: quas vellet Apollo,
Quas vellet capiti Bacchus inesse suo.
Illis contulerim, quas quondam nuda Dione
Pingitur umenti sustinuisse manu.
 (Her lovely hair is ruined: hair that Apollo would covet,
 Hair that Bacchus would want for his own head.)

I might compare her tresses to those the painter once
Showed nude Dione supporting with a dripping wet hand.)

42. E.g., Meyer [see note 6], 50, and text to *Klassischer Bilderschatz* [see note 1].

43. Also *Epistulae ex Ponto* 3.1.11: "*Tu neque ver sentis cinctum florente corona*" (Neither do you feel the spring, girl with its crown of flowers).

44. Whereas it is more correct to read "*cinctum florente corona*" as "garlanded (around the head). Ovid's *Fasti* were also a principal topic of Poliziano's public lectures; see Gaspari [note 8], 2:667. On his own poem in the manner of the *Fasti*, see Mencken, *Historia vitae Angeli Politiani* (Leipzig, 1736), 609.

45. First ed., 1556, fol. CXIX^v.

46. A mistake for *Metamorphoses* 2.

47. The author of the *Hypnerotomachia* was a Dominican, Francesco Colonna (died in Venice, 2 October 1527). According to the preface to the first edition by Leonardo Crasso, the book's editor, it was composed at Treviso in 1467. See A. Ilg, *Über den kunsthistorischen Wert der Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Vienna, 1872), and Lippmann's comments in *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 4 (1884): 198. Reproductions of the woodcuts recently published by J. W. Appel (London, 1888).

48. Fol. m IV^v.

49. Here, as will be seen, the passage from Ovid quoted above [see note 44] has been interpreted correctly (*cinctum* meaning "garlanded").

50. *Subucula*: undergarment.

51. *Chyrotropus*: charcoal brazier.

52. *Buccatus*.

53. See fig. 4.

54. To take only the most important, see the description of the "nymphs" on the obelisk and the way in which they are depicted, Appel (see note 47) no. 5; also Appel nos. 9, 10, 22, 76-78.

55. *Flora in campagna* [*Versi e prose di Luigi Alamanni*], ed. Raffaelli (1859), 1:4 lines 13-16.

56. At Chantilly; see fig. 7. See P. de Chennevières, *Gazette des beaux-arts* (1879) 514: "*Notons encore la Vénus sortant de l'onde et entourée de naïades, du même Botticelli, première pensée du tableau des Offices de Florence et provenant de la collection Reiset.*" (Note also the Venus arising from the waves and attended by naiads, by the same Botticelli, a first sketch for the painting in the Uffizi in Florence. Formerly in the Reiset collection.)

57. Statius, *Achilleis*, ll. 836 ff.:

Nec servare vices nec braccia iungere curat;

Tunc molles gressus, tunc aspernatur amictus

Plus solito rumpitque choros et plurima turbat.

(He cares neither to take his turn nor to link arms;

Then he spurns the dainty steps, the cloaks,

More than usual, and breaks up the dances in great confusion.)

58. See the *Beschreibung Roms* 3.1:349 f., and Dessau, *Sitzungsbericht der Berliner Akademie* 2 (1883): 1077 ff.
59. *Ancient Marbles in Great Britain*, 735.
60. See fig. 6, after Robert [see note 31], 2:34, pl. 19.
61. Dessau [see note 58], 1093.
62. See Oettingen ed., 733.
63. [*Historia naturalis*] 36.[4].29.
64. Hain, *Repertorium* 13087.
65. Hain, *Repertorium* 13090.
66. Hain, *Repertorium* 13094.
67. From the 1534 ed., p. dcclxvii.
68. See above, note 10.
69. *Histoire de la Renaissance* 1, color reproduction.
70. E. Müntz, *Les collections des Médicis au XV^{me} siècle* (Paris, 1888), 86: "Nella camera di Piero. Uno panno in uno intavolato messo d'oro alto bra. 4 in circha e largo * bra. 2: entrovi una fighura di Pa<llade> et con uno schudo dandresse <sic> e una lancia d'arco di mano di Sandro da Botticello, f. 10." (In Piero's chamber, a decorative panel in a gilded frame, about 4 braccia high and 2 braccia wide. Bearing a figure of Pallas with a shield <sic> and a spear, by Sandro Botticelli, f. 10.)
71. [See note 4], 3:312.
72. Reprinted in the Biblioteca rara series by C. Tèoli [1863], 22. Del Lungo, too [see note 14], refers to Giovio in connection with Epigram 104, "Pro Petro Medice": "In viridi teneras exurit flamma medullas."
73. In his *Ragionamenti*, Vasari assigns the *bronconi* to the elder Giuliano as a love emblem.
74. This emerges from the presence in Lorenzo's inventory (page 85) of the following item: "Una storietta di bronzo di br. 1 per ogni verso, entrovi uno Christo crucifixo in mezzo di dua ladroni con otto figure a pie, f. 10" (A bronze relief about 1 braccio square, containing the figure of Christ crucified between two thieves, with eight full-length figures). This square bronze relief is undoubtedly identical with the *Crucifixion* in the Bargello in Florence, which M. Semrau, *Donatello's Kanzeln in S. Lorenzo* (1891), 206-9, has shown to be the work of Bertoldo di Giovanni. According to Semrau, this work is 61 cm square. This yields the measurements given here for Botticelli's painting.
75. Copy in Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett (2998a). This woodcut is reproduced with its text by Geiger, *Renaissance und Humanismus*, opposite 198. (Fig. 9.)
76. St. 2, ll. 41 ff.
77. Fig. 8 [from a new photograph].
- + 78. This would fit Lippmann's surmise, *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* (1882): 187 ff., that the woodcuts for the *Giostra* were made between 1490 and 1500, and that the illustrations to the *rappresentazioni*, too, "clearly show Botticelli's artistic tendency."
79. An attempt has latterly been made to show that the supposed portrait of Pico della Mirandola in the Uffizi is a portrait of Piero di Lorenzo painted by Botticelli between 1492 and 1494. See *Archivio storico dell'arte* 1:290 and p. 465.

80. See above, p. 90 [fig. 10].
81. The *Spring* is now in the Accademia in Florence. [Uffizi, Sala VI, no. 8360.] According to the information in *Der klassische Bilderschatz* 1 (1889): 10: panel, 203 × 314 cm.
82. However, G. Kinkel, *Mosaik zur Kunstgeschichte* (1876), 398, clearly indicated that the two paintings were companion pieces.
83. See J. Bayer, *Aus Italien* (1885), 269, "Frau Venus in der Renaissance": "Is it Zephyrus, who blows on the nymph of the forest floor and embraces her? Rosebuds spring from her mouth and slip down onto her neighbor's dress. This must be Flora herself."
84. The text of the third volume of the *Klassischer Bilderschatz* series (1891): viii, follows Vasari in giving Castello as the place for which the painting was intended; a more inherently plausible location would be Careggi, the meeting place of the Neoplatonic circle.
85. *Liber de pictura*, ed. Janitschek (see note 18), 147.
86. See Richard Foerster, "Die Verleumdung des Apelles in der Renaissance," *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 8 (1887): 29 ff.
87. (See note 18), 147.
88. Berlin, Königliche Bibliothek, libr. pict. A. 61; see above, p. 97.
89. No. 49, fol. 320. See Jahn, *Sächsische Berichte* (1868), 186. Illustrated in Winckelmann, *Monumenti inediti*, pl. 147. Discussed in Dütschke, *Antike Bildwerke* 3:235. Hauser (see note 26), 49, no. 63, also p. 147.
90. Photo Brogi [*Klassiker der Kunst* 30 (1927): 55]. See Cosimo Conti, "Découverte de deux fragments de Sandro Botticelli," *L'art*, 1881, no. 4:86-87; 1882, no. 1:59-60; subsequently C. Ephrussi, *Gazette des beaux-arts* 25 (1882): 475-83, with illustrations of the fragments. See also, more recently, A. Heiss, *Les médailleurs de la Renaissance: Florence et les florentins* (Paris, 1891), 56 ff. On Giovanna Tornabuoni, see also F. Sitwell, "Types of Beauty," *Art Journal* (1889): 9, with illustration of the 1488 portrait of her ascribed to Ghirlandaio; and Enrico Ridolfi, *Giovanna Tornabuoni e Ginevra dei Benci sul coro di Santa Maria Novella in Firenze* (Florence, 1890). (From the abstract in *Archivio storico dell'arte* (1891): 68-69.)
91. Vasari, Milanese (see note 4), 3:269, mentions that Ghirlandaio painted a chapel *al fresco* for the Tornabuoni at Chiasso Maceregli (i.e., what is now the Villa Lemmi). An artist who stood stylistically between Botticelli and Ghirlandaio might well have painted those frescoes; but this is a matter that the writer can discuss only after seeing the frescoes for himself.
92. Collection of the Uffizi, Florence. Illustrated by Friedlaender, "Die italienischen Schaumünzen des 15. Jahrhunderts," *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 2:243, pl. 28, nos. 13-14, where they are ascribed to Niccolò Fiorentino.
93. They are demonstrably present from the first half of the fifteenth century onward: (1) in the sketchbook of Jacopo Bellini, fol. 31; see Gaye, *Schorns Kunstblatt* (1840), no. 34, 135; (2) in Agostino di Duccio's relief of Apollo in Rimini, as the terminal ornament on his lyre; see Cartari, *Le imagini* (note 45), fol. 121, with reference back to Macrobius (1.17.13), photo Alinari 37367; (3) on the fresco of the *Triumph of Venus* in the Palazzo Schifanoia, photo Alinari 10831; (4) in an initial to a Horace

manuscript (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Ham. Ms. 334) written for Ferdinand of
 * Naples (1458–94); (5) in a woodcut by Master J. B.—said by E. Galichon, *Gazette des
 beaux-arts* 4 (1859): 257–74, to be in the Hamburger Kunsthalle, but no longer to be
 found there—in which they are described as sheltered by a temple. For the statues of the
 Graces in Siena and the imitations of them, see Schmarsow, *Raphael und Pinturicchio*
 (1880), 6.

On a medal by Leone Leoni, illustrated by E. Plon, *Leone Leoni et Pompeo Leoni*
 (Paris, 1887), pl. 31, 4 (first half of sixteenth century), the Graces are shown together
 with two putti (to r. and l.), who receive fruits or flowers from them, just as they appear
 on antique sarcophagus reliefs. See Bartoli, *Admiranda*, 2d ed., pl. 68: “*In aedibus
 Mattheiorum.*” As early as Aldrovandi, *Le statue antiche di Roma* (1562 ed.), 144, a
 relief depicting the three nude Graces is mentioned in the house of Carlo da Fano.

94. See C. Justi, *Winckelmann* 2:287 [quotation]: “Gods and heroes are shown as
 if standing in holy places, where tranquillity reigns, and not as playthings of the wind,
 or in the act of brandishing a flag.”

95. Friedlaender [see note 92], pl. 28, no. 14.

96. [Fig. 14] In the Kestner-Museum, Hanover. My attention was drawn to it by
 Dr. Voegelé. The figures show the attributes now believed to stem from Vittore Pisano:
 short coats with wide sleeves, tight breeches with particolored hose, and tiered hats.

97. Prompted, perhaps, by *Aeneid* 4.168: “*summoque ulularunt vertice nymphae*”
 (the nymphs holloed on the topmost peak)?

98. For this coiffure, see the wind god in the miniatures of Liberale da Verona,
 illustrated in *L'art* 4 (1882): 227 [Venturi, 7:4, fig. 515]. It is not beyond conjecture that
 the artist had a late antique Virgil illustration in his memory or before his eyes. See,
 e.g., the Iris and the wind goddess in Vatican Ms. 3867 (fol. 74^v, 77), illustrated by
 Agincourt, *Histoire de l'art*, pl. 63; and on this P. de Nolhac, *Mélanges d'archéologie
 et d'histoire* 4:321 f. Poliziano made use of this manuscript for purposes of collation;
 see *ibid.*, 317.

The majority of the works mentioned here in connection with the Villa Lemmi
 fresco are illustrated by Heiss [see note 90], 68 ff. He also reproduces the Theseus and
 the Ariadne from the Baldini engraving (71), with the following comment:

*Dans la Vénus chasseuse surtout, on retrouve l'allure très distinguée, mais très
 tourmentée, la profusion d'ornements et les draperies flottantes, si caractéristiques
 du style de Botticelli. Nous reproduisons ici, de ce maître, deux dessins dont les cos-
 tumes et la façon dont ils sont traités ont une grande analogie avec les types des
 revers auxquels nous venons de faire allusion.*

(In the Venus as Huntress, above all, we find the same highly distinguished, but also
 highly restless, air, the same profusion of ornament and the same flying draperies
 that are so characteristic of the style of Botticelli. We here reproduce two drawings
 by this master, in which the costumes and their treatment evince a powerful analogy
 with the types on the reverses [of medals] to which we allude above.)

99. *Aeneid* 4.120.

100. Similar drapery folds are found in the work of Botticelli's teacher, Fra Filippo
 Lippi: e.g., in the fresco of the *Dance of Herodias* in Prato cathedral. See Ulmann,

Fra Filippo Lippi und Fra Diamante als Lehrer Sandro Botticellis (diss., Breslau, 1890), 14.

101. *Fasti* 5.193 ff.

102. *Metamorphoses* 1.497 ff.

103. Flora's hair in the painting is, accordingly, unbraided and unadorned; there is not even the fillet mentioned at 1.477: "*vitta coercebat positos sine lege capillos*" (with a fillet she bound her unruly hair).

104. In the prose translation of the *Metamorphoses* by Giovanni di Bonsignore (composed ca. 1370, published with woodcut illustrations, Venice: Zoane Rosso, 1497), we have an authentic witness to the care with which the Italians upheld Ovid's concern for detail.

See, e.g., for 1.477 ff.: "*Cap. XXXIV...fugia con gli capelli sparti et scapigliati legati senza alcuna acimadura <?>*" (Ch. 34...she fled disheveled, with hair loose, tangled <?>, and unshorn).

For 1.497 ff.: "*Cap. XXXV. Phebo desiderava cozosersi con daphne per matrimonio la donna fugēdo lo negava. Poiche era levato lo giorno vedeva gli disordinati capegli di daphne pendere per lo collo e dicea: che seria costei se la pettinasse e conzassese con maestrevole mano.* (Ch. 35. Phoebus wanted to wed Daphne, but the lady refused him and ran off. At break of day he saw her hair hanging in disarray around her neck, and said: "What might she be, if only her hair were combed and dressed by a skillful hand.")

For 1.527: "...percio che fugendo lei lo vento che traevano di ricōtro gli scopriano alquanto gli pani e mandaregli gli capelli doppio le spalle" (...as she fled from him, the wind blowing against her lifted her garments and sent her hair flying behind her).

For 1.540 ff.: "*sēza alcuno riposo sempre gli andava quasi allato alle spalle: tanto chel suo fiato gli svētilava gli capegli...*" (kept tirelessly just behind her, so that his breath ruffled her hair).

105. See above, pp. 98 ff.

106. Probably first performed in 1472 [1471] in Mantua. See Carducci [note 8], lix ff.; Gaspari [note 8], 213 ff.; also, more recently, A. d'Ancona, *Origini del teatro italiano*, 2d ed. (Turin, 1891), Appendice II: "Il teatro mantovano nel secolo XVI," 349 ff.

107. Carducci [see note 8], 102.

108. *Giostra* 1.109, Carducci [see note 8], 62.

109. See *Metamorphoses* 1.504:

Nympha, precor, Penei, mane! non insequor hostis;
Nympha mane! sic agna lupum, sic cerva leonem,
Sic aquilam penna fugiunt trepidante columbae,
Hostes quaeque suos: amor est mihi causa sequendi.
Me miserum! ne prona cadas indignave laedi
Crura notent sentes et sim tibi causa doloris.
Aspera, qua properas, loca sunt; moderatius, oro,
Curre fugamque inhibe; moderatius insequar ipse.

(O nymph of Peneius {Daphne}, I pray you, stay! I do not pursue you as a foe;
Stay, nymph! Thus does the lamb flee the wolf, the doe the lion,
Thus doves flee before the eagle on trembling wing,
Each from its foe: but love is the cause of my pursuit.
Alas for me! Lest you fall headlong, or your limbs, deserving no harm,
Leave their mark on the path, and I be a cause of pain to you—
The land is rough where you are hastening—run at a more temperate pace, I pray,
And check your flight; I shall follow more temperately myself.)

110. See Gaspari {note 8}, 667. A passage in a letter from Michael Verinus (died 1483; see Poliziano, *Epigrammata* 83, ed. del Lungo, 153) to Piero de' Medici bears the interpretation (if we follow Mencken) that a poetical commentary on the *Fasti* of Ovid, written by Poliziano in the language and style of the Latin poem itself, was circulated among his friends. The letter is printed by Mencken {see note 44}, 609:

Non sine magna voluptate, vel potius admiratione, Politiani tui poema, alterum Nasonis opus, legi. Dum enim fastos, qui est illius divini vatis liber pulcherrimus, interpretatur, alterum nobis paene effinxit, carmen carmine expressit, tanta diligentia, ut, si titulum non legissem, Ovidii etiam putassem.

(Not without great pleasure, or rather admiration, have I read the poem by your Poliziano—a second work of Ovid. For while he was commenting on the *Fasti*, which is the finest book of that divine poet, he almost created another such work for us: he described a poem by a poem, with such great care that if I had not read the title I would indeed have thought it was Ovid's.)

See above, note 44.

111. [Originally] cited from the Italian duodecimo edition of 1851 [now ed. Wiese (Heidelberg, 1913)]. On this see Zumbini, "Una storia d'amore e morte," *Nuova antologia* a XLIV (1884), 5.

112. Poliziano, *Giostra* 1.109.4: "Ch'io non ti seguo per farti morire."

113. See *Giostra* 1.64.

114. See Gaspari {note 8}, 2:244 ff.

115. *Poesie di Lorenzo de' Medici* (Florence: Barbèra, Bianchi, 1859), 270.

* 116. *Ibid.*, 273. As further evidence of the contemporary interest in this theme, a number of early artistic treatments may be cited:

1. The earliest representation in modern times (early fifteenth century) is probably the miniature in a manuscript in the British Museum (Christine de Pisan), Harl. 4431, fol. 143b. See Gray Birch, *Early Drawings* (London, 1879), 92.
2. A woodcut by Master J. B., Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett.
3. Dürer's woodcut for Celtis's *Libri amorum* (1502).
4. Caradosso, plaque, illustrated in Bode and Tschudi, *Die Bildwerke der christlichen Epoche*, pl. 38, no. 785; also *ibid.*, pl. 35, no. 785.

That is without mentioning those images that directly illustrate the text of Ovid (from the Venice edition of 1497 to the mid-sixteenth century).

117. D'Ancona {see note 106}, 2:5.

118. Ibid., 2:350. [See our p. 400, note 136, and addendum.]
119. See d'Ancona, *Sacre rappresentazioni*, 3:268–69.
120. Illustration of the pursuit scene in Müntz, *Histoire* (see note 14), 2:125.
121. The works mentioned are reproduced and discussed together by Ephrussi, *Gazette des beaux-arts* 1 (1878): 444–58.
122. *Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1885), 2:132 [*Gesamtausgabe* 5:290].
123. E. Foerster, *Geschichte der italienischen Malerei* (Leipzig, 1872), 3:306, considers the two wind deities in the *Birth of Venus* to be Zephyrus and Flora—a conjecture which would fit well into the context presented here, but which is refuted by the very fact that both are represented as winds in the act of blowing. *
124. Photo Alinari 1293; Uffizi catalog no. 74; *Antike Bildwerke* 3:74, no. 121. See fig. 15.
125. See Vasari, *Vite* (Livorno, 1772), 471 f. This list of the 24 *anticaglie* in the Sala of the Palazzo Pitti has been reprinted by L. Bloch in *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (Römische Abteilung)* 7 (1892): 81 f.
126. Bocchi, *Bellezze di Firenze*, ed. Cinelli (1677), 102 [*Le bellezze della città di Fiorenza* (1591), 46].
127. Dütschke tells us that the head of the statue is modern and “good Renaissance work.” It is noteworthy that the head of Botticelli’s *Hora of spring* also departs from his customary female type: the oval is more elongated, the nose straight, without a prominent tip, and the mouth somewhat wider. Illustrated, e.g., in Müntz, *Histoire* (see note 14), 1.41.
128. Florence, Uffizi; see Heiss (note 90), pl. 7, no. 3; Friedlaender, *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 2:243: “Without inscription. Mercury, striding to the right, draped, a curved sword at his side, caduceus in crook of right arm.”
129. See del Lungo (note 14), 72.
130. Niccolò produced one portrait medal of Poliziano (Heiss (see note 90), pl. 6, nos. 1, 2), and another of the latter’s sister, Maria (ibid., pl. 6, no. 3).
131. The three Graces on the reverse of Niccolò’s medal for Pico della Mirandola (see Litta, *Famiglie celebri italiane*), bear allusions to the Neoplatonic, allegorical view of Venus. Similarly, Niccolò’s “*Venus Virgo*” (see above, p. 117) might well be derived from kindred ideas of the symbolic interpretation of the *Aeneid*, as found in Cristoforo Landino’s *Disputationes camaldulenses*. On the relation between works of art of this kind and contemporaneous Neoplatonic poetry and philosophy, we may shortly expect enlightenment from a highly qualified source. *
132. An analogy for the pose and costume of Venus, which recalls that of draped figures in late Roman art, may be found, e.g., in the ivory relief of Hygieia in Liverpool (Westwood, *Fictile Ivories*, 4): this stems from the Gaddi collection, which was extant in Florence by the end of the fifteenth century. See Molinier, *Plaquettes* 1:42.
133. See above, p. 112.
134. E. Foerster (see note 123), 307: “breaks off blossoms from a tree.” G. Kinkel, *Mosaik zur Kunstgeschichte* (1876), 398: “knocks fruit off a tree.” W. Lübke, *Geschichte der italienischen Malerei* (1878), 1:356: “youth of noble appearance, on the point of breaking off a branch from one of the laurel trees.” C. von Lützow, *Die Kunstschätze Italiens* (1884), 254: “knocks the fruit from the tree.” *

135. It so happens that even the archaeologists are at a loss to find a precise iconographical definition of the Hermes depicted together with Venus on a small red-figure vase from Athens (Berlin Museum, no. 2660). The words in which Kalkmann laments the inadequacy of methodical investigation in confronting the most complex works of art are precisely applicable to Botticelli's painting; see *Archäologisches Jahrbuch* (1886), 231 ff.; 253: "An art that wanders on sunlit paths rarely suffers anyone to think through every one of the thoughts that underlie its happiest inventions; and to many questions it returns no answer but in hints."

136. *Carmina* 1.30.

137. See above, p. 115.

138. Poliziano's friend and pupil, who published his master's Greek epigrams in 1495.

139. Ms. Marucell. Flor. A. 82, printed by Roscoe, *Leo X*, ed. Henke, 3:561.

140. Bayer {see note 83}, 271.

141. Kalkmann {see note 135}, 252.

142. Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 1.6 ff. The manuscript had been discovered by Poggio. See Roscoe, *The Life of Lorenzo* (Heidelberg, 1825), 1:29; also Julia Cartwright in *Portfolio* (1882), 74: "The subject of the picture... is said" — by whom? — "to have been suggested by a passage of Lucretius: 'It Ver et Venus, etc.'"

143. See Gaspary {note 8}, 2:221.

144. Ed. del Lungo {see note 14}, 315, lines 210–20.

145. Like Spring in the painting.

146. See (cited by del Lungo) Horace, *Carmina* 1:4:

... *Gratiae decentes*

Alterno terram quatiant pede.

(...the lovely Graces

Stamp the ground in rhythm.)

The exact combination of Lucretius and Horace that the *concetto* of the painting requires!

147. Ed. Carducci {see note 8}, 38 f. See also Ovid, *Fasti* 4.92: "*illa <Venus> tenet nullo regna minora deo*" (She <Venus> has no less a domain than any deity).

148. On the imitation of Claudian, see above, p. 100. This same passage had already been used by Boccaccio, *Genealogia deorum* 11.4 (Basel, 1532), 272.

149. {See note 115}, 186.

150. *Ibid.*, 264.

151. *Ibid.*, 80.

152. See A. Neri, "La Simonetta," *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 5 (1885): 131 ff. The elegies of Bernardo Pulci and Francesco Timideo da Verona are also
* reprinted there.

153. Vasari, Milanesi {see note 4}, 3:322.

154. Gaspary {see note 8}, 2:230; *Giostra* 1.47, 48.

155. *Giostra* 1.43.

156. *Giostra* 1.43, 47.

157. *Giostra* 1.55.

158. *Giostra* 1.56.

159. Königliches Museum, no. 106A. See Meyer [note 6], 39: "Whether it" — the painting — "really depicted Giuliano's mistress, the beautiful Simonetta . . . can be no more than a conjecture." Ibid., 40: illustration (etching by P. Halm). The illustration in Müntz, *Histoire* [see note 14], 2:641, is indistinct.
160. Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt, Italienischer Saal, no. 11. Illustrated in Müntz, *Histoire* [see note 14], 2:8. Also photographed by Braun.
161. Carducci [see note 8], xxxvii f., and del Lungo [see note 14], 238.
162. Carducci [see note 8], 240, ll. 33 f.
163. Ibid., 242, ll. 79 ff.
164. Ibid., 268, ll. 13–25.
165. See Müntz, *Précurseurs* [note 17], pl. adjoining 91.
166. See Giovanni Visco, *Descrizione della giostra seguita in Padova nel giugno 1466, per nozze Gasparini-Brusoni* (Padua, 1852), 16. Here, once more, we see how the antique references in contemporary pageantry coincide with the antique influence on artistic form. On the "nymphs," see particularly above, pp. 107 f. As early as 1454, * such figures were seen in a procession for the feast of the birth of Saint John the Baptist; see Cambiagi, *Memorie istoriche per la natività di S. Gio. Battista* (1766), 65–67 (cited by Matteo Palmieri [Annales, appendix to *Liber temporibus*, in *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, new ed., vol. 26, part 1, 1906, 173]): "Ventesimo [carro] Cavalleria di tre Re, Reine e Damigelle, e Ninfe, con cani, e altre appartenenze al vivo" (Twentieth [float]: cavalcade of three kings, queens, and damsels, and nymphs, with hounds, and other appurtenances, true to life).
167. Chantilly; illustration in *L'art* (1887), 60.
168. See Frizzoni (on Vasari, Milanese [note 4], 4:144), *Archivio storico italiano* (1879): 256–57. Georges Lafenestre, *Gazette des beaux-arts* 2 (1880): 376, 482 (illustration), had already associated this portrait with the Simonetta of the *Giostra*.
169. See below, p. 140.
170. Barbèra ed. [see note 115], 35–63.
171. See Botticelli's drawings in Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, *Purgatorio* 29.14–15. The right hand is raised almost at right angles to the arm and turned palm outward; the head is turned left, toward Dante, as are both starry eyes. The left hand lies over the left thigh; as there is no cloak there to hold, the gesture seems unmotivated.
172. Lorenzo de' Medici, *Trionfo di Bacco ed Arianna* [see note 115], 423.
173. See A. Neri [note 152], 141–46 [after the *editio princeps*, *Bucoliche elegantissimamente composte de Bernardo Pulci* . . . , Florence: Miscomini, 1481 O.S.]
174. For the idea of Simonetta's return as a goddess, see Poliziano, *Giostra* 2.34.5:

Poi vedea lieta in forma di Fortuna
Sorger sua ninfa, e rabbellirsi el mondo
E prender lei di sua vita governo
E lui con seco far per fama eterno.
 (And then he saw his nymph arise with joy,
 In Fortune's guise; the world again grew fair.
 She now assumed direction of his life,
 And bore him with her to eternal fame.)

175. *Leonardo da Vinci: Lebensskizze und Forschungen über sein Verhältnis zur Florentiner Kunst und zu Rafael* (Munich, 1889), 74 ff.

176. {Ibid.,} fig. 36. His head is idealized.

177. {Ibid.,} fig. 39. But now, admittedly, with no portrait features.

178. *Giostra* 1.51.1 ff.

179. *Giostra* 2.28. Müller-Walde, too, sees her as Simonetta. The "various circumstances" that bring him to this conclusion may well be similar to those set out here; and there is much for which the present writer would have been glad of M.-W.'s support and confirmation. But as a result of the curious plan of his work, his assertions have still to be followed by the evidence on which they are based; and three years have now elapsed.

180. Ed. Heinrich Ludwig, *Quellenschriften für die Kunstgeschichte*, no. 15 (Vienna, 1888), 1:528, no. 639. J. P. Richter, *Leonardo* (1883), 1:201, introduces this same drawing to accompany the same passage.

181. Ludwig [see note 180], 1:522. In the same years (1476-78) when Botticelli was presumably working on his allegories of Venus, Leonardo was in Verrocchio's workshop. See Bode, *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 3 (1882): 258.

182. Ascribed by Müller-Walde to Leonardo and published by him as his fig. 81.

183. See the drawing by San Gallo, illustrated by Müntz, *Histoire* [see note 14], 1:238; also Hauser [see note 26], 17, no. 20.

184. See Richter [note 180], 1:182, with illustration.

185. See Ludwig [note 180], 1:116, no. 60: "...come disse il nostro boticella, che tale studio era uano, perche col solo gittare d'una spunga piena di diuersi colori in un muro esso lasciau in esso muro una machia, doue si uedeua un bel paese" (...as our Botticelli used to say...).

186. The remarks that follow can do no more than supplement Julius Meyer's comprehensive and exhaustive analysis.

187. The duality of involvement and detachment is conveyed in Botticelli's faces partly through the way in which the highlight is not located in the pupil, as a dot of light, but in the iris, where it sometimes takes the form of a circle. This gives the eye the appearance of being directed toward external objects but not sharply focused on them.

188. *Diego Velazquez* (Bonn, 1888), 1:123.

189. Gaye, *Carteggio*, 1:274-75.

190. See E. Calzini, *Urbino e i suoi monumenti* (Rocca San Casciano, 1897), 17.