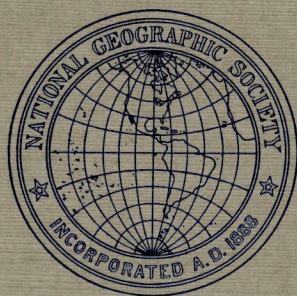


# Your National Gallery of Art After Ten Years

WITH 52 ILLUSTRATIONS  
24 IN NATURAL COLORS

By John Walker

Chief Curator, National Gallery of Art



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# Your National Gallery of Art After 10 Years

BY JOHN WALKER

*Chief Curator, National Gallery of Art*

AMERICANS by nature are hopeful. During the darkest days of the Civil War the rebuilding of the National Capitol continued; and it is under the shadow of another struggle for survival that the National Gallery of Art has reached its tenth anniversary.

Though danger menaces today, the Gallery continues to grow, just as all over the country new churches, new hospitals, new schools, and new museums are being built. These are our affirmations that we have not lost faith in the ultimate victory of humane and Christian values.

Art can strengthen our faith in these values. A serviceman who came to the Gallery during the war wrote in the visitors' book: "Through an understanding of what this building holds, our lives will have more meaning."

A consciousness of the importance of art in human life persuaded the late Mr. Andrew W. Mellon to provide the resources to build the Gallery and induces Congress each year to appropriate funds for its maintenance.\*

## Great and Growing Treasury of Art

Originally the collection consisted of only 111 paintings and 22 pieces of sculpture, but these works of art acquired by Mr. Mellon were among the greatest masterpieces in the world. The building on Constitution Avenue was designed to provide five and a half acres of exhibition space. Naturally Mr. Mellon planned for a greater density of works of art than 24 to the acre! He had faith that the beauty of the new building would have a magnetic effect on masterpieces in other collections.

He was right. Before the Gallery opened, Mr. Samuel H. Kress gave his large group of Italian paintings and sculpture, trebling the size of the original donation. His gift, so significant to the Gallery intrinsically and also because of its opportune timing, has been increased on several occasions by magnificent additions not only of Italian art but also of other schools.

The Widener Collection, one of the finest ever formed in America, was the next donation. Later Mr. Chester Dale sent the Gallery many of his distinguished and brilliantly chosen paintings, principally of the French 19th-century school; and Mr. Lessing J. Rosenwald assembled for the print department a superlative collection, a donation which has steadily grown. Others have given until the paintings and sculpture alone in the

permanent collection now number more than ten times the original 133 objects.

Thus in a decade, to quote Emily Genauer, art critic of the *New York Herald Tribune*, the National Gallery of Art "came into possession of a collection which ranks it among the top three or four museums in the world." And of this collection the National Gallery has purchased only two paintings, both American, and both bought with funds donated for this purpose by a private individual. All the other works of art have been given.

Probably nowhere but in America could this have happened. Collecting here has not been the same as elsewhere. None of the principal donors to the Gallery bought works of art with the intention of leaving them to his heirs; and, even more remarkable, all made their donations while still able to enjoy their works of art. The greatest collectors in America have looked upon their treasures as being in temporary custody, destined from the beginning for public benefit.

Taxation seems to have ended the era of great private collections. It is of immense significance, therefore, that the Samuel H. Kress Foundation has assumed the responsibility individuals find almost impossible to undertake—that of buying works of art for public museums. Through an imaginative and carefully conceived plan, the Foundation intends to extend the benefits of art to regional galleries throughout different sections of the country.

The basic aim of this unique philanthropy has been stated by Mr. Rush H. Kress † as the development through art of "a deeper spiritual character on the part of our coming generations."

## Newly Acquired Paintings Reproduced

During the last five years the Kress Foundation has acquired many of the outstanding masterpieces still available. More than 130 examples of painting and sculpture and some 1,300 medals, plaquettes, and small bronzes—all from these acquisitions of the last few years—have recently been shown at the National Gallery of Art in honor of its tenth anniversary (page 75). A selection from this exhibition is reproduced to accompany this article (pages 77-100).

\* See "Old Masters in a New National Gallery," by Ruth Q. McBride, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, July, 1940.

† Brother of Samuel H. Kress and vice president of the Foundation.





### A Student Painter Copies a Masterpiece to Learn How the Master Did It

Amateur artists eager to improve their technique besiege Washington's National Gallery of Art for permission to copy its famous paintings, but only a few can be accommodated. To prevent faking, copies must be labeled as such, and must be larger or smaller than the originals. Here Thelma DeAtley reproduces "The Old Bridge," a picture of a crumbling structure near Rome painted about 1760 by Hubert Robert (page 81).

Only collectors, curators, and dealers can realize the difficulty today of bringing together such a collection. On several occasions someone has said to me, "I paid x millions of dollars for my collection. Did I pay too much?" And because of the high quality of his works of art, I have honestly replied, "Give me the same amount of money and I could not, under present circumstances, assemble a comparable group of paintings and sculpture."

Examples by the Old Masters of secondary quality are easy to buy, but today masterpieces are so scarce as to be literally priceless.

Not only have most of the important collections entered museums; nearly all European countries have restricted the export of significant works of art. Thus, while American museums have increased in number, there is less and less for them to acquire.

In these difficult circumstances Mr. Rush Kress and the trustees of the Kress Foundation have acted with wisdom and speed. They have neglected no opportunity to add to America's store of art. For example, during the winter of 1950-51, an emissary flew three

times from America to various parts of Europe to bring back only four paintings, but each is of immense significance.

One, "The Attentive Nurse," by Chardin, is reproduced (page 85). It was purchased from the artist in the 18th century by Prince Liechtenstein and remained in the collection of his family until it was flown across the Atlantic last winter.

As Switzerland is still a free market for works of art, some of the most important masterpieces were acquired there. Among these, particularly fascinating is the Dürer "Madonna and Child" from the collection formed by the German industrialist, Baron Heinrich Thyssen, at Lugano. The reverse of this panel is reproduced (page 94). It shows Lot and his daughters fleeing, like elegant refugees, from what appears to be an atomic explosion over Sodom.

The greatest single coup made by the Kress Foundation, however, secured the paintings from the Cook Collection, panels and canvases known to generations of connoisseurs, at Richmond, on the outskirts of London. Before World War II, Sir Francis Cook sent his





### Guests Crowd the Gallery on Its Tenth Anniversary to See a New Collection

The National Gallery was founded a decade ago with funds and art works given by the late Andrew W. Mellon. Last March 17, for its tenth birthday, it received priceless paintings, sculptures, medals, plaquettes, and small bronzes from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation in New York. Here, at the first night's showing, Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson (center, right), greets Rush Kress, vice president of the Foundation.

most important pictures to America for safekeeping. This shipment contained the famous tondo, or circular painting, "The Adoration of the Magi," by Fra Angelico and Fra Filippo Lippi (a supplement to this issue), a work that would stand among the greatest masterpieces in any gallery.

#### Circular Painting Marks a Crossroad

The tondo is a climax of beauty, a summary in itself of the whole evolution of the Italian schools of painting in the 15th century. For it stands at a crossroad of art. The old style, the gay, colorful, fairy-tale painting of the Middle Ages, is ending in an outburst of splendor, and the new style, scientific in observation, studious in anatomy and perspective, realistic in its portrayal of life, is beginning its long development (page 140).

After the war all the paintings from the Cook Collection were crated for reshipment to England. It was an unforgettable experience in 1947 to see in the vault of a New York warehouse the flood-lit radiance of each picture as the covers were removed from stacks of packing cases for inspection by representa-

tives of the Kress Foundation and the National Gallery of Art.

The negotiations between the owner and the Kress Foundation were complicated. Sales to museums in Great Britain have certain tax advantages, and this is a further hardship to American buyers. It seemed several times as if all the paintings in the Cook Collection would leave America for good. However, each time, at the last moment, shipment was postponed; and ultimately a large number of paintings were acquired by the Foundation from Sir Francis Cook.

Besides the tondo, four of these Cook Collection pictures are reproduced. In the "Calvary" (page 78) a band of Renaissance mercenaries, their armor glinting, their doublets and hose strongly patterned, act out their triumph at the foot of the cross. The truculence of their gestures and the violence of their movements convey the almost brutal force of Signorelli's style and explain the profound attraction it exerted for Michelangelo.

By contrast, the lady painted by Sebastiano del Piombo is the epitome of Renaissance charm (page 92). So fascinating is this



portrait that the subject has been traditionally considered the most gifted woman of her time, Vittoria Colonna. A poet herself and the subject of some of Michelangelo's finest sonnets, she was a center of the literary life of Rome.

There is an old inscription in the lower right-hand corner which reads "V. [C]olonna," but can we rely on its accuracy? In art history we live in an age of skepticism, and therefore we have labeled the painting simply "Portrait of a Young Woman."

Alessandro Alberti was painted in Venice at the age of 30, says the letter on the table (page 88). But as a historical personage he is a nonentity. What we want to know is the name of his brilliant portraitist.

X-rays have given us useful information about the original appearance of the fourth Cook Collection painting reproduced (pages 98 and 103). This fairy-tale scene of "St. George and the Dragon," generally considered the masterwork on panel by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, known as Sodoma, had when acquired a flowery meadow in the foreground.

X-ray shadowgraphs showed that some squeamish collector had carefully buried under repaint the remains of the dragon's previous meal, apparently eaten just before the arrival of his last course, the Princess Cleodolinda! The picture now appears as originally painted.

### How Paris Looked When America Was Discovered

Some pictures among the recent additions to the Kress Collection came to America when export restrictions were less stringent. As important in French painting as the Fra Angelico-Fra Filippo Lippi tondo in Italian art are the two panels attributed to the Master of St. Gilles, so called from the two paintings by him in the National Gallery, London, representing scenes from the legend of St. Gilles. These are documents precious not only for their intrinsic beauty but also because they show certain sections of Paris as they appeared about the time Columbus discovered the New World.

The first painting represents "The Baptism of Clovis" by St. Remy (page 90). The scene, which actually took place at Reims, is shown as happening in the Sainte Chapelle in Paris. The artist has taken liberties with the interior, combining details of the upper and lower chapels, but the porch and the statue are familiar to countless travelers as belonging to the lower part of the building. The Gothic section of the Palais de Justice, seen outside on the left, has been replaced.

The second panel shows an early view of the façade of Notre Dame (page 91). St. Remy stands on the steps of St. Jean Le Rond, which is no longer in existence. The Gothic build-

ing on the right was part of the Hôtel Dieu, one of the oldest hospitals in Paris or indeed in Europe. In the middle distance is the quay of the Seine, and the tower against the sky probably belonged to the Church of St. Geneviève, which actually stood more to the east. Badly damaged by fire in the 18th century, this region of Paris, except for Notre Dame, is utterly changed today.

### An Artist Interested in Music

Other paintings among those reproduced give us glimpses of the past. One, representing "Mary Queen of Heaven" surrounded by a choir of angels, is by an anonymous artist known as the Master of the St. Lucy Legend. He must have been as interested in music as in painting, for he has carefully depicted many of the musical instruments known in the 15th century (page 100).

This artist used color in a musical way, for the angels' robes, like chromatic chords, form together a polyphonic harmony of hues. Though apparently trained in Flanders, he was probably active in Spain, as the panel came from a monastery near Burgos.

Another painting (page 99), also from Spain, uses the subject of "The Marriage at Cana" as an excuse, it would seem, to depict one of the important dynastic marriages of history. This was the wedding of Juan, Prince of Asturias, son of Ferdinand and Isabella and heir to the Spanish throne, to Margaret of Austria, daughter of Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor.

How much, one wonders, is the woebegone expression of the groom related to the ceremony? Perhaps he had dined too well, or perhaps it was the appearance of the bride seated beside him, surely one of the ugliest on record. High hopes were placed in this union of the major powers of Europe, but the result was disappointing, for Juan survived his marriage by only six months.

Robert Louis Stevenson, writing of Sir Henry Raeburn's paintings, says: "These portraits are . . . a piece of biography . . . racier than many anecdotes, and more complete than many a volume of sententious memoirs." Could words indeed describe a Renaissance woman of intellect as adequately as she is embodied in the portrait of a young girl (page 89) with bulging forehead, high cranium, and wan complexion?

This panel, attributed by many critics to Leonardo da Vinci himself, is thought to represent Beatrice d'Este, who married at 16, undertook a vital political mission to Venice at 17, and was the friend of such geniuses as Leonardo, the architect Bramante, and Baldassare Castiglione, diplomat and man of letters. With her husband, Lodovico Sforza,





**TITIAN (1477?-1576), Italian • *Portrait of a Young Lady as Venus Binding the Eyes of Cupid***

With this painting the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE introduces 24 works of art from the Kress Collection in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. "Portrait of a Young Lady as Venus" is one of the 119 paintings and 18 sculptures recently acquired from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and shown at the Gallery's tenth anniversary exhibition.

While approaching a century of age, Titian died of the plague. Venetians so idolized him that, disregarding a law that no plague victim could be buried in a church, they laid him to rest in the Church of the Frari near two of his altarpieces. In this painting, a recent cleaning brought to light the gift-bearing arm (right). Originally sketched in, it had been painted over.









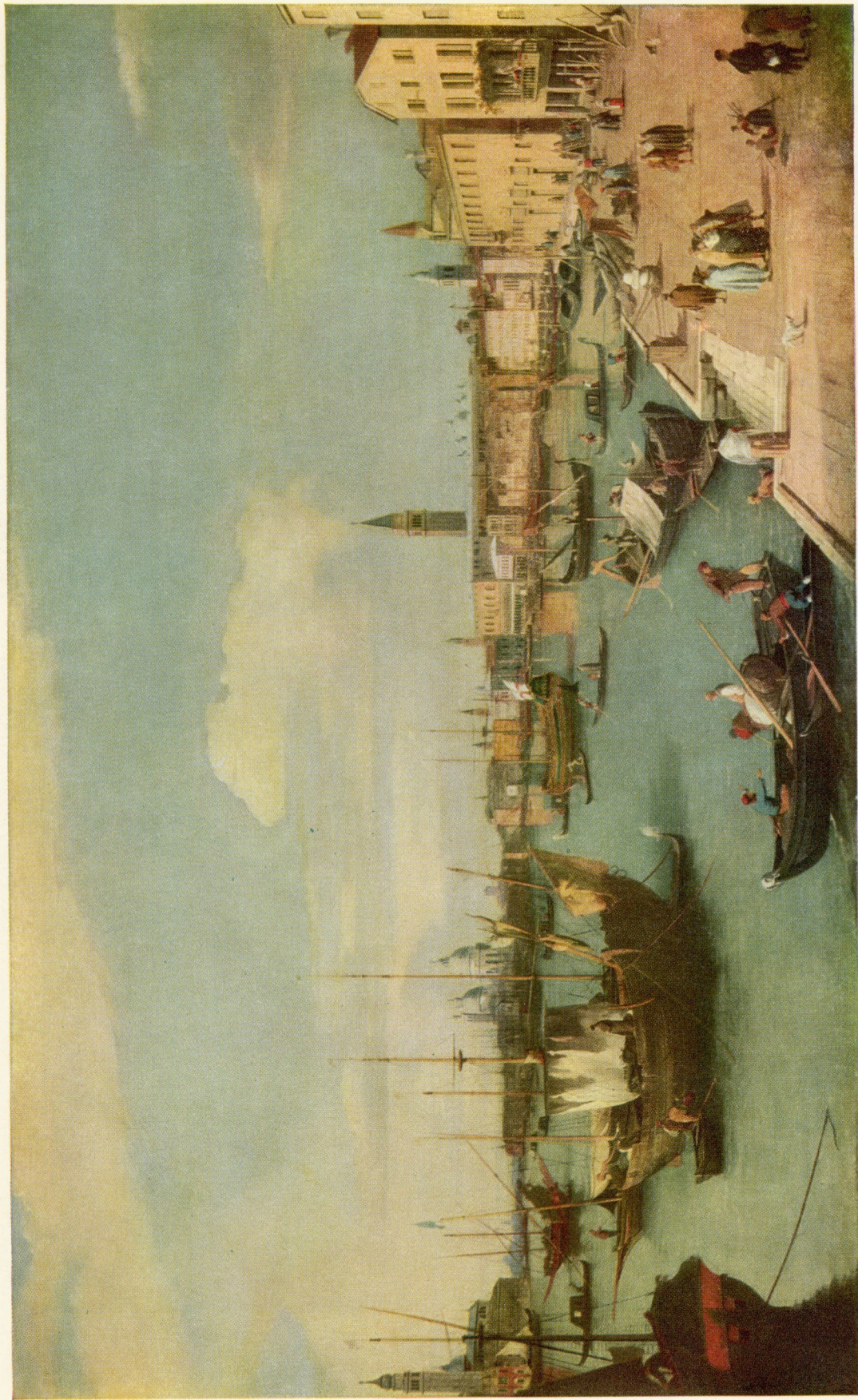












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National Gallery of Art (Kress Collection)

# CANALETTO (1697-1708), Italian • *The Basin of St. Mark's*

The fame of Antonio Canale (Canaletto), son of a theater decorator, rests chiefly on his Venetian scenes. His glorious canvases keep alive memories of the days when Venice was the world's loveliest and gayest city. On and off for eight years the Italian painter worked in England, where he was immensely popular, but he always returned to paint his Venice. Five domes of St. Mark's Cathedral rise to the right of the bell tower (center).









*PHILIPPE DE CHAMPAGNE (1602–74), French • Omer Talon*

Born in Brussels of Flemish parents, Champagne went to Paris when he was 19 years old; hence he is claimed by the French School. As a portraitist, he achieved lifelike resemblance. His glimpses of Richelieu are so real they make the Cardinal seem still alive.

In this life-size painting of Omer Talon, 17th-century writer and jurist, Champagne developed a dramatic harmony of reds. Talon's eyes seem to follow any beholder walking past the portrait. Until recently the picture remained a possession of the De Buttet family in their French castle.





JEAN BAPTISTE SIMÉON CHARDIN (1699–1779), French • *The Attentive Nurse*

Chardin, a simple man, lived in the workers' quarter of Paris. Such mundane things as pots, bread, bottles, and fruit interested the artist, who painted them with passion. Child, nurse, scullery maid, and old man—such humble folk helped him grasp the meaning of everyday life. Chardin's reputation has grown with time. Today he is esteemed as perhaps the first modern artist.

"The Attentive Nurse," a possession of Liechtenstein's princely family since it was painted, was flown to the United States last winter.













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National Gallery of Art (Kress Collection)

*UNKNOWN ARTIST (Mid-16th Century), Italian • Alessandro Alberti with a Page*

There can be no doubt about the identification of this handsome Italian gentleman; his name and age (30) are given in the letter on the table.

Critics are not very curious about the model, however. What they would like to know is the name of his brilliant portraitist. It seems likely that they will never learn. The painter's signature has been so tantalizingly obliterated that even the infrared ray cannot decipher it.

Whoever the artist was, he appears to have been a pupil of Titian (page 77). He resembles the master in his straightforward, convincing portrayal of features and personality; and it is known (again the letter) that he worked in Venice, Titian's headquarters.

Something of Lorenzo Lotto, Titian's compatriot, may be seen in the page's sad, appealing gaze.





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National Gallery of Art (Kress Collection)

*UNKNOWN ARTIST (Early 16th Century), Italian • Portrait of a Young Lady*

Most authorities identify the sitter as Beatrice d'Este, Duchess of Milan, a beautiful and accomplished lady of the Italian Renaissance. She was betrothed at the age of 5 to Lodovico Sforza, a diplomat who later became the Duke of Milan, and married him when she was 16. Presiding over a glittering court, Beatrice surrounded herself with scholars, poets, and artists. She revealed political ability as her husband's ambassador to Venice in 1492 and as his assistant at the peace conference of Vercelli three years later. Death cut short her brilliant career at the age of 22.

Beatrice and her husband were patrons of the gifted Leonardo da Vinci. Many critics believe Leonardo himself painted this portrait, but the Kress Foundation prefers to follow the more modest attribution to the master's studio.

Head in profile and bust turned slightly forward give the pose a dynamic quality. Leonardo was the first to introduce this attitude in portraiture.





MASTER OF ST. GILLES (Late 15th Century), French • *The Baptism of Clovis*

Legend says Clovis I, King of the Franks, locked in battle with the Germans in 496, swore to become a Christian if he won. He did. This painting represents his baptism by St. Remy as having occurred in Sainte Chapelle, Paris. Actually, Clovis was baptized in Reims. The old façade of Paris's Palace of Justice (left) has vanished.





MASTER OF ST. GILLES • *The Conversion of an Arian by St. Remy*

The anonymous artist is known as the Master of St. Gilles because in two paintings in the National Gallery of London he represented scenes from the legend of that holy man. Here he shows the Arian bishop's conversion to Catholicism before the façade of Notre Dame. The Gothic chapel of the original Hôtel Dieu, founded about 660, appears on the right.





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National Gallery of Art (Kress Collection)

### SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO • *Portrait of a Young Woman*

Sebastiano Luciani (Piombo) was influenced by four great masters of Italian art. As a youth in Venice he studied under Giovanni Bellini and Giorgione. After going to Rome in 1510, he came under the sway of Raphael and Michelangelo.

Sebastiano started his career as a lute player. In later years he was appointed to the lucrative Vatican job of the *piombo* (keeper of the seals). So highly did he prize this office that he adopted its name as his own. Thereafter he seldom painted. Many pupils sought training from him, but the self-indulgent Sebastiano taught them little.

Late in life the artist quarreled with Michelangelo over the latter's "Last Judgment." Sebastiano encouraged the Pope to insist it be executed in oil. Michelangelo, who wanted to do it in fresco, told the Pope that oil was fit only for women and sluggards like Fra Sebastiano.

Sebastiano is best known for his portraits (page 79), which are often mistaken for those of Raphael. One of his best is that of Christopher Columbus in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

This portrait, faintly inscribed "V. [C]olonna," may represent Vittoria Colonna, a Renaissance poet whom Michelangelo made the subject of some of his finest sonnets.





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National Gallery of Art (Kress Collection)

GIROLAMO ROMANINO (1485?-1562), Italian • *Portrait of a Man in Armor*

Though he worked chiefly for provincial patrons, Romanino insisted upon generous compensation. Rich but stingy peasants in one hamlet were made to feel the artist's scorn when they complained of the scanty dress he gave to the St. Christopher in their altarpiece. Short skirts, Romanino told them, were the result of short pay.

By this red-bearded sitter's elegant dress we may conclude that he did not cavil at the painter's price. His luxuriant plumed hat is as large as any in his day; his armor is ample and gleaming.

In spite of his provincial training (in Brescia), Romanino's portraits have often been confused with those of Giorgione and Titian. This picture, for example, reflects Giorgionesque elements in the full face pose and the figure's rigid horizontal and vertical lines. Sharp reflections on the armor give evidence of Titian's influence.

Romanino's large religious compositions do not command the esteem of his portraits. They are sometimes marred by exaggerated movement and oppressive coloring.

Authentic Giorgiones are few. Many of his works, frescoes on the walls of Venetian palaces, have been destroyed. His surviving paintings are marked by luminous colors and harmonious composition.





### ALBRECHT DÜRER (1471–1528), German • *Lot and His Daughters*

About 1500, Nürnberg was the Florence of Germany. Where the Italian city emphasized beauty, its German counterpart stressed expression. Champion of the Nürnberg School was native Albrecht Dürer, a goldsmith's son. A thinker as well as artist, he had an insatiable intellectual curiosity. In that respect he rivaled Leonardo and Michelangelo.

Italians have said Dürer would have been their greatest artist had he been one of them. The German Goethe wrote, "When we know Dürer, we recognize that in truth, nobility, and even grace, his only equals are the greatest of the Italians."

As a painter, Dürer was the most important and gifted of the German School. As an engraver, he was perhaps the greatest of all time. His paintings, though original and vigorous, were often marked by stiffness and uninspired color, but his engravings are beyond criticism.

In this painting, executed in a free, water-color-like manner, Dürer pictures Lot and his unmarried daughters fleeing Sodom's rain of brimstone (Genesis 19:24). Gomorrah burns in the distance. Lot's wife, turned into a "pillar of salt" for looking back, is left standing on the road. Violent explosions suggest the mushroom effect of an atomic bomb.





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National Gallery of Art (Kress Collection)

### UNKNOWN ARTIST (Late 15th Century), French • *A Miracle of St. Benedict*

Born in Norcia, young Benedict studied in Rome, but, shocked by urban corruption, retreated to the mountains of Subiaco. There he spent three years of solitary prayer in a cave.

As word of Benedict's austerity and wisdom spread, disciples gathered around him. To bring order to his new community, he organized 12 monasteries. Catholicism's famed Benedictine Order dates from that act. Later St. Benedict moved to Monte Cassino and established the mountaintop abbey which served as a lighthouse of knowledge during the Middle Ages. Allied artillery crushed the abbey during World War II.

This painting, believed to have originated in the studio of Simon Marmion, records one of Benedict's holy deeds. While praying in his cell (left), he saw a vision of his disciple, St. Placidus, who, while drawing water, had fallen into a lake. Benedict sent St. Maurus to the rescue. Here Maurus, walking on the water as if on solid ground, pulls Placidus to safety.

A. D. 543. St. Benedict foresaw his own death of fever. Six days before the event, he ordered his grave to be opened. After being carried to his chapel, he died in prayer.





















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National Gallery of Art (Kress Collection)

**UNKNOWN ARTIST (Late 15th Century), Flemish • Mary Queen of Heaven**

This anonymous artist "transplanted into Heaven a musical performance of his own time," as one critic put it. He made the old-fashioned instruments stand out with precision. Even the musicians' finger positions are correct, and the musical scores are legible. The heavenly orchestra plays lutes, shawms, harps, vielle (viol), and portable organ.

Angel-musicians in two groups surround the throne of the Holy Trinity (background) and the Virgin Mary at the moment of Assumption.

"Mary Queen of Heaven" contains evidence that the painter received his training in Flanders. Discovery of the panel in a monastery near Burgos suggests he was active in Spain.



she wove that delicate fabric of intrigue which supported his supremacy at Milan. At 22 she was dead, and with her death disaster pursued her husband until, as a contemporary wrote, everything fell into ruin, and the court which had been a joyous paradise was changed into a black inferno.

### Early Atlas Shown in Painting

An equal misfortune overtook with similar speed Cardinal Bandinello Sauli. Some hint of this appears in the painting by Sebastiano del Piombo, signed and dated 1516 (page 79). The melancholy Cardinal seems bemused, his eyes rimmed and sleepless. The figure leaning forward on the left whispers, while two geographers discuss some point connected with an open atlas, perhaps the unlucky war then being waged by the Vatican against the city-state of Urbino.

Less than a year after this group portrait was completed, Cardinal Sauli, opposed to this senseless and costly struggle, was implicated in the plot of another cardinal to poison its instigator, Pope Leo X. The conspiracy failed, Sauli was confined in the lowest dungeon of Castel Sant' Angelo and, though shortly afterwards released, died within a few months.

On the Cardinal's white cassock appears a fly. So well drawn and shaded is this insect that the guards at the Gallery are constantly on the alert lest some visitor try to flick it from the painting (page 102). Such a touch of illusionism is rare in 16th-century Italian art. Perhaps the fly was added to suit the taste of this Cardinal from Genoa, a city in close contact with the Netherlands, where artists delighted in such effects.

A hundred years later the same city, Genoa, was a temporary residence of Sir Anthony Van Dyck, one of the greatest Flemish artists. While there he painted the local nobility and among them several members of the Spinola family. One of these was Polyxena (page 86), daughter of Ambrogio Spinola, the general who so gracefully receives the keys in Velázquez' painting of the "Surrender of Breda."

As Polyxena wears a Flemish dress, she may have been painted at Antwerp after Van Dyck's return from Italy. In the 17th century, society and art take on a new internationalism.

The interchange of artists between Italy and the North after 1600 became, in fact, so common that it is sometimes difficult to determine not only the attribution but even the nationality of a painting. The portrait of Bishop Alvise Grimani (page 87), for example, was at one time attributed to Van Dyck, but is now recognized to be by Ber-

nardo Strozzi, known as Il Prete Genovese, or the Genoese Priest.

Though Strozzi took vows as a Capuchin, he left his monastery to support his mother. After her death he refused to return to monastic life and was condemned to three years' imprisonment. He escaped and fled to Venice. There his lost vocation proved no handicap to his work for the Church, and during the last 13 years of his life he turned out numerous religious paintings.

Paintings offer insight not only into the character of individuals but also into the spirit of cultures. Contrast, for example, two pictures which may even have been painted the same year, around 1560, one in Italy (page 77), the other in Flanders (page 83).

Titian reflects the opulence of Venice, of the Renaissance where man is the measure of all things, and the refined satisfaction of his senses an ultimate purpose of art. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, on the other hand, lived beyond the Alps in a country swept by the anguish of reform, where the soldiers of Alva with fire and blood were trying in vain to reforge the lost unity of Europe. This world is more like ours. In "Landscape with the Temptation of St. Anthony Abbot," the warfare in the skies and the evil things on the ground seem a preview of that Armageddon we fear today.

### Painters Played Tricks with Time

The paintings in the Kress exhibition extend in date from Giotto to Ingres, from the 13th century to the 19th. Among the most important 15th-century paintings to come to America is the small panel by Benozzo Gozzoli (page 97). Medieval and Renaissance artists, refusing to be limited by the fact that a picture can show only one moment in time, often represented several scenes of a story in a single composition. So Salome dances in the foreground, and, as a consequence, John the Baptist is shown being decapitated on the left, while in the middle distance Herodias receives the head of the Saint.

The scene has the intensity of high tragedy: Salome dances with a lithe insouciance; Herod Antipas, enthralled and aghast, grasps a knife and touches his heart, a wonderfully apt gesture. Each courtier acts a different role. The sycophant at the end of the table looks away; the older man turns to the King with a glance of sorrowful pleading; and the young dandy on the right stares at Salome with cold but possessive passion.

Of about the same time is a panel by a northern artist working in the studio of Simon Marmion, which likewise represents more than one event in a single picture (page 95). Here St. Benedict is shown sending St. Maurus





### "Look! A Fly on the Picture!" A 16th-century Artist's Joke Still Fools Beholders

Sebastiano del Piombo, perhaps at the request of his subject, Cardinal Sauli, added a rare touch of realism to this painting—a housefly so carefully drawn that many persons try to shoo it away (pages 79 and 101). Guards watch to see that they do not actually brush the painting.

to the rescue of the drowning St. Placidus. Though the scene is dramatic, its mood is serene, timeless, with even the colors subdued to the grays and blacks of monastic life.

How explosive by contrast seems another painting, two centuries later! Elijah is carried to Heaven in a chariot of fire (page 96). Giovanni Battista Piazzetta in this ceiling decoration represents every figure as if tossed by a whirlwind of flame. But in all this turbulence a wonderful clarity of draftsman-ship is maintained. The hands of Elisha are among the most beautiful in art.

Later in the 18th century the tempo again changes, becomes slower, as if people were weary from excess of thought and emotion. Taste turns to the charm of "far-off things and battles long ago." Robert's nostalgic love of the crumbling monuments of the Campagna, as in his *Ponte Salario*, heralds the coming vogue of Romantic sentiment (pages 74, 81).

Venice was the pleasure resort of the 18th-century world. Its popularity fostered an insatiable desire for paintings of the more famous views, such as the Grand Canal and the Basin of St. Mark's (page 82).

Antonio Canaletto painted these scenes so often and so vividly that, after looking at many of his works, actuality and fantasy merge in the mind until, sight-seeing in Venice, I have sometimes admired the perspective and reached out to touch the canvas before realizing that I was myself standing inside the picture.

But while Canaletto painted, Venice was dying; and with the end of its independence the center of Italian life moved to the Vatican. It is appropriate that the most recent painting (page 80), done by Ingres and dated 1810, shows a scene in the Vatican with Pius VII surrounded by ecclesiastical dignitaries, each carefully portrayed.



Ingres himself appears as the fourth brown-clad figure below the Cardinals. In the background are frescoes by Cosimo Rosselli, Botticelli, Perugino, Pintoricchio, and Michelangelo which decorate the Sistine Chapel. Thus Ingres's picture seems a symbol of the indestructible connection between the Old Masters and the beginnings of modern art.

The Kress Foundation has acquired sculpture as well as paintings. Fortunately it was possible to buy the entire Dreyfus Collection of Renaissance bronzes, some 1,300 in number. These were assembled by a French connoisseur, Gustave Dreyfus, who was determined to have a collection as great as any existing in the world.

After the Franco-Prussian War and continuing until his death in 1914, Dreyfus spent almost all his time trading, exchanging, and seeking unique pieces, early castings, and perfect examples. Because bronze becomes more beautiful the more it is polished, two of his daughters, who never married, spent their days polishing and repolishing.

Fortunately, the Renaissance bronzes were kept together after Dreyfus died. Addition of this collection has placed the National Gallery on a par with the greatest museums in Europe in the field of medals, reliefs, plaquettes, and small bronzes.

Likewise, in the field of French 18th-century sculpture Kress Foundation gifts, added to the pieces in the Widener Collection, place the Gallery in the foremost rank.

But benefactions on this scale, though received several times in the Gallery's short history, are not likely to be repeated. In the future its exhibition space will probably fill more slowly.

But already in its first decade the National Gallery of Art has received a great treasure



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National Gallery of Art

### A Squeamish Owner Painted Out the Dragon's Dinner Course

Two human heads, an arm, and a foot originally decorated the foreground of Sodoma's "St. George and the Dragon" (page 98). After the Kress Foundation acquired the painting, X-rays revealed the alteration, and the overpaint was removed (page 76). Restoration is a ticklish process, involving chemical analysis of both the original and the new paint, then the use of solvents removing one and not the other. In some cases overpaint can be eliminated only with a scalpel, flake by flake.

of visual beauty. This has happened at an opportune time. All over the country the desire to see works of art has increased. During ten years more than 18,000,000 visitors have come to the Gallery.

People today are beginning to get such pleasure from looking at masterpieces as generations have received from listening to fine music. They are learning at the same time that all art is a stirring witness to human creativity, a witness that fortifies our faith in the dignity of man and our belief in the final triumph of Christian ideals.

For additional articles in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE on the National Gallery, see: "American Masters in the National Gallery," September, 1948, and "The Vienna Treasures and Their Collectors," June, 1950, both by John Walker; also "Masterpieces on Tour," by Harry A. McBride, December, 1948.







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To carry out the purposes for which it was founded sixty-four years ago, the National Geographic Society publishes the National Geographic Magazine monthly. All receipts are invested in The Magazine itself or expended directly to promote geographic knowledge.

Articles and photographs are desired. For material The Magazine uses, generous remuneration is made.

In addition to the editorial and photographic surveys constantly being made, The Society has sponsored more than 100 scientific expeditions, some of which required years of field work to achieve their objectives.

The Society's notable expeditions have pushed back the historic horizons of the southwestern United States to a period nearly eight centuries before Columbus crossed the Atlantic. By dating the ruins of the vast communal dwellings in that region, The Society's researches solved secrets that had puzzled historians for three hundred years.

In Mexico The Society and the Smithsonian Institution, January 16, 1939, discovered the oldest work of man in the Americas for which we have a date. This slab of stone is engraved in Mayan characters with a date which means November 4, 291 B. C. (Spinden Correlation). It antedates by 200 years anything heretofore dated in America, and reveals a great center of early American culture, previously unknown.

On November 11, 1935, in a flight sponsored jointly by the National Geographic Society and the U. S. Army Air Corps, the world's largest balloon, *Explorer II*, ascended to the world altitude record of 72,395 feet. Capt. Albert W. Stevens and Capt. Orvil A. Anderson took aloft in the gondola nearly a ton of scientific instruments, and obtained results of extraordinary value.

A notable undertaking in the history of astronomy was launched in 1949 by The Society in cooperation with the Palomar Observatory of the California Institute of Technology. This project will require four years to photomap the vast reaches of space, and will provide the first sky atlas for observatories all over the world.

In 1948 The Society sent out seven expeditions to study the eclipse of the sun along a 5,320-mile arc from Burma to the Aleutians. The fruitful results helped link geodetic surveys of North America and Asia.

The Society granted \$25,000, and in addition \$75,000 was contributed by individual members, to help preserve for the American people the finest of the giant sequoia trees in the Giant Forest of Sequoia National Park of California.

One of the world's largest icefields and glacial systems outside the polar regions was discovered in Alaska and Yukon by Bradford Washburn while exploring for The Society and the Harvard Institute of Exploration, 1938.



