

## Gothic Art in Italy

### Art Discussed:

**Cimabue, *Madonna and Child*, 1280-1290**

**Giotto, *Madonna and Child*, 1310**

**Pisano, *The Pisa Pulpit*, 1259-1260**

**Giotto, *Arena Chapel Frescoes*, 1305**

### VOCAB:

**Altarpiece**

**Maniera greca**

**Trecento**

### HW:

**Look up the artist Cavallini in your text. Would you say he is more like Cimabue or Giotto? Explain.**

### **Cimabue, *Madonna and Child***

- Tempera paint
- Byzantine in inspiration: maniera greca
- Retains hierarchical sense of scale
- Profusion of gold leaf and stylized drapery folds remain
- Three-dimensional nature of throne heralds formal advances, however
- Varying expressions of the four prophets below
- Colossal un-Byzantine large size
- Long, thin elegant figures
- Flecks of gold emphasize Mary's drapery folds
- Strong verticality
- Virgin as throne of wisdom
- Deeply blue, lapis lazuli robe identifies Mary as the Queen of Heaven
- Modestly inclined heads
- Angels stacked around throne

### **Giotto, *Madonna and Child***

- Enormous in scale
- Sculptural solidity, sense of volume
- Swelling bosom
- Mary is huge and dominant
- Figure has substance, dimensionality, bulk: note the projecting knees of the Virgin
- Observed, rather than remembered reality seen in the figures' physicality
- Angels stand realistically around throne
- Some depth of space, recession of throne and steps

### **Nicola Pisano, *Pisa Pulpit***

- Sculptural Scenes
- Five panels on a hexagonal pulpit, one side open leaving five panels
- Important influence of classical sarcophagus reliefs
- Active drapery expresses what is beneath
- Powerfully modeled, monumental bodies
- Little space for architecture or scenes behind
- Very crowded narratives, but without losing the vividness of each story
- Proportions are awkward, heads are large
- Heavy draperies
- Scenes layered one atop the other
- No attempt at distant space
- On Pulpit
- Arches cusp as in French Gothic architecture
- More unified treatment of standing statues
- Corinthian columns with acanthus leaves

### **Giotto, *Arena Chapel Frescoes***

- Scrovegni family chapel in Padua, built on the site of an ancient arena, hence common name
- Chapel built and decorated to expiate the sin of usury, a theme of the frescoes
- Sense of theatrical drama, leading to feeling of immediacy between image and viewer
- Shallow stage for figures

- Pushed forward in the picture plane, little background or distance
- Weighty figures, sculptural solidity
- Volumes are shaded to give solidity
- Simple folds of drapery
- Extraordinary range of emotions
- Figures seen from the back
- Modeled to indicate direction of light
- Great variety: each scene contains a different figural composition