Alexander William, the eldest son of James, later 24th Earl of Crawford and 7th Earl of Balcarres, and of Maria Pennington, heiress to the 1st Baron Muncaster, was born at Muncaster Castle, situated high above the river Esk in Cumbria, on 16 October 1812. By the time he succeeded his father as 25th Earl of Crawford and inherited the family home at Haigh Hall, Wigan, in 1869, he had acquired a very considerable reputation both as a scholar and writer and also as a collector of books and works of art. The ambition to write a book on the early Italian painters was first conceived by Lord Lindsay in 1839, during a tour of Italy which he made with his cousin, Colonel James Lindsay, and his wife Anne, who lived in the Lindsay's ancestral Scottish home at Balcarres in Fife. (James' father had bought the house from his elder brother,}

1This study is based on the private papers of Lord Lindsay. His journals, and his correspondence to and from members of his family circle, remain in the possession of the Earl of Crawford. With few exceptions this manuscript material is now on deposit in the John Rylands University Library.

The article is based on my PhD thesis, presented to the University of Edinburgh in 1976 under the title Lord Lindsay and James Dennistoun. Two Scottish Art-Historians and Collectors of Early Italian Art. Since then Nicolas Barker has published a delightful book which throws much light on Lord Lindsay's family life and above all on his activity as a very important book collector, entitled Bibliotheca Lindesiana, printed for presentation to the Roxburghe Club (London, 1977). However, this otherwise important work makes no serious attempt to discuss Lindsay's art-historical interests and his picture collection.

During my work on Lord Lindsay I received much valuable advice from Professor Francis Haskell, Professor Giles Robertson, and Professor Sir Ellis Waterhouse; also much practical assistance from Miss Glenise Matheson, Keeper of Manuscripts in the John Rylands University Library. My greatest debt, however, is to the late David, 28th Earl of Crawford and 11th Earl of Balcarres, who from the outset took an almost paternal interest in my education and the progress of my research, and inspired me with his infectious and profound enthusiasm for the history of his family and the study of Italian art. In affectionate gratitude for this, and for the warm hospitality regularly extended to my wife and myself at Balcarres, I dedicate this study to his memory.
who was Lord Lindsay's grandfather.) James and Anne were to become Lord Lindsay's closest friends and the recipients of his most informative travel letters; their home became the young scholar's principal refuge and eventually their daughter Margaret became his wife. Their other children were: Coutts, who inherited his grandfather's baronetcy, trained as a painter under Ary Scheffer and started the Grosvenor Gallery; Mary Anne, who married Robert Holford of Westonbirt, one of the richest picture collectors of his time; and Robert James, who became Baron Wantage and also formed an important art collection.

It was at the suggestion of James and Anne that Lord Lindsay, during their Italian tour of 1839, began to read a book entitled De La Poésie Chrétienne written by A. F. Rio, a French Roman Catholic of Breton origin, which not only inspired his own detailed survey of early Italian art but also provides us with the central clue to the aesthetic and philosophical viewpoint which he would propound in his Sketches of the History of Christian Art, published in 1847.

Until the publication of De La Poésie Chrétienne in 1836 and its surprisingly rapid circulation in British circles, the subject of early Italian painting, although by no means neglected, had almost invariably been discussed in Britain in a strictly antiquarian spirit. With the notable exception of Charles Eastlake, later Director of the National Gallery in London, most British critics had failed to recognize the new trends in German critical and art historical writing during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. They had been unaffected by the efforts of William Heinrich Wackenroder, Friedrich Schlegel, and Baron Karl Friedrich von Rumohr to lead the way towards a new acceptance of Italian, Flemish and German primitives as works of art to be admired on their own terms, rather than as mere curiosities, historical specimens of the early development of modern European painting. It was primarily through the writings of Rio, who himself acknowledged von Rumohr as ‘mon véritable initiateur’,1 that these ideas eventually reached British readers, Lord Lindsay included.

However, Rio's aesthetic philosophy was both simpler and more extreme than that of his German mentors. His nostalgic

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1 See A. F. Rio, Epilogue à l'art chrétien (Paris, 1892), ii. 121. See also pp. 111 ff.
belief in the pure and undiluted Christian quality of early Italian art was accompanied by revulsion not only for the seicento eclectics, for whom appearance and facility of execution was now seen to have taken precedence over the idea, and whom Friedrich Schlegel had already knocked down from their eighteenth-century pedestal, but also for the hitherto unchallenged supremacy of Italian Renaissance art, inasmuch as it ultimately represented the disastrous triumph of pagan and progressive values over a Christian civilization, a supremacy which by the nineteenth century had still not been reversed.

Writers before Rio had not usually attempted to distinguish the individual merits and artistic values of early Italian artists in any terms other than those of technical progression towards the ultimate achievement of Raphael. Rio, on the other hand, draws sharp moral distinctions between those fifteenth-century artists, such as Masaccio and Uccello, who succumbed to naturalistic and classical influences, and those more retardataire artists such as Fra Angelico, Benozzo Gozzoli, and certain later Umbrian painters, including Perugino, whose inspiration was thought to be strictly Christian. By an extension of this argument a firm division is then established between the purity of Raphael's early style and the latent mannerism of his Roman period. Rio attributes the pagan quality of Renaissance art to the ill effects of Medici patronage, and we are left in no doubt that his own sympathies were with the Dominican friar Savonarola, who had fearlessly preached the message that a truly Christian society would only be restored if men turned their eyes back to the ideals of an earlier era uncontaminated by progressive ideas.

Yet fully to appreciate the emotional and intellectual impact of these intoxicating ideas on Lord Lindsay in 1839, it is necessary first to take a brief look at his earlier education and experiences. In the immediately preceding years from October 1830, when he had gone up to Trinity College, Cambridge, as an undergraduate, until March 1839, when he joined James and Anne in Rome, Lindsay had found relatively little time to pursue art-historical studies or to reflect on aesthetic questions. His main energies had been devoted to his formal university education, to exhaustive antiquarian researches on the family history of the Lindsays, the
results of which were eventually published in 1839, and, finally, to his careful preparations for a tour of Egypt and the Holy Land, made between November 1836 and September 1837, of which he subsequently published a popular account in 1838. It is, therefore, during the two years after Lindsay left Eton in 1828, aged only sixteen, that we may trace the early origins of his interest in European art, which developed rapidly during his travels, first in France in 1828–9 and then on a tour of the Low Countries, Germany, and Italy in 1829–30.

Lindsay’s first visit to France was spent mainly in Paris, in the care of his English tutor, Frederick Pratt, and under the further guidance of his French drawing master, Jean Broc (1771–1850), a former pupil of David, who, as Lindsay wryly observed in his journal, ‘draws on geometrical principles and talks a vast deal about Raphael . . . [but] has a sovereign contempt for Salvator Rosa’. Lindsay and Pratt had arrived in the French capital on 1 June 1828 and the very next day they took the first step towards a systematic study of the pictures of all the different schools in the Louvre which they did not complete until February 1829. They began, as Lindsay dutifully informed his father (letter of 4 June), by examining the ‘early masters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries from Cimabue and J. Van Eyck upwards’. On subsequent visits it was Raphael’s La Belle Jardinière and Poussin’s Débâle which he singled out for special praise, and he also records his appreciation of Dou’s Dropsical Woman as ‘the most highly finished picture I ever saw’. Thirty-six years later, with the benefit of hindsight, Lindsay was to claim that Fra Angelico’s Coronation of the Virgin, which had been engraved by Schlegel as early as 1817, deeply impressed him at this time ‘with the beauty and interest of the early Tuscan painters’;¹ but there is absolutely no reference to it in his early diaries and letters.

The most immediate effect on the young Lindsay of his intensive study of the pictures in Paris was a renewed appreciation, amounting to a curatorial concern, for his own family’s

¹Letter from Lord Lindsay to his son, James Ludovic, dated Florence, February 1865, concerning the future development of the Bibliotheca Lindesiana. For Schlegel’s engraving see his Mariae Krönung und die Wunder des heiligen Dominicus von Johann von Fiesole, 1817.
picture collection which was then divided between Haigh Hall, Wigan, and Berkeley Square, London. Besides family portraits, it included good quality works by Dutch artists, including Rembrandt’s *Titus*, now in Rotterdam, and Lindsay began to compile a catalogue as soon as he had returned home in 1829.

However, it was in the field of old master prints that Lindsay showed most enterprise and sense of purpose during his first visit to Paris. At Eton he had already started to collect old printed books, and he continued to buy incunabula in Paris under the indulgent eye of Mr Pratt, while also extending his range to include prints, with examples of Dürer, Lucas van Leyden, Agostino Veneziano, Rembrandt, Castiglione, Salvator Rosa, and Stefano della Bella, as well as landscapes and genre scenes by seventeenth-century Netherlandish artists. Lindsay’s plan, which had been directly inspired by his regular visits to the well-ordered print room in the Bibliothèque du Roi, was to add his small portfolio of prints to those already in his father’s possession so as ‘to form a little history of the art of engraving, beginning from the early periods, giving generally one of each great master’.¹

Apart from its intrinsic interest, Lindsay’s early burst of enthusiasm for the fine arts commands our attention on account of the violent reaction which his letters home provoked from his father, amounting to a direct challenge, which Lindsay never forgot, to find a moral and social justification for his ‘solitary and unprofitable amusements’.² ‘Learning is only useful’, Earl James informed his son, ‘as it benefits the human race ... No doubt [pictures] are a most beautiful and ornamental piece of furniture, proper to adorn the dwellings of the wealthy, and being among the highest order of mecanic [sic] art and combined with a great deal of mental association, they are consequently most pleasing and most gratifying; but with regard to the nice distinction of names, it matters very little whether the picture is painted by Vanderveld or Vandervert, the world in general care very little about it, and understand it less. ...’ ‘I therefore think’, Earl James concludes severely, ‘that the nice and laborious enquiry about the names of painters is in a great measure lost time, and as a pursuit

¹ Letter to his mother, dated Paris, 1 February 1829.
² Letter dated Haigh, 6 January 1829.
not worth much laborious investigation being altogether unprofitable, and not tending to any good beyond Curiosity.'

Ten years later, in Rio's *De La Poésie Chrétienne*, Lindsay at last found a moral justification for his artistic and intellectual pursuits. As he tactfully suggested to his mother, in a letter from Florence dated 29 May 1839: 'Now that I understand a little more of painting and its connection with morals and manners I take a pleasure far greater than I did when here before [in 1830] in the marvels of art with which Italy teems, particularly the ancient frescoes of the 14th century, when painting was a branch of religion.'

Lindsay was on the road from Rome to Assisi when he first picked up Rio's book, and the impact on his aesthetic responses was instantaneous. On 20 May 1839, having just reached Assisi, Lindsay records in his journal how they had 'halted at S. Maria degli Angeli, and after visiting the church built over the house where St. Francis received his first call, and admiring a beautiful fresco of Overbeke's, quite in the spirit of the école mystique, drove up to Assisi, the picturesque old convent of the Franciscans, and peculiarly interesting in the history of art as the cradle of that pure and religious school of painting, which beginning with Giotto, and carried on by Fra Angelico, Benedetto Gozzoli and Perugino, found its highest development in Raphael'.

Three days later we find Lindsay in Florence at the Uffizi gallery, recalling his previous visit in 1830 just after he had left school: 'My taste much changed since I used to frequent the Tribune -- then Leonardo's Herodias and one or two of Raphael's last manner were my chief favourites. We stood long before Rod. Ghirlandaio's ... raising of the child by S. Zenobio, a wonderful picture in every respect -- composition, drawing, and colouring, all in perfection. There are many figures ... none superfluous, because all expressive. Fra Angelico's Holy Family surrounded by angels also detained us long; no painter, not excepting Raphael himself, has invested his ideas with so much of heaven....' Then, moving on to the Brancacci chapel at the Church of the Carmine, Lindsay again exactly echoes Rio in his judgement that, although Masaccio's fresco decoration was 'wonderful as a composition and in point of drawing', the conception was 'deficient in the higher elements and purpose of art'.
The journey home took Lindsay to Munich. He was quite unprepared for the impact of King Ludwig of Bavaria’s recent efforts to propagate a new national art. Cornelius had been brought to the city in 1819 to decorate the Glyptothek and had then been occupied from 1830 onwards in a vain attempt to vie with Signorelli and Michelangelo in interpreting the Creation and Last Judgement in the Ludwigskirche. Meanwhile, in 1827, Schnorr had followed Cornelius to Munich where King Ludwig had hired him to decorate part of the Residenz, a miniature imitation of the Palazzo Pitti in Florence, with scenes from the Nibelungen Saga. ‘I at least have been quite taken by surprise’, Lindsay confessed in his travel journal: ‘I had heard and read indeed that Munich, a place till the last thirty years utterly void of interest, was becoming, under King Louis’ auspices, one of the most remarkable towns in Europe, but I always thought the accounts exaggerated. . . . Art I fancied (in its higher departments, I mean—fresco, religious painting etc.) was extinct for ever—gladly, gladly do I find myself mistaken.’

Above all, Lindsay admired the frescoes by Heinrich Maria von Hess in the Aller Heiliger, preferring their qualities of ‘tenderness, purity and holiness’ to the ‘grandeur and severity’ of Cornelius’ Last Judgement, or even to ‘the Gothic spirit of chivalry’ which he had enjoyed in Schnorr’s Nibelungen Lied. Hess, he concluded, ‘has evidently drunk deeply of the spirit of the old Christian painters and retaining all that was excellent, avoided all that was mistaken in their notions—those of the times they lived in’.

Before leaving Munich, Lindsay ordered a set of G. Schreiner’s reproductive prints of the frescoes by Hess, and on his return home he lost little time before gathering into his library at Haigh further illustrated books relating to his new preoccupation with early Christian Art. The most valuable acquisitions were L’Etruria Pittrice (1791), notable for its engraved plates illustrating the development and progress of Tuscan painting from the eleventh century onwards, and an edition of Carlo Lasinio’s etchings of the Campo Santo at Pisa, first published in Florence in 1812. These are ‘to be studied carefully with our friend Rio’, he confided to Anne (letter of 26 October 1839) who was again back in Florence.

And it was another new book, the Musée Français, a corpus of
high quality engravings after paintings in the Louvre, published in 1803 and dedicated to Napoleon, which provoked Lindsay to take the next major step in the development of his philosophy of art. He had become increasingly irritated by the arrangement within the volume of what he characterized as 'drunken scenes of Ostade and Teniers, the degradation of painting, interspersed between subjects the highest and the holiest'. A casual remark by his young cousin Coutts, that a cattle piece by Paul Potter in the Hague was generally reckoned the fourth finest picture in the world, merely fanned the flames of Lindsay's disgust and prompted him to devise a complicated 'scheme of the poetry and prose of painting' which he expounded in a letter to James on New Year's eve 1839.

Lindsay's basic idea, clearly inspired by further reflection on *De La Poésie Chrétienne*, was that 'precedence in art, or in literature ... is to be regulated by the moral elevation of the artist, by the nobler or more degraded aspect in which he views the works of God, and by the degree in which his influence is a blessing to his fellow creatures or the reverse'. He postulates 'three distinct existences', defined as Humanity, Nature, and the Degradation of Humanity, and goes on to re-divide Humanity and Nature into 'the two grand classes of Poetry and Prose'. The highest class of Poetry is described as 'Religion ... Man in his intercourse with God', and, as prime examples, Lindsay cites Giotto, Fra Angelico, Perugino, Raphael, Michelangelo, Fra Bartolomeo, Leonardo da Vinci, Overbeck and Hess. For Lindsay the absolute antithesis to the productions of these religious artists was to be found in the work of the Dutch genre painters, which he placed in the category of Lower Life—'the Degradation of Humanity below the beasts that perish—the predominance of the animal and earthly propensities of man above the spiritual and heavenly, coarsely and unfeelingly exhibited ...'.

Anne, replying to Lindsay's intense and provocative letter, lightheartedly demurs at his 'magnanimous contempt' for the whole Dutch school. But Lindsay was in no mood to be humoured. He reminds Anne of the distinction he had drawn between the work of a still-life painter, such as Van Huysum, and the 'exhibition of mere moral deformity' found in the works of
Teniers, for instance. ‘Is not a flower, a butterfly, a ladybird, fresh and pure from God’s hands, a more interesting and elevating subject of sympathy and contemplation than the drunken boors in which that portion of the Dutch school ... delight in?’ he demanded insistently. Lindsay did, however, now modify his position in one important respect. ‘In drawing up my scheme, I only contemplated settling the precedency of the several departments of art by a reference to their moral elevation, and the consequent precedency of those painters who are acknowledged Masters in those several departments—never intending that an indifferent religious painter should, in reference to his individual merits, be placed above a master in landscape—Barocci for instance, above Claude.’

It was at this precise moment in Lindsay’s personal development that he at last found sufficient confidence to resist, with absolute finality, persistent parental pressures to step into the public arena and stand for election to Parliament. ‘The cultivation of the intellect requires a private life’, he confided to Anne (letter of 23 January 1840), and he went on to outline his personal ambitions in the intellectual field: ‘...I have many schemes, grand noble schemes, floating before me, and which, please God to spare me, I hope to fix and realise—the Providential History of Man (which I told you I planned at Thebes sitting on the broken obelisk), a Poem (I feel it in me, dear Anne) ... a work on Art to lead men to the true moral and religious dignity and object ... and another on Love, that of God to Man, as provocative of love to God and to our neighbour.’

It was in this speculative frame of mind that Lindsay set off once more for Italy. He had been invited to stay with James and Anne at their rented home in Florence, the Villa Torregiani, where he at once settled happily into the quiet routine they had established. They generally avoided the fashionable English community. Anne preferred her regular visits to the Church of the Carmine, where, under the guidance of her drawing master, Signor Marini, she was making reduced copies of the Masaccio frescoes. Above all there were regular visits from Félicie de Fauveau, the French sculptress, who, as a fervent royalist, had been living as an exile in Florence.

1 Letter dated Haigh, 19 February 1840.
since 1836, and who was now making a bust portrait of Anne. Félicie de Fauveau was of particular interest to the Lindsays as a friend and admirer of Rio; indeed, it was her copy of *De La Poésie Chrétienne* which James and Anne had lent to Lord Lindsay outside Assisi in 1839. And it was under her firm control that the Lindsays included visits to Siena and San Gimignano among their holiday excursions. These are vividly evoked by Lord Lindsay in a letter to a friend in Scotland (Robertson Glasgow) dated 13 June 1840: ‘James, Anne and I made two or three very interesting excursions into Tuscany—the first to Pistoia, Lucca ... and Pisa,—the second to the three convents of Vallombrosa, Camaldoli, and La Verna, Arezzo and Siena, San Gimignano, Volterra and so home. You must know that we have all three become passionate lovers of the ancient Italian painters—the contemporaries of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio, who revived the art and dedicated their efforts to the noblest end, the propagation of Christian truth and principle among the people—an end which in proportion as paganism and the classics became the favourite intellectual food of Europe, to the exclusion of the Bible, sank more and more into disrepute, till at last mere anatomical accuracy, colouring, drawing, etc., in short the mere mechanism of the art came to be considered the great desideratum, to the comparative neglect of the poetry and feeling of the subject represented, which if a sacred one, must of course be a failure if the heart do not inspire the hand. This old school, of which the chiefs were Giotto, Orcagna, Fra Angelico, Benozzo Gozzoli, Perugino, Fra Bartolomeo, etc., ended with Raphael, few or none of the later painters having sought their inspiration where they did, till a few years ago Overbeke, Hesse, and a few other German painters took up the chain which they had dropped and have since proved themselves well worthy to rank as their successors. The Campo Santo at Pisa, as you probably recollect, is a perfect museum of ancient frescoes, and we spent many most delightful hours in studying them—Orcagna’s are grand as Dante—Benozzo Gozzoli’s as full of nature’s beauty, animate and inanimate, as Shakespeare—and yet scarcely one Englishman in fifty ever heard their names. At San Gimignano, a little town between Siena and Volterra, and absolutely unknown to travellers, there are works by
almost all the greatest masters from Giotto to Perugino inclusive—but Benozzo's are the most numerous—one chapel is entirely painted with the history of S. Augustine. Colonel Lindsay and I are having coloured drawings made of three or four of the best of them, as well as of others which we saw in different places, and which will scarcely be in existence a hundred years hence, they are so fast crumbling away.\footnote{A copy of this letter is preserved among the Crawford family papers. The original is lost.}

At the end of the summer Lindsay returned to Haigh, armed with engravings of Beato Angelico's \textit{Life of Christ} in the Belle Arti, issued by the Florentine print-seller, Nocchi, and a copy of Raphael's \textit{Madonna del Cardellino} in the Uffizi; and accompanied, too, by his sixteen year old cousin, Coutts, who was to be his guest and pupil. He was now preoccupied, above all, by the necessity of finding a suitably young and promising English artist to whom he might particularly address his book on Christian art. Coutts' physical proximity, as much as his bourgeoning talents, may account for the extraordinary letter on the subject which Lindsay addressed to Anne on 10 December 1840. 'Dear Anne, here we are striving to revive the spirit of the past and restore the Arts to a sense of their due vocation, but where in England shall I find the man to follow up my views, who will be my disciple? who will set the example! for artists, poor devils, \textit{must} follow the fashion and pander to the bad taste of the time till a better spirit is breathed into it—they \textit{must} paint to live before they can live to paint. I want a man independent in every sense of the term. \textit{Why Coutts is the man!} give him only fair opportunities, enable him to acquire mastery over the mechanism of the art both in oils and fresco, store his mind well, and with the knowledge of human nature he will acquire in active life, and the inspiration of his own noble and Christianized heart within, with his singular talent of observation and his equanimity (to return united with genius) I see no earthly reason which he should not be a second Benozzo Gozzoli—aye, or rival to anyone whose name we may rank still higher in the scale of excellence. And it would be a glorious vocation...' At this juncture Lindsay's devotion to early Christian art and to
the notion of its revival in his own time was no longer in question, but his detailed understanding of art-historical development was still quite rudimentary, as he himself appreciated, especially after completely re-reading Luigi Lanzi’s authoritative History of Italian Painting (1789). Moreover he had come to the conclusion (as he explained to James, who was now back at Balcarres) ‘that treating of painting isolately is insufficient and will never do, if an attempt is to be made to bring men back to its right object and principles; one must begin with the architecture of the Middle Ages—Sculpture and painting were its children and must be considered in relation to it and to each other’.¹ And so he decided to go back to Italy once again, to make the detailed notes he still needed. Colin, his younger brother, would accompany him; also his new protegé, Coutts.

They arrived in Rome in December 1841, and Lindsay, doubtless anxious for some independence, lost no time before engaging tutors for the boys in his charge. Johann Wittmer, a pupil of Cornelius’ school and the son-in-law of Koch, was hired as a drawing master for Coutts. His style, Lindsay assured a friend of the boy’s mother, ‘somewhat resembles Fra Angelico’s’; but he was ‘instructing Coutts in the muscles, anatomy etc. ... not to make him a professed anatomist, but to give him that general technical knowledge and facility of expressing his ideas which I am sure will be well bestowed on him’.²

Wittmer was also commissioned to make copies of what Lindsay describes as ‘a most beautiful series of Byzantine compositions embroidered (from celebrated paintings on mosaic probably of the time) on the Dalmatica or robe with which St. Leo invested Charlemagne at his Coronation ... it was worked at Constantinople and gives one a very high degree of the Greek art at that time’.³ Later he discovered that this celebrated sacerdotal robe in the Vatican in fact dates from as late as the twelfth or thirteenth centuries; and, although this new knowledge did not in any way weaken his belief in the artistic superiority of Eastern over Western art in the ninth and tenth centuries, it did reinforce his

¹ Letter dated Haigh, 27 July 1841.
² Letter to Miss Jean Trotter dated Rome, 9 December 1841.
³ Letter to Anne Lindsay dated Rome, 27 January 1842.
equally firm conviction of the quality of the Byzantine revival under the Comneni.

Lindsay's interest in the Dalmatica is but one of many instances of his appreciation of the importance and quality of Byzantine art which he believed had been seriously underestimated, even by those who had responded to the rising taste for Italian primitives. Rio, for instance, was certainly guilty of a persistent tendency to undervalue the influence of the Byzantine school on the revival of Christian art in the West; and he refers lugubriously and with undisguised prejudice to 'l'intervention fatigante de cet art byzantin'.¹ No doubt his rigid Roman Catholic orthodoxy and his sense of identification with the past struggles of the Papacy against Eastern iconoclasts explain his distorted outlook on this essentially art historical issue. Yet Rio's position was by no means an isolated one, and it may fairly be said that apart from Séroux d'Agincourt's antiquarian interest in engraving Byzantine designs as part of his methodological survey of art [Histoire de l'Art par les Monumens, depuis sa décadence au IVe siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au XVle (1810–23)¹], and some perceptive comments on this subject made by Flaxman in his Lectures, Lindsay's claim to originality was not unreasonable.²

In general, however, Lindsay's comments on individual works of art throughout the 1842 tour are not notable either for their originality or their critical penetration. Unlike Ruskin, Lindsay appears to have had no eye for detail, no capacity for connoisseurship or even for more generalized stylistic criticism; and his tendency towards abstraction and moral censure, inherited initially from Rio, is still not brought under adequate control. Moreover, the speed at which he journeyed through the Italian peninsula from Naples to Venice, mainly visiting pre-selected sites, described in his secondary source-books, itself inhibited unscheduled digressions which might have led to independent discoveries. It would appear that he was incapable of

²Lindsay subsequently acknowledged that he had been anticipated in this judgement by Flaxman; see Sketches of the History of Christian Art (1847) i. 73. For a recent assessment of Flaxman's views on art see D. Irwin in The Burlington Magazine, ci (June 1959), 212 ff.
making the necessary advance from the initial stage of discovering the early Italian painters, which he had achieved in 1839, to the more active stage of preparing an authoritative historical and critical account of the art he wished to promote into public favour.

In January 1842 we find Lindsay and Coutts in Orvieto; Colin had become unwell and had been sent home from Naples earlier in the month. Predictably, Lindsay took exception to the naked figures in Signorelli's frescoes in the Cathedral. He describes the men and women as 'clumsily built, fat often as porpoises', and suggests that they are 'contorted and twisted in every direction' simply to exhibit the artist's 'powers in foreshortening'. Yet, because he nevertheless felt that 'mind and feeling predominate throughout', he was disposed to find merit in other parts of the cycle, in the scene with Antichrist, for instance, which he described as 'a grand moral composition', and in the Glory of the Blessed meeting in Paradise, where he admired the 'symmetrical and graceful' composition. Indeed Lindsay's lengthy description eventually suggests that Signorelli's frescoes at Orvieto had met his standards; he certainly bestows far more praise on them than Rio had felt able to afford. It must, however, be said that Lindsay's analysis, for all its emotional intensity and sympathy, tells us remarkably little about Signorelli and his artistic development; and there is no effort whatsoever to discuss the style of the Orvieto frescoes in terms of their relationship with other works by the artist, such as the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, about which Lindsay is tantalizingly silent.

At Panicale Lindsay and Coutts called a halt specially in order to inspect Perugino's fresco of St. Sebastian. 'The form has the loveliness and delicacy of a Grecian statue', Lindsay concedes, yet in the young saint's 'sweet expression of faith and resignation' he could also applaud the triumph of spirit over the flesh.

In Spoleto Lindsay had the opportunity to refresh his memory

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1 Lindsay's notebooks from this tour have not apparently survived. We can, nevertheless, follow the progress of his travels in great detail from the extremely long and carefully composed letters he sent home to Anne, and which he clearly intended her to preserve. All quotations relating to the journey from Rome to Florence are taken from a letter dated Florence, Easter Monday, 28 March 1842.
of Filippo Lippi's frescoes in the Cathedral, which he had already admired, without equivocation, in May 1839, just before he first read Rio. Now, however, he refers to Lippi as a 'coarse and vulgar painter', notes that in these frescoes 'the expression throughout is earthy', and concludes that 'in all the highest qualities of his art, he [Lippi] falls short of his purer minded contemporaries'. There was no place in the école mystique for a monk who had abducted a nun and been on trial for fraud!

It was dusk as the two travellers approached Assisi. Lindsay has left us a vivid account of their arrival. Its almost child-like sense of innocent wonder, combined with a mood of melancholy nostalgia for an irrecoverable past, perhaps brings us closer to the spirit of Lindsay's romantic love of Italy than any of his more inhibited efforts to write on works of art. Assisi, he suggests, 'is altogether a ghostly place, and if you had seen it as we did that evening, you would have confessed the justice of the epithet! ... the town was silent as death—long desolate streets, solemn and still like the corridors of a convent, lighted by single lamps placed at their distant angles, and echoing to our measured footfall as to the tread of a regiment, while if any one passed us, it was with the swift gliding noiseless motion of a spirit—then the lofty palaces towering above us, and the vast arched doors yawning like the mouths of hell out of whose blackness one expected demons to rush out on one—cannot you fancy them? At one moment we could hardly persuade ourselves we were not standing, its first discoverers, in some forgotten city of the middle ages, tenanted only by the shades of the departed—at another, turning a corner of the street, the broad lights cast across the blackness on the opposite walls, and the indistinct figures flitting across them, reflected from within some archway opening immediately on the owner's dwelling room, made us fearfully fancy ourselves intruders on a Domdaniel of enchanters'.

The following morning Lindsay at once began to compile detailed notes on 'every individual fresco that could in any way be of interest with reference to early art'. He was interested principally in questions of iconography, a task which appears to have caused him remarkably little difficulty, due largely to De Natalibus' Lives of the Saints, a fifteenth-century volume outlining
'all the legends in their unadorned simplicity', which he had bought in Rome 'as a vademecum in my fresco explorations' and now carried everywhere. This work was now further facilitated by his good fortune in acquiring in Assisi a complete series of reproductive drawings of every fresco in the upper and lower church, executed from scaffolding some thirty years earlier by G. B. Mariani. Lindsay found that these outline drawings succeeded admirably in conveying the 'composition and general idea' of the dimly lit frescoes; his only reservation was that 'the faces are not done justice to'. For strictly iconographic purposes this limitation was of no consequence, but Lindsay was also attempting, with much imaginative sympathy, to record and describe the individual emotions of the protagonists depicted in the main narrative fresco cycles, especially the scenes from the life of St. Francis in the upper church. Not unreasonably, Lindsay had decided that the revolutionary quality of Giotto's frescoes lay particularly in the fact that the artist had been 'obliged to create a new style in order to delineate feelings and sentiments unthought of, at least as yet unexpressed by the Greeks—to reflect in short the new spirit which had entered into the heart of the people'. Indeed it was on the strength of the 'originality and expressive' power of the St. Francis cycle in the upper church that Lindsay finally became convinced by Vasari's attribution of the frescoes to Giotto, a view which had been questioned by some nineteenth-century writers, including von Rumohr. Lindsay did, however, disagree with Vasari's view that Cimabue rather than Giotto should be credited with the revival of painting in Italy. For Lindsay Giotto was 'the father of the Florentine and indeed almost every other in Italy'. Only the Sienese school of Mino and Duccio took precedence, and even this view was soon to be revised after Lindsay had seen the Giotto frescoes at the Arena chapel in Padua and those of his followers, Altichiero and Giusto de'Menabuoi, in the same city. For by the time he wrote his book, Lindsay had concluded that the 'dramatic principle' of Giottesque art 'must necessarily take the lead' before the 'contemplative' style of Siena could 'do itself justice'.

1 Letter from Lord Lindsay to Miss Jean Trotter dated Rome, 9 December 1841.
2 Lord Lindsay, Sketches of the History of Christian Art (London, 1847), ii. 163.
In Arezzo Lindsay’s principal idea was to trace the decline of the Giottesque school, and he went to considerable trouble to locate Spinello Aretino’s frescoes of the Fall of Lucifer which Vasari had recorded in S. Michele Archangelo. Although assured by a local guide that the church was destroyed, Lindsay persisted and eventually found the remains of the fresco ‘on the wall of the bedroom of a poor contadina’ who was the tenant of a house named Casa dei diavoli into which the deconsecrated church had been converted. The three surviving fragments of this fresco are now divided between the museum at Arezzo and the National Gallery in London; they had eventually been rescued by Sir Henry Layard who bought them in 1855.

It was as a direct result of a growing tendency to rely on Vasari as his principal source that Lindsay found himself in front of Piero della Francesca’s frescoes in S. Francesco. For although Vasari described them in some detail, they had been virtually ignored by most later writers. The chief exception was Lanzi, who had confined himself to a favourable comment on their mechanical qualities of perspective and relief when compared with the earlier productions of the Giottesque school. And Charles Eastlake had briefly drawn attention to the same frescoes in his influential review, published in The Quarterly Review (June 1840), of J. D. Passavant’s new book on Raphael. When Lindsay found them, they were in distressing condition, ‘absolutely in the last agonies of dissolution, hanging in flakes from the walls’, yet he could still perceive and record their quality, not only the artist’s clear mastery of perspective, but also the dramatic sense of moment—‘in the procession you feel the march of a vast multitude’—combined with the truly classical quality of ‘graceful ease and repose which we have lost since the 16th century’. Coutts, too, is reported as having compared the integrated composition of these monumental frescoes with the Elgin Marbles, ‘hosts only being in motion instead of subdividual figures’. This, ostensibly at least, was the major discovery of Lindsay’s tour and one, moreover, which apparently stimulated uncharacteristic visual responses as opposed to mere moral approbation. It is all the more remarkable inasmuch as the clear classical bias of Piero della Francesca’s work might have been reckoned sufficient to disqualify it from inclusion
within Rio's concept of the école mystique. Further investigation of Lindsay's personal papers fails to clarify this curious paradox. Indeed, writing to his friend Robertson Glasgow, only ten days later (20 March), Lindsay strikes a singularly pessimistic note in his description of Arezzo, and makes absolutely no reference to Piero della Francesca: 'a walk of many hours yielded us little satisfaction; Spinello and Vasari are the great names there.' Is this the voice of the critic who had just discovered a long neglected masterpiece? Or could it perhaps have been the precocious young Coutts, rather than his more voluble mentor, who had in fact first responded to the spirit of the antique evoked by Piero's art?

Good Friday marked the departure of Coutts from Italy; he was due to enlist in the Guards, but Lindsay still nursed higher ambitions for him. Then, one day in April, Lindsay, left on his own now in Florence, walked into Molini's shop and found the English language edition of Franz Kugler's *Handbook of the History of Painting*, edited by Charles Eastlake and published in 1842. Naturally his first concern was to discover to what extent the German writer might have trodden on the ground he had marked out for his own book. But, although he readily acknowledged the quality of Kugler's connoisseurship, infinitely more impressive than his own, Lindsay was quickly reassured that the necessity for his own work was in no way diminished. For, while Kugler's work had the advantage of being published in English, unlike most other books on early Italian art, it lacked popular appeal and would not, Lindsay felt, attract 'the uninitiated pure spirited youthful English aristocracy for whom I write'. And he then goes on to characterize it, somewhat disparagingly, as 'flowing on a continuous stream of criticism, unrelieved by break or rapid, anecdote or biography, criticism, criticism, criticism to the end'. By this he meant of course detailed stylistic analysis, a visual emphasis conspicuously lacking from his own art historical and critical vocabulary.

Then, almost feverishly, Lindsay set about preparing a detailed scheme of the form in which his own contribution would be

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1 For a stimulating discussion of the critical reputation of Piero della Francesca see R. Longhi *Piero della Francesca* (Florence, 1963), pp. 116 ff.
moulded. From his long letter to Anne of 7 May 1842, it becomes evident that his principal motivating idea was still more or less the same as the one he had outlined to James in 1839, but fortified now by a belief, which he had not hitherto expressed in such singularly nationalistic terms, that 'Providence, in committing the pure faith to the custody of England and placing her on the throne of the civilized world, enjoins her to carry the spirit of Christianity into every department of genius, every walk of life'. This remark reflects the beginning of a new preoccupation that was to haunt him more and more during the next five years: that the religious outlook of his mentor, Rio, while 'admirable—for the French and Roman Catholics' was 'forgive me, rather narrow bottomed' and dogmatic.

Finally, Lindsay assures Anne that in spite of possible indications to the contrary he did not contemplate a work 'like Agincourt's or Cicognara's' of six or seven volumes and a thumping folio of plates'. On the contrary, he had in mind no more than a modest series of letters to a young artist or friend just gone out to Italy. This unusual form would, he hoped, free him from the 'responsibility of a professed historian', while leaving him scope to 'offer a thousand hints, conjecture etc. in an offhand way—to blend with criticism, description, anecdote, reminiscence, allusion ad infinitum—in short to range at freedom through the pleasant fields of fresco, roaring and lashing my tail ad libitum'.

There is no necessity for us to follow the remainder of Lindsay's 1842 Italian tour in meticulous detail. A dreadful predictability surrounds his responses to the Carracci and other seicento masters in Bologna, to the mannerist art of Giulio Romano in Mantua, and to the sensual art of the High Renaissance in Venice. Giulio Romano is 'a course material painter, disqualified, both by his natural character and the society in which he lived, to excel in any line of art'. Whereas, for Lindsay, 'the voluptuousness of Greece was refined and elegant', with 'similar qualities . . . stamped on her productions', the equivalent

1 L. Cicognara, Storia della scultura del suo risorgimento in Italia fino al secolo di Canova, Prato, 1827.
2 Letter to Anne Lindsay dated Rovigo, 3 June 1842.
in Italy was 'gross in the extreme'; and for Giulio Romano contemplation of 'the antique ideal was not sufficient to counteract the coarse modern positive atmosphere in which he lived'. Titian's Assumption in the church of the Frari, Venice, is later singled out for ever greater abuse. The Virgin is described as 'a swarthy well-fed coarse-featured Venetian model—blown up to heaven in a gale of wind—her modesty evinced not by the spiritual purity of the head and form, but by pressing her feet together to hinder her pettycoats from flying over her head'. All later painters, Lindsay concluded, 'seem to think that religious expression consists in physical exertion as if the Catholic Church were Jumpers or Irvingites'. As for Tintoretto, 'there is no selection, no ideal beauty, either of form or expression, but a simple copyism of vulgar nature'. But how quickly such rigid and unseeing moral criticism pales in comparison with the spontaneous and infectious manner in which Ruskin would shortly proclaim his discovery of Tintoretto's genius in the Scuola di San Rocco.

Ruskin, by his own account, had gone to Italy for the first time in 1845 under the direct inspiration of *De la Poésie Chrétienne*; and there is clear evidence of Rio's influence in his earnest efforts, during July of that year, to draw up a hierarchical scale of painters, based 'on the amount of *holy expression* visible in the works of each, not by art', and headed by the category of 'Pure Religious Art. The School of Love'. Yet no sooner has Ruskin thus convinced his followers of the extent to which he, too, had succumbed to the restricted vision of an *école mystique*, than he restlessly reasserts the independence of his eye, and with a staggering and delightful unpredictability, of which Lindsay in marked contrast was scarcely capable, he writes home again, only two months later, to inform his parents: 'I never was so utterly crushed to the earth before any human intellect as I was today, before Tintoret. Just be so good as to take my list of painters, and

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1 Letter to Anne Lindsay dated Verona, 19 June 1842.
put him in the school of Art at the top, top, top of everything, with a big black line underneath him to stop him off from everybody…’

It was perhaps in Parma that Lindsay came closest to stepping out of line. Although he had little hesitation in estimating Correggio’s excellencies to be of a ‘subordinate kind’, amounting to little more than the ‘pursuit of grace’, and ‘cold and unimpressive in a moral point of view’, he did very nearly succumb to the delights of the Holy Family with St. Jerome, in spite of some undisguised irritation at ‘the silly unmeaning smile on the Virgin’s cheek’. For ‘the light of the sunniest Italian sky is shed so glowingly over this picture as to warm one’s inmost being—a soft brilliancy which witch[es] one into a momentary oblivion of truth and principle—a momentary belief that you are gazing on a vision of Calypso’s isle’. Such dreams, however, had to be brushed aside; for Lindsay they were simply the ‘trials of faith one has to go through in this pilgrimage through the Terra Santa of Art’.

However, it is from Lindsay’s account of his visit to Modena that we can perhaps most readily conjure an image of this shy, solitary but humorous and self-deprecating scholar making his relentless progress across Northern Italy. ‘You would be amused, dear Anne’, he writes, ‘seeing me on my explorations—the laquais perhaps following me … with the large folio De Natalibus under his arm—gloves I have long discarded—and as for being stared at I have long grown callous to it—the other day while making my notes on the sculptures outside the Cathedral at Modena I had about twenty people round me; sometimes the priests come to see what I am about—I always make a civil observation and then take no further notice of them, and they generally soon go. The people take me for a queer fish, I fancy, but I don’t care for that. The ciceronis too don’t know what to make of me—I have regularly to break them in; it takes about an hour to do so generally—a quick curt yet courteous manner answers my purpose admirably, and I never allow myself to be diverted from

1 Letter to his father dated Venice, 24 September 1845. See Shapiro op. cit. pp. 211–12.
2 Lindsay’s visits to Parma and Modena are described in his letter to Anne dated Rovigo, 3 June 1842; see p. 45, n. 2. above.
my object. As for the custodes, they get terribly weary, cough, or rattle their keys, all too no purpose—I remain quite callous till they sit down in despair or resignation. Sometimes rather ludicrous incidents happen. The other day, intensely occupied with a picture in the choir of a church, I advanced into the middle of it; whether or not the stalls were filled with the canons before I entered, or whether they took their place while I was standing there in a state of abstraction, I know not, but you may imagine the start it gave me, the whole assembly suddenly bursting out in full chant, within ten feet of me—believing myself alone. And I did not even blush. In short pro tempore my character seems totally changed, and I have become one of the most confident, self possessed, determined men of action in Europe.'

Home again at Haigh at the end of August, Lindsay addressed himself to the final form of his book on Christian Art. The principal challenge was seen to lie in the need to reinterpret Rio's concept of the *école mystique* in terms which would be acceptable to moderate members of the Church of England but which could not be construed as lending support to the Puseyites. 'My work will be hailed as a contribution to the cause of Puseyism, now peculiarly on the watch to Romanise art and make it subservient to its purpose,' Lindsay warned Anne. So he would 'take care to mix the antidote with the draught which by the tincture of their opinions would become poison.'

James and Anne were now in Florence and spent the Christmas holiday discussing with their old friend Félicie de Fauveau the General Classification of Schools and Artists which Lindsay had devised for his book. On 28 December 1842 Anne duly reported back to Lindsay with a summary of Félicie de Fauveau's criticisms and ideas, at the same time expressing her own regret that Lindsay had not himself confided more intimately with their French friend during his own sojourn in Florence. But Lindsay quickly made it abundantly clear that he had no wish to continue a dialogue with Félicie de Fauveau on the subject of Italian art. It was a question of his religious beliefs, and of a 'consciousness that I differ from her views as a Roman Catholic so decidedly on many

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1 Letter dated Haigh, 8 November 1842.
points, while I go along with her in others so far beyond the limits of Protestants, that I find myself constantly awkwardly situated ... with her.'1 Or, as he expressed it yet again a little later, 'How could I explain or reconcile the delight I take in some of the Legends of the Saints and the scorn with which I regard others—how without apparent obstinacy and real insincerity maintain views in conversation which on her principles are wrong but on mine true? I felt in a degree the same embarrassment that a Puseyite must be sensible of in conversing with a Catholic....'2

Such observations provide an early indication of the intense manner in which Lindsay was to set about evaluating his views on art in the light of his Anglican religion. Anne, however, was not readily appeased by Lindsay’s excuses, especially when, in February 1843, she discovered that Rio was at that very moment filling his notebooks in exemplary fashion with Félicie de Fauveau’s ideas and information, for use in a forthcoming supplementary volume to De la Poésie Chrétienne. Yet her uncharacteristically tactless and ill-judged letter on this matter, with its fascinating gossip about Rio’s intimate friendship with the leaders of the Oxford Movement in England, can only have aggravated Lindsay’s actue anxiety and strengthened his determination to prune his aesthetic ideas of any associations that might be construed as Roman Catholic or Puseyite.3 Nor would Lindsay associate himself with what Anne now described as Rio’s current ‘hobby horse’, the ‘downfall of Michelangelo’. For Michelangelo was assessed by Lindsay to have been almost ‘protestant in reason’ and in his ‘recognition of our Saviour as the prime object of worship’, even if he remained Catholic ‘in heart and imagination’. ‘I have not yet in every particular made up my mind about Michelangelo’, he conceded, ‘and I fully admit that his was a deviation from the line of traditional Christian art; still, though bad at a Madonna he is profoundly lofty and religious in his spirit; his Holy Family in the

1 Letter dated Haigh, 26 January 1843.
2 Letter to Anne dated Haigh, 28 February 1843.
3 Letter to Lord Lindsay dated Florence, 16 February 1843. 'We have had a very pleasant visitor at Florence lately—but who I am afraid if you do not make the better haste may forestall you in many of your observations', she wrote. 'I mean Rio who with his family is travelling in Italy picking up materials for another volume. We have seen him very often and there is much to like in him.'
I never saw a Frenchman do such ample justice to the English character—he speaks English as well as you do—he has written but not yet published a work on the influence of Catholicism (Roman) on art in England—particularly relating to Architecture.... It is curious to hear him speak of puseyism and of his expectations from it. He has seen and conversed with many of the leaders of the party and they seem to have been much more open in their admissions to him than they are to the public. He leaves this next Saturday for Rome. Having travelled thro' all Germany, Dresden, Vienna etc to Venice where he passed some weeks in pursuit of his object. Here his great object seems to be to suck the brains of Mademoiselle de Fauveau who surprises me more & more by her original views and the great mass of information she possesses. I cannot tell you how angry both James and I have often felt at you for not making more use of her. I really think you were very foolish and as to your reason about catholic views, I cannot see that it was one at all, for you were not bound to her opinions but might receive them and modify them as best pleased you. She said to me more than once I am sorry Lord Lindsay did not come oftener to see me. I would much have preferred giving him any little knowledge I possessed than giving it to Rio—but he apparently did not wish for it. Perhaps she was right. At any rate I feel so savage with you at this moment that it is lucky for you you are not here so that you escape a predestinate scratched face.... One thing comforts me about Rio—he is going to lose his time and throw away his power in analysing and attacking the bad schools and proving that they ought not to be admired, for which purpose he visits every object in the decadence of art and criticises it. Now this will tire people, he had better show what is worthy of admiration and having given people a good taste the bad will fall by itself. His great hobby horse at present is the downfall of Michael Angelo—but he will break his horns against that Rock if he does not take care. He is full of Eloquence and enthusiasm and will talk by the hour and excite himself so that he cannot sleep all night. His taste appears to me incorrect or rather so full of prepossession that he will go into raptures at any daub of the early times and can find no beauty in the best pictures painted after a certain date—it is amusing to see Félicie check his extasies and say—ne regardez pas cela il n’y a pas grand’ chose—on which he quietly withdraws—and begins to apostrophise another picture. Nevertheless he will write well and I should greatly wish you to be before hand with him. A part of his plan is to embody his ideas in a sort of tale. He will present an individual entering into life with the warmest admiration for all classical art and learning, travelling in Italy with these feelings and with great contempt for the religious school of art. Some great event happens in his life, Rio did not tell me what, which entirely changes his feelings, gives him another turn of mind and his second tour in Italy is described with all his new impressions and new delights. I think this may be a very bright notion if well worked out. His first object in entering a town is to get together all the legends and stories of saints, patriots etc and to make himself well acquainted with them so as to put himself as much as possible in sympathy with the painting. In this he does much as you do—but he intends writing his work in Italy that he may not get cold—great part of it he says at Venice where he has a great many followers and admirers—it is rather drôle to hear him talk of “Mon Ecole”. He is a good specimen of a Frenchman but a Frenchman still.'
Tribune I will not stand for, but the Sistine Chapel was the last grand protest of Christianity against Paganism South of the Alps, the dying blast or rather echo of Savonarola's trumpet, like Roland's at Fontarabia, the last and loudest, prophetic and full of woe.'\(^1\)

By February 1846 Lindsay had completed his manuscript. It amounted to an introductory essay on Christian iconography, followed by a General Classification of Schools and Artists; and then ten essays or letters on Roman art; Byzantine art; Lombard and Gothic architecture; sculpture of the Lombards and the Italo-Byzantine revivals; Nicola Pisano; Giotto and his school; the school of Siena; the semi-Byzantine succession at Florence—Orcagna and Fra Angelico; the primitive school of Bologna; and finally sculpture and painting North of the Alps. Having followed Lindsay so closely on his tours through Italy, we find little to surprise us in the strictly art-historical passages of the book. On the other hand the well-researched iconographical section at the very beginning does require further comment, if only because it is headed, in provocative terms, Christian Mythology, Legends of Saints.... The explanation of Lindsay's deliberate use of this offensive term undoubtedly lies in his staunch determination not to be mistaken either for a Roman Catholic who actually believed in all the medieval legends and devotional practices associated with them, or even for another Mrs Jameson, whose aim, in his opinion, was to 'give the legends in the most romantic and sentimental manner'.\(^2\)

The most puzzling aspect of the Sketches of the History of Christian Art was to be found, however, not in the iconographical references but in the extent to which the book is coloured by a metaphysical theory which Lindsay had begun to formulate in January 1843, the very moment when Anne was bombarding him with the latest news of Félicie de Fauveau and Rio. It was at this moment that he first referred to his concept of 'three progressive epochs of Sense, Mind and Spirit',\(^3\) which he later developed into a virtually incomprehensible essay, published in 1846 as

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\(^1\) Letter to Anne dated Haigh, 28 February 1843.

\(^2\) Letter to Anne dated Haigh, 19 April 1844.

\(^3\) Letter to Anne dated Haigh, 26 January 1843.
Progression by Antagonism, and which he then recapitulated in the opening pages of the Sketches…. At first sight the theory appears to be only remotely connected with Lindsay's interest in Christian art, notwithstanding his repeated assurances that it provides the key to a proper understanding of the Sketches…, or more specifically that it 'affords the general principle of which the history of art is the individual exemplification'\. But if we follow its elaborate analogies with enough insistence, it does eventually reveal Lindsay's solution to the dilemma faced by the Protestant who found himself in sympathy with pre-Reformation Christian art, but at odds with the idolatry and superstition which had inspired it.

'The perfection of human nature', he begins, 'implies the union of beauty and strength in the Body, the balance of Imagination and Reason in the Intellect, and the submission of animal passions and intellectual pride to the will of God, in the spirit.' He then goes on to suggest that 'Man is, in the strictest sense of the word, a progressive being, and with many periods of inaction and retrogression, has still held, upon the whole, a steady course towards the great end of his existence, the re-union and re-harmonizing of the three elements of his being, dislocated by the Fall in the service of his God.' He compares these component elements of each individual man and of all societies to three distinct historical periods, each firmly identified with one of the three elements: 'The race of Ham... gave the fullest expression to the animal energies'; then the Greeks 'developed the intellectual faculties, Imagination and Reason...'; finally 'the race of Shem, the Jews, and the nationals of Christendom, their locum tenentes as the Spiritual Israel, have, by God's blessing, been elevated in Spirit to as near and intimate communion with Deity as is possible in this stage of being'.

'Now the peculiar interest and dignity of Art', Lindsay declares, 'consists in her exact correspondence in her three departments with these three periods of development, and in the illustration she thus affords... to the all important truth that men stand or fall according as they look up to the Ideal or not.' The Architecture of

1Letter to Anne dated Paris, 18 April 1846.
2Lord Lindsay, Sketches of the History of Christian Art (London, 1847), i. xi–xvii.
Egypt expresses 'the ideal of Sense or Matter'; the Sculpture of Greece is 'the voice of Intellect and Thought, communing with itself in solitude, feeding on beauty and yearning after Truth', while 'the Painting of Christendom (and we must remember that the glories of Christendom, in the full extent of the term, are yet to come)—is that of an immortal Spirit, conversing with its God'.

But the significance and implications of this statement only become evident when we turn to Lindsay's application of the theory of Progression by Antagonism to his estimate of the works of individual artists in the ten essays which constitute the main body of the Sketches.... He writes of Nicola Pisano, for instance, as follows: 'Niccola's [sic] peculiar praise is this,—that, in practice at least, if not in theory, he first established the principle that the study of nature, corrected by the ideal of the antique, and animated by the spirit of Christianity, personal and social, can alone lead to excellence in art, each of the three elements of human nature—Matter, Mind and Spirit—being thus brought into union and co-operation in the service of God, in due relative harmony and subordination. I cannot over-estimate the importance of this principle; it was on this that, consciously or unconsciously, Niccola himself worked,—it has been by following it that Donatello and Ghiberti, Leonardo, Raphael and Michael Angelo have risen to glory. The Sienese school and the Florentine, minds contemplative and dramatic, are alike beholden to it for whatever success has attended their efforts. Like a treble-stranded rope it drags after it the triumphal car of Christian art. But if either of the strands be broken, if either of the three elements be pursued disjointedly from the other two, the result is, in each respective case, grossness, pedantry or weakness,—the exclusive imitation of Nature produces a Caravaggio, a Rubens, a Rembrandt—that of the Antique, a Pellegrino di Tibaldi and a David,—and though there be a native chastity and taste in religion, which restrains those who worship it too abstractedly from intellect and Sense, from running into such extremes, it cannot at least supply that mechanical apparatus which will enable them to soar,—such devotees must be content to gaze into heaven, like angels cropt of their wings.1

1Lindsay, op. cit. ii. 102 ff.
This passage brings us to the heart of the paradoxical situation in which Lindsay now found himself. He wished to applaud the pure religious spirit of the early Italian artists but, as a Protestant, he could not associate himself unreservedly with their far from rational religious faith, and as an arbitor of artistic merit he could not entirely overlook their technical limitations and imperfections. Nor could he bring himself to dismiss all pagan and classic art simply on the grounds that it expressed a humanist and unchristian philosophy. 'Do not for a moment suppose me insensible to Classic Art,' he reminds his readers, for 'the memories of Greece and of the Palatine are very dear to me—I cannot speak coldly of the Elgin marbles, or the Apollo, the Venus, the Dying Gladiator, the Niobe, the Diana of Gabii, the Psyche of Naples...'.

It was to resolve this internal conflict that he devised a determinist philosophy of historical evolution by which man progressively advances towards the truth by a dialectical process resulting from the antagonism of half-truths. As a philosophical system it shows remarkable parallels with the views expounded by Hegel in his lectures on aesthetics. Except that whereas for Hegel the dialectical progress towards the ultimate spiritual synthesis took place inexorably as part of the historical process, with no possibility of false turnings, Lindsay, in common with some earlier German philosophers, including Schiller, A. W. Schlegel, and even his more reactionary brother F. W. Schlegel, who became a Catholic convert, saw the artist as a prophet who would inspire his contemporaries with the necessary vision to effect the progression towards true spiritual awareness.

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1 Lindsay, op. cit. i. xiv–xv.
2 This emphasis on the parallels between Lord Lindsay's *Progression by Antagonism* and the writings of German philosophers begs the question of just how extensively Lindsay had read their work. There is no evidence of his reading Hegel or A. W. Schlegel at this juncture. He records first reading Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* as late as April 1846, when *Progression by Antagonism* was already written. He expresses gratification on finding 'partial anticipation' of his theory, or 'rather of its details', not only in Schiller but also in English and French writers he had been reading c.1846, including Guizot, Arnold and Coleridge. Such anticipations nevertheless struck Lindsay as 'vague and lifeless', and the 'eyes of those who thus anticipate have been circumscribed by natural barriers of prejudice'—Schiller, for instance, because he was 'German and a Sceptic'.
concept enabled Lindsay to take refuge in the dynamic ideal of a second regeneration of Catholic Christianity which he hoped might be realized within his own lifetime. Such regeneration would be a conscious and deliberate gesture, and Lindsay's book on Christian art was designed to prompt some independent English artist to set the process in motion by the example of his vision. Rio's nostalgic view of early Christian art, which tended to equate any subsequent technical and intellectual progress with paganism, now struck Lindsay as unacceptably reactionary, although it, too, was ultimately derived from the same German philosophical antecedents.

Lindsay's narrow determinist view of historical and artistic evolution may have succeeded in clearing him of any suspicion of harbouring Roman Catholic or Puseyite sympathies, but it provoked the wrath of his two principal reviewers, Ruskin, and

1 One further example of the application of Progression by Antagonism to the vexed question of Christian Art relates to the current revival of medieval church architecture and Augustus W. Pugin's worrying and acute observation that 'those who think merely to build chancels, without reviving the ancient faith, will be miserably deceived in their expectations' and his uncompromising belief that 'if the present revival of Catholic antiquity is suffered to proceed much farther, it will be seen that either the Common Prayer or the ancient models must be abandoned' (see A. Pugin, The Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture (London, 1843; reprint 1969), pp. 137-8). Pugin had underlined this Protestant dilemma by his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith; but Lindsay was able once again to resort to his theory of Progression. After summarizing Pugin's position, he asks rhetorically, 'But what is the alternative? the Meeting-house?' and then firmly replies: 'By no means. The Church of England is neither Catholic nor Protestant—she does not with the Catholics exalt Imagination and repudiate Reason, nor with the Protestants exalt Reason and repudiate Imagination, but includes them both, harmoniously opposed, within her constitution, so as to preserve the balance of truth, and point out the true "Via Media" between Superstition on the one hand and Scepticism on the other, thus approximating (in degree) to the Ideal of human nature, Christ Incarnate, of whom the Church is the Body and ought to be the Likeness and the Image. This then is the problem—England wants a new Architecture, expressive of the epoch, of her Anglican faith and of the human mind as balanced in her development, as heir of the past and trustee for the future—a modification, it may be, of the Gothic, but not otherwise so than as the Gothic was a modification of the Lombard, the Lombard of the Byzantine and Roman, the Byzantine and Roman of the Classic Greek, the Classic Greek of the Egyptian. We have a right to expect this from the importance of the epoch ...' (Lindsay, op. cit. ii. 29-30).
Nicholas Wiseman who, three years later, was to be appointed Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. Ruskin, whose early sympathy for Rio's concept of the *école mystique* has already been noted, now complained, wittily, in the *Quarterly Review*, of Lindsay's 'triplicity'.\(^1\) Wiseman was drawn into an expression of angry distaste for Lindsay's 'irreverent eyes' and 'flippant tongue'.\(^2\)

Wiseman was quick to perceive the religious difficulties from which Lindsay, as an Anglican, had attempted to extricate himself. He takes advantage of Lindsay's nice distinctions, isolates the two most Protestant elements in his argument, his objective analysis of early Christian iconography and his progressive belief in a specifically Anglican revival of Christian art in the years ahead, and then cunningly places these two tenets of the Protestant position in deadly opposition to each other. 'Protestantism', exclaims Wiseman, 'is essentially irreverent, and Lord Lindsay's work, great as its merit, shows it. He begins it, by a long preface on *Christian Mythology*. And this is synonomous with the *materials of Christian art during the middle ages*. Imagine the possibility of a school of art springing up among a sect, who, while they pretend to copy or rival old art, consider its materials a *mythology*!' Then, turning to Lindsay's attack on Mariolatry and 'the Catholic virtue of chastity', Wiseman finds yet further confirmation of 'the utter hopelessness of the revival which he contemplates', and proceeds to deliver an almost unanswerable challenge. 'Let any artist imbued with these notions sit down to meditate upon the countenance which he would give to a "Virgin-Saint", whose chief characteristic must be the virtue thus unchristianly denounced beaming from every feature. As to his attempting to depict the queen of Virgins, to set forth the lily, after he has scorned its whiteness, we defy him. Furthermore, Protestantism presents no types of Christian art. It has destroyed the types of the past. It excludes as legendary all the most beautiful histories of the early saints; it has quenched all sympathy for the favourite themes of medieval painting, the Fathers of the desert, St. Benedict, and the great monastic heroes, and still more the

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\(^1\) *Quarterly Review*, June 1847, pp. 1–57.

\(^2\) For Wiseman's review, written jointly with John Steinmetz, see the *Dublin Review*, July 1836, pp. 435–60.
inspirer, and the maturer of art, and of its poetry, the glorious St. Francis of Asisium.'

Wiseman then turns to the present and the future of Christian art, although to judge from the passage which follows he was, in fact, thinking more in terms of high Roman baroque than of the revivalist aesthetics of the German Nazarenes. 'As to the present, it allows no communion with Saints in heaven, and consequently no interest in having their effigies before your eyes: no loving intercourse with blessed Spirits, and therefore no right to bring them visibly into action. All ecstasy, supernatural contemplation, vision and rapturous prayer, with the only approach of heavenly expression that earth can give; all miracles and marvellous occurrences, with the store of incident which they supply, all mingling in any one scene of the living and the Blessed, the past and the present—in fine, all the poetry of art is coldly cut out, nay, strangled and quenched by the hard hand of protestantism.' Christian art, Wiseman finally concludes, 'must spring up, either like the Phoenix from the ashes of its great predecessors, and this it may do in Italy, or like the first light, by creation from the void of a preceding chaos.' But whereas 'Protestantism has neither a smouldering spark nor a creative vigour to quicken it ... the Catholic Church has it everywhere, and therefore here'.

Ruskin, unlike Wiseman, completely missed the point of Lindsay's theory of Progression by Antagonism; or if not, he pretended to. Indeed, he remains remarkably aloof from the sectarian squabbles surrounding the revival of interest in early Italian art. 'The strife or antagonism which is throughout the subject of Lord Lindsay's proof', he suggests, 'is not, as he has stated it, between the moral, intellectual and sensual elements, but between the upward and downward tendencies of all three—between the spirit of Man which goeth upward, and the Spirit of the Beast which goeth downward.' He goes on to insist that the gulf between Christian and Pagan art is not relative, as Lindsay had suggested, but one that was absolute and unbridgeable. 'The separation is not gradual, but instant and final—the difference not of degree, but of condition; it is the difference between the dead vapours rising from a stagnant pool, and the same vapours touched by a torch.'
In the light of this rigid belief Ruskin then brushes aside Lindsay’s warnings against the current danger of over-estimating Fra Angelico as an artist who represented ‘the simple Imaginative Christianity of the middle ages, as opposed to the complex Reasoning Christianity of recent times.’ For Ruskin, Fra Angelico ‘was a man of (humanly speaking) perfect piety’ who ‘never employed his art but as a means of expressing his love to God and man, and with the view, single, simple, and straightforward, of glory to the Creator, and good to the Creature...;... he used his colour and lines as David his harp, after a kingly fashion, for purposes of praise and not of science’.

Lindsay’s great error, in Ruskin’s opinion, had been to insist on the principle of a ‘Perfection resultant from a balance of elements’, and his concept of Nicola Pisano’s ‘treble-stranded genius’ is denounced as ‘mere Bolognese eclecticism in other terms’. Instead Ruskin promotes his own ‘great principle of the incommunicableness and singleness of all the highest powers’, which he believes refutes the idea, ‘already so fatal to art, that either the aim of the antique may take place with the purposes, or its traditions become elevatory of the power of Christian art...’.

For ‘artists proper’, Ruskin suggests, ‘are appointed each with his peculiar gift and affection, over the several orders and classes of things natural, to be by them illumined and set forth. And that is God’s doing and distributing; and none is rashly to be thought inferior to another as if by his own fault; nor any of them stimulated to emulation and changing places with others, although their allotted tasks be of different dignities, and thus granted instruments of differing keenness; for in none of them can there be a perfection or balance of all human attributes...’

By thus insisting on the particular artistic gifts of individual painters and absolving them from their role as pawns in the great dialectical struggle superimposed on the historical record by German philosophers and their followers, Ruskin was able to recognize that works of art have a physical context as well. It was Lindsay’s failure to recognize ‘the inevitableness of material’ that had led him, in Ruskin’s view, both to the flawed theory of historical relativism and his unrealistic aspiration that art should ultimately achieve a balanced perfection, a utopian synthesis
which all experience had shown to be neither desirable nor possible. ‘Neither the social habits nor intellectual powers of the Greeks’, Ruskin insists, ‘had so much share in inducing his advance in Sculpture beyond the Egyptian, as the difference between marble and syenite, porphyry or alabaster. Marble not only gave the power, it actually introduced the thought or representation or realization of form, as opposed to mere suggestive abstraction.’

Lindsay’s insistence on abstract artistic concepts, together with his ‘remorseless’ demand for ‘exertion of thought’, had blinded him to the true practical purpose of his book, which, Ruskin suggests, ‘is assuredly as much to win to the truth as to demonstrate it’. As a guide for the innocent traveller in Italy, it lacked critical precision and judgement. Even in the case of Giotto, an artist Lindsay had particularly admired and studied in Assisi and Padua, ‘he has throughout left the artistical orbit … undefined, and the offence of his manner unremoved as far as regards the uninitiated spectator’. ‘We question’, Ruskin continues, ‘whether from all that he has written the untravelled reader could form any distinct idea of the painter’s peculiar merits or methods, or that the estimate, if formed, might not afterwards expose him to severe disappointment.’

Perhaps, even more regrettably, the author of the Sketches of the History of Christian Art had ignored the new generation of artists on whom his ultimate aspirations were to depend. He has forgotten, Ruskin complains, that ‘of the men to whom he must primarily look for the working out of his anticipation the most part are of limited knowledge and inveterate habit, men dexterous in practice, idle in thought … conscious of practical difficulties which the critic is too apt to underestimate…. Noble exceptions there are, and more than might be deemed; but the labour spent in contest with executive difficulties renders even these better men unapt receivers of a system which looks with little respect on such achievement, and shrewd discerners of the parts of such system which have been feebly rooted, or fancifully reared.’

Coutts Lindsay, to whom the Sketches … were dedicated, would perhaps have had some difficulty in identifying himself with Ruskin’s definition of the mid-nineteenth-century artist. There is,
alas, no record of his reaction either to Lindsay’s book or to Ruskin’s review. As for the central creative role he had been invited to assume, so as to give fresh impetus to the progression of Christian art, it remained unfulfilled. The future for Coutts lay elsewhere; in his exclusive Grosvenor Gallery, in the neo-pagan values of the aesthetic movement, and, of course, in the inevitable association with Gilbert and Sullivan’s Bunthorne, a ‘greenery yallery Grosvenor Gallery Foot in the grave young man’.

A study of Lord Lindsay as a collector will appear in the following number of the Bulletin.