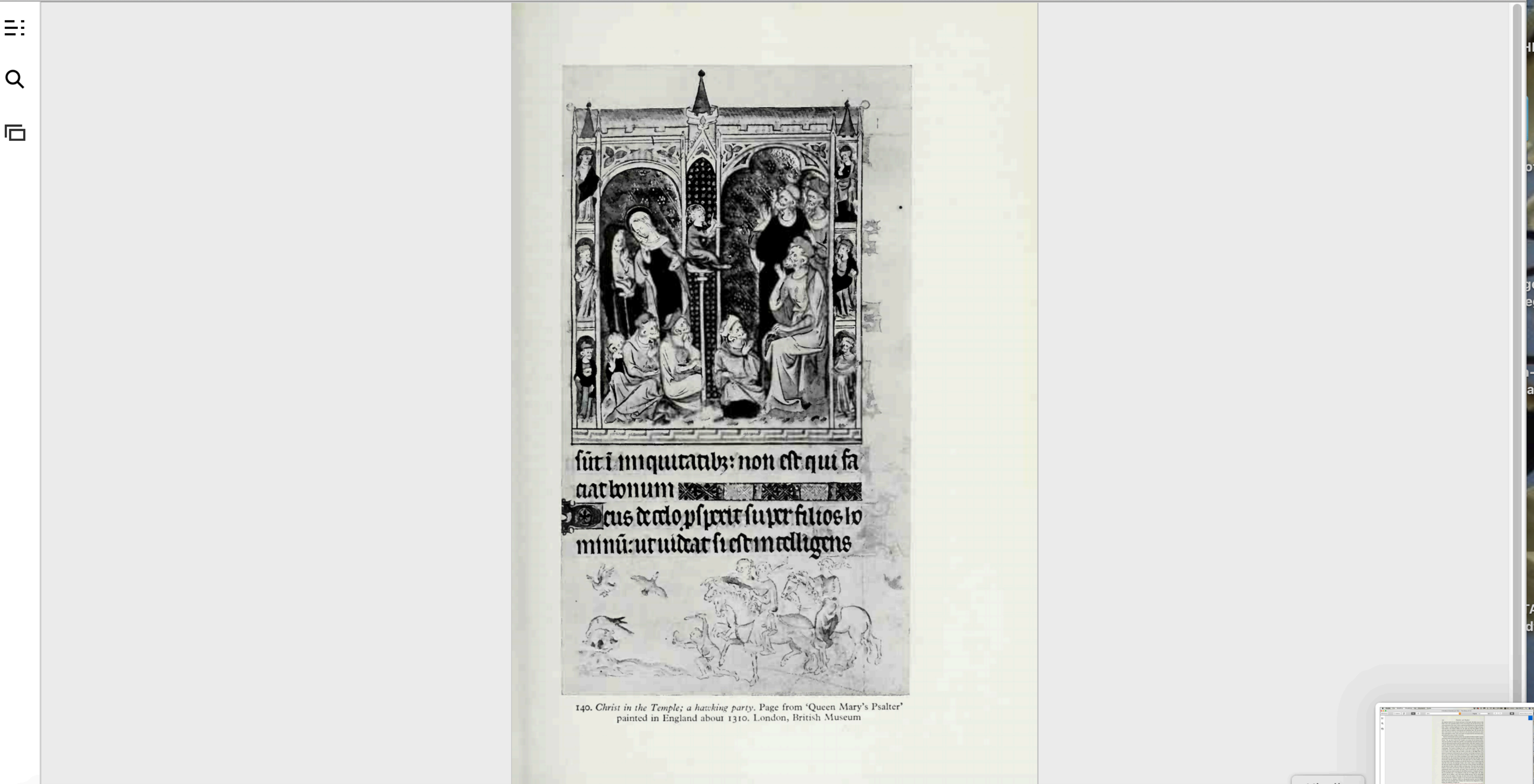
the exquisite finish of every detail, the beauty of the hands, the little creases in the baby's arms, the wonderful surface of silver and enamel, and, last but not least, the exact proportion of the statue, with its small and graceful head on a long and slender body. There is nothing haphazard in these works of the great Gothic craftsmen. Such details as the drapery falling over the right arm show the infinite care the artist has taken to compose it into graceful and melodious lines. We can never do these works justice if we just pass them by in our museums, and devote no more than a quick glance to them. They were made to be appreciated by real connoisseurs, and treasured as pieces worthy of devotion.

The love of fourteenth-century painters for graceful and delicate details is seen in such famous illustrated manuscripts as the English Psalter known as 'Queen Mary's Psalter'. Fig. 140 shows Christ in the Temple, conversing with the learned scribes. They have put Him on a high chair, and He is seen explaining some point of doctrine with the characteristic gesture used by medieval artists when they wanted to draw a teacher. The Jewish scribes raise their hands in attitudes of awe and astonishment, and so do Christ's parents, who are just coming on to the scene, looking at each other wonderingly. The method of telling the story is still rather unreal. The artist has evidently not yet heard of Giotto's discovery of the way in which to stage a scene so as to give it life. Christ, who was twelve at the time, as the Bible tells us, is minute in comparison with the grown-ups, and there is no attempt on the part of the artist to give us any idea of the space between the figures. Moreover we can see that all the faces are more or less drawn according to one simple formula, with the curved eyebrows, the mouth drawn downwards and the curly hair and beard. It is all the more surprising to look down the same page and to see that another scene has been added, which has nothing to do with the sacred text. It is a theme from the daily life of the time, the hunting of ducks with a hawk. Much to the delight of the man and woman on horseback, and of the boy in front of them, the hawk has just got hold of a duck, while two others are flying away. The artist may not have looked at real twelve-year-old boys when he painted the scene above, but he had undoubtedly looked at real hawks and ducks when he painted the scene below. Perhaps he had too much reverence for the biblical narrative to bring his observation of actual life into it. He preferred to keep the two things apart: the clear symbolic way of telling a story with easily readable gestures and no distracting details, and, on the margin of the page, the piece from real life, which reminds us once more that this is Chaucer's century. It was only in the course of the fourteenth century that the two elements of this art, the graceful narrative and the faithful observation were gradually fused. Perhaps this would not have happened so soon without the influence of Italian art.

In Italy, particularly in Florence, the art of Giotto had changed the whole idea of painting. The old Byzantine manner suddenly seemed stiff and outmoded.



140. *Christ in the Temple; a hawking party.* Page from 'Queen Mary's Psalter' painted in England about 1310. London, British Museum

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Nevertheless it would be wrong to imagine that Italian art was suddenly set apart from the remainder of Europe. On the contrary. Giotto's ideas gained influence in the countries north of the Alps, while the ideals of the Gothic painters of the north also began to have their effect on the southern masters. It was particularly in Siena, another Tuscan town and a great rival of Florence, that the taste and fashion of these northern artists made a very deep impression. The painters of Siena had not broken with the earlier Byzantine tradition in such an abrupt and revolutionary manner as Giotto in Florence. Their greatest master of Giotto's generation, Duccio, had tried —and tried successfully—to breathe new life into the old Byzantine forms instead of discarding them altogether. The altar panel of Fig. 141 was made by two younger masters of his school, Simone Martini (1285?–1357?) and Lippo Memmi (died 1347?). It shows to what an extent the ideals and the general atmosphere of the fourteenth century had been absorbed by Sienese art. The painting represents the Annunciation—the moment when the Archangel Gabriel arrives from Heaven to greet the Virgin, and we can read his words coming out of his mouth: '*Ave Maria, grazia plena*'. In his left hand he holds an olive branch, symbol of peace; his right hand is lifted as if he were about to speak. The Virgin has been reading. The appearance of the angel has taken her by surprise. She shrinks away in a movement of awe and humility, while looking back at the messenger from Heaven. Between the two there stands a vase with white lilies, symbols of virginity, and high up in the central pointed arch we see the dove, symbol of the Holy Ghost, surrounded by four-winged cherubim. These masters shared the predilection of the French and English artists of Figs. 139 and 140 for delicate forms and a lyrical mood. They enjoyed the gentle curves of the flowing drapery and the subtle grace of slender bodies. The whole painting, in fact, looks like some precious goldsmith's work, with its figures standing out from a golden background, so skilfully arranged that they form an admirable pattern. One can never cease to wonder at the way in which these figures are fitted into the complicated shape of the panel; the way in which the angel's wings are framed by the pointed arch to the left, and the Virgin's figure shrinks back into the shelter of the pointed arch to the right, while the empty space between them is filled by the vase and the

141. SIMONE MARTINI and LIPPO MEMMI: *The Annunciation*. Painted in 1333 for an altar in Siena Cathedral. Florence, Uffizi

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dove over it. The painters had learned this art of fitting the figures into a pattern from the medieval tradition. We had occasion, earlier, to admire the way in which medieval artists arranged the symbols of the sacred stories so as to form a satisfying pattern. But we know that they did so by ignoring the real shape and proportion of things, and by forgetting about space altogether. That was no longer the way of the Sienese artists. Perhaps we may find their figures a little strange, with their slanting eyes and curved mouths. But we need only look at some details to see that the achievements of Giotto had by no means been lost on them. The vase is a real vase standing on a real stone floor, and we can tell exactly where it stands in relation to the angel and the Virgin. The bench on which the Virgin sits is a real bench, receding into the background, and the book she holds is not just the symbol of a book, but a real prayer book with light falling on it and with shade between the pages, which the artist must have studied from a prayer book in his studio.

Giotto was a contemporary of the great Florentine poet Dante, who mentions him in his *Divine Comedy*. Simone Martini, the master of Fig. 141, was a friend of Petrarch, the greatest Italian poet of the next generation. Petrarch's fame today rests mainly on the many love-sonnets he wrote for Laura. We know from them that Simone Martini painted a portrait of Laura which Petrarch treasured. Now this may not seem to us a very startling fact unless we remember that portraits in our sense had not existed during the Middle Ages. We remember that artists were content to use any conventional figure of a man or a woman, and to write on it the name of the person it was intended to represent. Unfortunately, Simone Martini's portrait of Laura is lost, and we do not know how far it was a real likeness. We do know, however, that this artist and other masters in the fourteenth century painted likenesses from nature, and that the art of portraiture developed during that period. Perhaps the way in which Simone Martini looked at nature and observed details had something to do with this, for the artists of Europe had ample opportunity of learning from his achievements. Like Petrarch himself, Simone Martini spent many years at the court of the Pope, which was at that time not in Rome but at Avignon in France. France was still the centre of Europe, and French ideas and styles had a great influence everywhere. Germany was ruled by a family from Luxembourg who had their residence in Prague. There is a wonderful series of busts dating from this period (between 1379 and 1386) in the cathedral of Prague. They represent benefactors of the church and thus serve a similar purpose as the figures of the Naumburg 'Founders' (p. 139, Fig. 129). But here we need no longer be in doubt. These are real portraits. For the series includes busts of contemporaries including one of the artist in charge, Peter Parler the Younger, which is in all probability the first real self-portrait of an artist known to us (Fig. 142).

Bohemia became one of the centres through which this influence from Italy and France spread more widely. Its contacts reached as far as England, where Richard II

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142. PETER PARLER THE YOUNGER: *Self-Portrait* in Prague Cathedral. Between 1379 and 1386

143. *St. John, St. Edward the Confessor and St. Edmund recommend Richard II to the Virgin.* From the Wilton Diptych. About 1400. London, National Gallery

married Anne of Bohemia. England traded with Burgundy. Europe, in fact, or at least the Europe of the Latin Church, was still one large unit. Artists and ideas travelled from one centre to another, and no one thought of rejecting an achievement because it was 'foreign'. The style which arose out of this mutual give-and-take towards the end of the fourteenth century is known among historians as the 'International Style'. A wonderful example of it in England, possibly painted by a French master for an English king, is the so-called Wilton diptych (Fig. 143). It is interesting to us for many reasons, including the fact that it, too, records the features of a real historical personage, and that of no other than Anne of Bohemia's unlucky husband—King Richard II. He is painted kneeling before the Holy Virgin, with three saints interceding for him, and presenting him to the Christ-child who is bending forward with a gesture of blessing, and is surrounded by choirs of angels. Two of the saints and one angel point towards the king, as if to draw the Virgin's attention to him. Perhaps something of the ancient magical attitude towards the image still survives in the custom of 'donors' portraits' to remind us of the tenacity of these beliefs which we have found in the very cradle of art. Who can tell whether the donor did not feel somehow reassured in the rough and tumble of life, in which his own part was perhaps not always very saintly, to know that in some quiet church or chapel there was something of himself—a likeness fixed there through an artist's skill, which always kept company with the saints and angels and never ceased praying?

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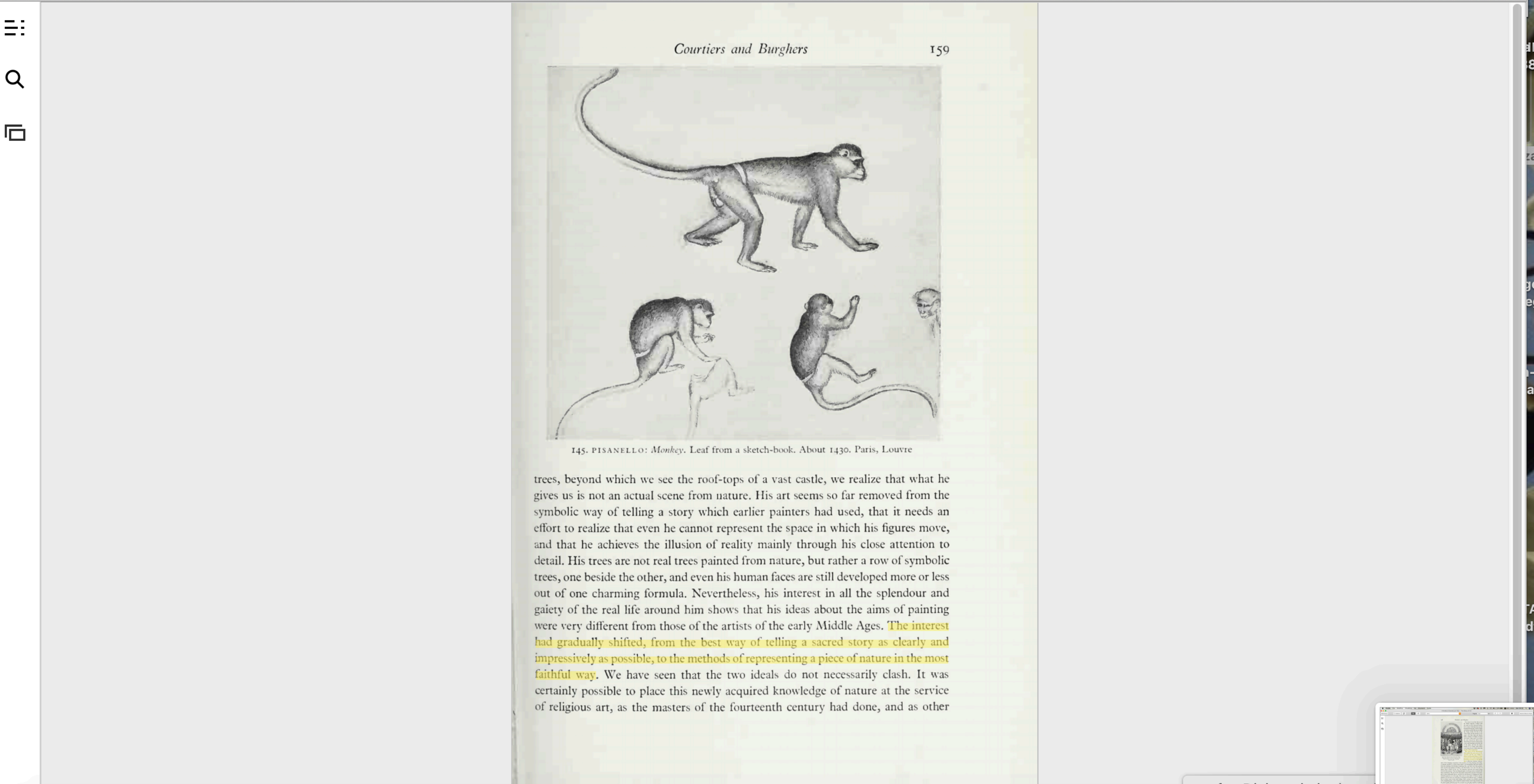
144. PAUL and JEAN DE LIMBOURG: *May*. Page from a Book of Hours painted for the Duke of Berry about 1410. Chantilly, Musée Condé

It is easy to see how the art of the Wilton diptych is linked with the works we have discussed before, how it shares with them the taste for beautiful flowing lines and for dainty and delicate motifs. The way in which the Virgin touches the foot of the Christ-child, and the gestures of the angels with their long and slender hands, remind us of figures we have seen before. Once more we see how the artist showed his skill in foreshortening, for instance in the posture of the angel kneeling on the left side of the panel, and how he enjoys making use of studies from nature in the many flowers which adorn the paradise of his imagination.

The artists of the International Style applied the same power of observation, and the same delight in delicate and beautiful things, to their portrayal of the world around them. It had been customary in the Middle Ages to illustrate calendars with pictures of the changing occupations of the months, of sowing, hunting, harvesting. A calendar attached to a prayer book which a rich Burgundian duke had ordered from the workshop of the brothers Limbourg (Fig. 144) shows how these pictures from real life had gained in liveliness and observation, even since the time of Queen Mary's Psalter of Fig. 140. The miniature represents the annual spring festival of the courtiers. They are riding through a wood in gay attire, wreathed with leaves and flowers. We can see how the painter enjoyed the spectacle of the pretty girls in their fashionable dresses, and how he took pleasure in bringing the whole colourful pageantry on to his page. Once more we may think of Chaucer and his pilgrims; for our artist, too, took pains to distinguish the different types, so skilfully that we almost seem to hear them talking. Such a picture was probably painted with a magnifying glass, and it should be studied with the same loving attention. All the choice details which the artist has crowded on to his page combine to build up a picture which looks nearly like a scene from real life. Nearly, but not quite; for when we notice that the artist has closed the background with a kind of curtain of



145. PISANELLO: *Monkey*. Leaf from a sketch-book. About 1430. Paris, Louvre

trees, beyond which we see the roof-tops of a vast castle, we realize that what he gives us is not an actual scene from nature. His art seems so far removed from the symbolic way of telling a story which earlier painters had used, that it needs an effort to realize that even he cannot represent the space in which his figures move, and that he achieves the illusion of reality mainly through his close attention to detail. His trees are not real trees painted from nature, but rather a row of symbolic trees, one beside the other, and even his human faces are still developed more or less out of one charming formula. Nevertheless, his interest in all the splendour and gaiety of the real life around him shows that his ideas about the aims of painting were very different from those of the artists of the early Middle Ages. The interest had gradually shifted, from the best way of telling a sacred story as clearly and impressively as possible, to the methods of representing a piece of nature in the most faithful way. We have seen that the two ideals do not necessarily clash. It was certainly possible to place this newly acquired knowledge of nature at the service of religious art, as the masters of the fourteenth century had done, and as other

masters were to do after them; but, for the artist, the task had nevertheless changed. Formerly it was sufficient training to learn the ancient formulae for representing the main figures of the sacred story and to apply this knowledge in ever-new combinations. Now the artist's job included a different skill. He had to be able to make studies from nature and to transfer them to his pictures. He began to use a sketch-book, and to lay up a store of sketches of rare and beautiful plants and animals. What had been an exception in the case of Matthew Paris (p. 142, Fig. 131) was soon to be the rule. A drawing such as Fig. 145, made by the North Italian artist Pisanello (1397?-1450) only some twenty years after the Limbourg miniature shows how this habit led artists to study a live animal with loving interest. The public which looked at the artist's works began to judge them by the skill with which nature was portrayed, and by the wealth of attractive details which the artist managed to bring into his pictures. The artists, however, wanted to go one better. They were no longer content with the newly acquired mastery of painting such details as flowers or animals from nature; they wanted to explore the laws of vision, and to acquire sufficient knowledge of the human body to build it up in their statues and pictures as the Greeks had done. Once their interest took this turn, medieval art was really at an end. We come to the period usually known as the Renaissance.

146. *A Sculptor at Work*. One of ANDREA PISANO's reliefs on the Florentine Campanile. About 1340