

Gwendolyn Trottein, *Les Enfants de Vénus. Art et astrologie à la Renaissance*. Paris, Éditions de la Lagune, 1993, 244 pp., 20 colour plates; 73 black-and-white illus. \$80.00

Corinne Mandel

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Book Reviews

Comptes rendus de livres

GWENDOLYN TROTTEIN, *Les Enfants de Vénus. Art et astrologie à la Renaissance*. Paris, Éditions de la Lagune, 1993, 244 pp., 20 colour plates; 73 black-and-white illus. \$80.00.

Gwendolyn Trottein opens her book with three well posed, and fundamental questions: “Who are the children of Venus?”, “Of which Venus are they the children?”, and “Under what rubric do they constitute a theme in the history of art?”. The first two questions are answered readily. The children of Venus emerge during the Renaissance of the twelfth century, and continue to hold sway through the Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They are children of the planet Venus, and hence are born under Taurus the bull and Libra the scales. The answer to the third question is the subject of her book. As such, it is also a corrective to the well known notion, elucidated by Erwin Panofsky, Fritz Saxl, and Raymond Klibansky, as well as by Rudolph and Margot Wittkower, that Renaissance artists were born under Saturn.¹ As Trottein points out, with the help of the sixteenth-century theorist Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, whereas Michelangelo was a brooding, and melancholic Saturnine, Raphael was Venusian, given to sensuality, pleasure, and enjoyment of life. In the chapters that follow, Trottein traces the development of images of children of Venus, from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries, and endeavours to set forth the characteristics of the Venusian in the course of her visual and iconographical analyses. Of necessity, she considers images created both North and South of the Alps. She also pays lip service to the eastern tradition that was so influential in the inception and development of the theme by including a thirteenth-century illumination of the planet Venus from Albumasar’s *Liber Astrologie*, and an illustration of Venus and her occupations from a sixteenth-century Turkish manuscript.

The first chapter, entitled “*Conception et Naissance des Enfants de Vénus en France et en Italie (1400-1430)*,” opens with a brief mention of the comprehensive schemes that decorated medieval cathedrals, like Chartres, in which the Liberal Arts were joined by the signs of the zodiac, the labours of the months, and religious scenes. Trottein then turns her attention to the gulf that separated the plentiful literary treatments of Venus, and the paucity of Venusian imagery during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Illustrating the *Planet Venus* from a French version of Albumasar’s *Liber Astrologie*, c. 1250, Trottein perceptively notes that it is Venus who is represented as a musician with a drum and harp, not her children. She then garners evidence from Vincent de Beauvais’ *Speculum naturale* to reinforce the fact that the illumination presents only part of

Venus’ character: Venus reigns not only over song and sweet language, but also over amorous desires. Trottein does not provide the reader with Vincent’s text, which contains additional information about the astrological Venus. This is odd, given that she has occasion to refer to this passage in the pages that follow.² Moreover, one wonders why mention is not made of the ninth century Islamic *Picatrix* until page 103, in the context of Baccio Baldini’s celebrated *Children of Venus* engravings of c. 1460 and 1464-65, since the *Picatrix* also gives music to Venus. Granted, in her introduction Trottein indicates that: “*nous avons essayé d’éviter une identification trop précipitée ou absolue du texte et de l’image. Il ne faut pas oublier que les Enfants de Vénus sont d’abord un thème artistique, et non un thème littéraire traduit en peinture. ... ce sont avant tout les images elles-mêmes, et les rapports qui s’établissent peu à peu entre elles au cours de leur histoire, qui restent au centre de cette étude.*” Notwithstanding, Trottein does defer to the literature that influenced the images of Venus’ children. She would be hard pressed to treat her theme without it.

Further examples of Venuses from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries lead Trottein to a discussion of the Guariento frescoes in the Eremitani church in Padua, 1365, a cycle which she isolates as one of the earliest manifestations of the nascent Venus and her children theme - nascent because not yet *bona fide*. This is followed by mention of the frescoes in the Palazzo Tinci at Foligno, c. 1410, and Nino Pisano’s 1342-45 *Planet Venus* relief on the Campanile of the Florentine Duomo, to which I shall return. These examples are used as segues to what Trottein sees as the first true representation of the planets and their children in the Salone of the Paduan Palazzo della Ragione, executed beginning in 1309-13, embellished between 1378-80, and repainted between 1424-40.

Curiously, she omits from the discussion the Sala dei Notari of the Palazzo dei Priori in Perugia, executed in 1297. As Jonathan Reiss has demonstrated, the extant frescoes feature personifications of the months of January and February, which are then respectively complemented by the *Man with the Rearing Horse*, and the *Contemplative Man*.³ *January* is depicted as a man seated at a table brimming with food, and holding up two containers - a motif that will infiltrate subsequent representations of Venus and her children. *February* is personified by a monk warming himself before a fire. Both images are wholly in keeping with certain traditional representations of the labours of the months (witness the January and February scenes in the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, before 1416). They depart from this tradition in that they are collocated with scenes

that quite clearly demonstrate the activities, and character of those under the influence of the planets Jupiter and Saturn. In other words, they are the earliest known examples of *Planetenkinderbilder*.⁴

One might wish to argue that since the Perugian cycle does not, and evidently did not, contain a representation of Venus, then it is not strictly germane to Trottein's theme. But it is precisely comparative material like this that enables one to address the more thorny issues. Near the close of the first chapter, Trottein isolates two illuminated manuscripts of Christine de Pisan's *L'Épître d'Othéa* (1406-8 and 1408-15) as the first instances of Venus and her children in the history of art *vis-à-vis* the canonical representations of the planets' children, featuring an airborne planetary deity and the children on the earth below. Trottein astutely takes issue with Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, who state that all of Christine de Pisan's planets are benevolent. She quotes Christine de Pisan, who clearly viewed both the Moon and Venus as extremely malevolent forces for her "good knyght." Trottein then goes further, and argues against the "triumvirate's" thesis that the source for the hovering planets in the manuscripts of Christine de Pisan's *Épître* are religious. To recap, according to Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl:

... a wish was felt to make immediately visible the fatal 'influence' of each planet on those subject to it, and so it is understandable that after a number of hesitant attempts at modernising the schema in the Salone at Padua, a solution was finally found in a design which had been used in quite another sphere and in quite another sense to show the 'influence' of a heavenly power on earthly existence: the design of Christ's Ascension into heaven (or, to be more exact, the risen Christ addressing those left on earth), of Judgement Day, and, above all, of Pentecost and similar mysteries.⁵

Trottein argues for the influence of profane love, and isolates an image contained in Panofsky's *Studies in Iconology* representing Guillaume de Machaut's God of Love (i.e., Cupid) seated atop a tree with youthful men and women venerating him from the ground.⁶ Trottein's example is certainly germane to the hovering Venus in the manuscripts illustrating Christine's *Épître*. At the same time, the illuminated illustrations of *Venus* and *Luna* are but two of a series that includes the remaining five planets. It does not stand to reason that two illustrations in a series be influenced by one tradition, while the others take inspiration from another, contradictory one. Moreover, it is not unimportant to point out that Guillaume de Machaut's Cupid in the tree carries positive connotations. After all, Cupid holds a torch and a single arrow, rather than two arrows, one golden, to

inspire love, and the other leaden, to stop it. A more conservative approach would not throw the baby out with the bathwater; the Assumption of the Virgin, for example, is as relevant to Christine de Pisan's *Venus* as Pentecostal imagery is to Christine's *Saturn*.

Any discussion of the children of the planets must, it seems to me, address a problem inherent in the very theme itself. While each planet is given a month, more often than not two, over which it rules, the zodiacal signs also given to each planet do not correspond to any given month. For example, Mars rules the month of March, and the zodiacal sign of Aries, which falls roughly from mid-March through mid-April; Venus rules the month of April, and the zodiacal sign of Taurus, which begins in mid-April and runs through mid-May; and Mercury rules the month of May, and the zodiacal sign of Gemini, which the Sun traverses from mid-May through mid-June. While Venus rules April, then, she must naturally cede to Mars, as Mercury must cede to Venus, and so on through the twelve zodiacal signs and twelve months of the year.⁷ From this vantage point, the children of Venus ought to manifest some characteristics of the children of Mars and Mercury, if not also of the Moon, the ruler of both the month of September and the zodiacal sign of Cancer, and of Jupiter, the ruler of both November and the zodiacal sign of Sagittarius, that is to say of the "planets" that rule the months preceding and succeeding September, and Venus' nocturnal house of Libra. Trottein does not address this issue primarily, I think, because she is following the method set out by Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, by which the children of Venus (or Saturn in the case of her model) are by and large wrenched from their larger contexts. Hence, she divides the succeeding chapters into groups according to country of origin, time frame, and representations of the children of Venus.⁸ She is able to reinforce the thesis of Aby Warburg that the Italians of the fifteenth century transformed the children of the planets model developed by Northern Europeans. Moreover, she adds a number of little-known examples in a variety of media to the list provided by Jean Seznec in his overview of the subject.⁹ As such, Trottein provides an extremely useful corpus of material. However, by not providing illustrations, or at least descriptions of the other children accompanying at least some of the remaining planets in each of the series she treats, Trottein cannot forge links between the children of one month, and those of another manifesting the former's characteristics.

This is not to suggest that Trottein consistently ignores all series of *Planetenkinderbilder*. A most successful, and stimulating discussion of Venus and her children occurs around the mid-point of the book, with the treatment of

the frescoes of the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara, executed between 1469-70. Here, Trottein includes illustrations of, and references to the frescoes representing the months of March and May or, more properly speaking, the children of the Manilian guardians Minerva and Apollo, respectively.¹⁰ In addition, she analyzes the uppermost and lowest registers of the *Venus and Mars* component as a synthetic unit, rather than treating each as a subject unto itself, in the manner of previous commentators.¹¹

Early on (pages 37-39), Trottein provides an illustration of Mercury's month of May from the *Grandes Heures de Rohan*, 1418-25, in order to underscore the relationship between the birds of Venus and Cupid that symbolize lyric poetry and song, and the wind-blown costume of the gallant, courtly horseman. The illustration of the month of April, which contains Taurus the bull above the trees, rather than Gemini the twins, also displays a veritable aviary.¹² Granted the costume of April's rider does not echo the wings of the birds, that is to say Cupid's wings, but the similarity between the two months is representative of the larger issue of a shared iconography. The wings of Cupid and the birds are not unrelated to Mercury's winged *petasos* and boots.¹³ To be sure, Trottein notes that both April and May are characterized by flowers and the chase (page 46), but she does not pursue the implications. Hence, it is not until page 156, and the discussion of the Housebook Master's 1475-85 *Children of Venus*, that Trottein explains that both Mercury's and Venus' children are musicians – a point to which I shall return – and not until page 161, and the discussion of the organ, traditionally given to Mercury, that she sees the possibility of “une simple contamination par l'iconographie de cette autre planète printanière et musicienne” in two German manuscripts dating from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (her figures 65 and 66). I would argue that such “contamination” is manifested periodically in the imagery that Trottein presents, beginning with one of the earliest “precursors” to the children of Venus theme, namely the *Venus* relief on the Florentine Campanile.

According to Trottein:

La planète Vénus qui figure au deuxième étage du campanile, revêt un aspect sobre et classique; elle tient dans la main un couple nu qui s'embrasse et qu'on pourrait prendre pour la représentation de deux enfants de Vénus si les autres reliefs des dieux de cette série ne venaient infirmer cette interprétation. Le couple est donc à comprendre de nouveau comme un attribut permettant d'identifier Vénus, de même que le Jupiter du Campanile, sous l'aspect d'un gros moine, tient un calice et une croix. (page 23)

When one takes into account the research of Fritz Saxl, to which Trottein refers the reader in a note, then one learns that the Campanile *Venus* is another Ishtar, much as Mercury is like the sage Nebo, Mars, the equestrian Ninib, or Jupiter, the priest Marduk. Given the eastern influence, it then comes as no surprise that *Venus*, located on the second register of the Campanile, is collocated with *Jubal*, the biblical musician, located on the first.¹⁴ The traditional eastern association of Venus with music is thus borne out on the Florentine Campanile. *Mercury-Nebo* is located to the right of *Venus-Ishtar*. Beneath him, on the first register, is the “hammerer and artificer in every work of brass and iron,” *Tubalcain* (Genesis 4: 22). In fact, Tubalcain the smith was credited with the invention of music as the result of a medieval error, unrecognized by Vincent de Beauvais, for one, which obfuscated the distinction between Jubal-Tubal and Tubal-Cain.¹⁵ Thus, both Mercury and Venus are intimately related on the Campanile by means of their historical exemplars. Given this relationship, it is perhaps not coincidental that the two lovers in Venus' hand evoke representations of Gemini as lovers embracing, such as that on the “microcosmic man” of the *Très Riches Heures*, and that on the northern chariot wheel of the *Neptune Fountain* in the Piazza della Signoria, Florence, 1561-75. Trottein seems to recognize the similarities between the Campanile *Venus'* attribute, the lovers in the company of Cupid on Venus' belt at Schifanoia, and the lovers on the bed in Aldegrever's 1533 *Venus* engraving. She also notes that the copulating couple in the German manuscript, created before 1447 and illustrated as her figure 22, has much in common with alchemical renditions of the union and ultimate death of the base elements of Mercury and Sulphur, or of the Queen and the King. The source for such apparent relationships is surely literary. I wonder whether a key to the interpretation of such imagery might not reside with Boccaccio? In his *Genealogy of the Gods*, Boccaccio states that: “*Non è anco senza misterio ... ch'ella [Venus] habbia partorito il gemino amore.*”¹⁶ Could these twin loves, “*il gemino amore,*” be analogous to the Dioscuri (i.e., the Mercurial Gemini) borne of Leda and Jupiter as a (Venusian) swan, and transformed, hermaphrodite-like, into male and female loves?

As a compiler of the mythological traditions of both west and east, Boccaccio is a key source for the character of Venus and, ultimately, of her children. Trottein points to the inherent problem of differentiating the various Venuses by drawing on Boccaccio's *Livre des femmes nobles et renommées*: “*Car aucuns disoient elle estre une planette du ceil que nous appellons Venus. Les autres disoient quelle estoit femme celeste envoyée en terre ...*” (page 42). And yet, so many of

the attributes and qualities of Venus and her children that Trottein discusses according to each subsequent image are contained in Boccaccio's fourteenth century exposition in the *Genealogy of the Gods*.¹⁷

That the illustrations of the children of Venus draw on the qualities listed in Boccaccio, or in the primary, antique sources, is not surprising.¹⁸ What needs to be elucidated is the reason for the appearance of attributes that are not traditionally associated with Venus in so many of the renditions of her children. In this regard, Trottein provides an excellent analysis of the connection between fifteenth century images of Venus' children and contemporaneous celebrations of May day, which included the bath and, as a corollary, the whorehouse (*bagno* also means bordello in Italian).¹⁹ She makes the connection between Venus' monkey and *Superbia* in the 1445 Kalendar of Passau, a connection, parenthetically, that is later reconciled in the collocation of the monkey with Vulcan, the Manilian guardian of Libra, at the Palazzo Schifanoia. She explains the conflation of Venus-Fortuna on page 172. Moreover, her analysis of the falcon and heron at Schifanoia (page 140) as emblematical of prostitution, particularly *vis-à-vis* the woman on top, is exemplary.²⁰ But then there is the question of the tree of Mercury that infiltrates Venusian scenes early on (Trottein points to the Salone of Padua on page 74); of the table set with food, which Trottein sees as a Northern idea, but which also evokes representations of both Jupiter and Mercury, and their children; of the book being read by two women in the foreground of the *Venus* illumination of Salomon Trismosin's alchemical *Splendor Solis*, which clearly belongs to Mercury in this context; or of the melancholics that punctuate a considerable number of Venusian scenes.

Trottein treats the notion that the planets are related to the temperaments, or humors on p. 188, as the book draws to a close, because a 1566 engraving of the *Sanguine Temperament* by Herman Müller after Maerten van Heemskerck contains a representation of Venus and her children. Earlier, on pages 89-90 Trottein finds a grouping of Saturnine, atrabiliary types in a French xylography of the 1460s; and on page 153, another melancholic emerges in the Housebook Master's well known *Children of Venus*, 1475-85. In each instance Trottein reasonably suggests that such inclusions may well reflect a malady of the heart, the effects of melancholic music, or serve to illustrate the Latin dictum "*post coitum animal triste*." She does not, however, address the reasons for the melancholics intrusion into sanguine scenes. Nor does she comment on the fact that melancholics punctuate the Salone of the Paduan Palazzo della Ragione.²¹ Returning to the Müller *Sanguine Tempera-*

ment, Trottein points out that although it features Jupiter, his eagle and thunderbolt, and Venus with an arrow and Cupid with the bow, the children depicted below are all under Venus' sway. She concludes on page 191 that: "*Si dans la gravure de Müller l'accent porte davantage sur les enfants de Venus que sur ceux de Jupiter, l'insistance thématique concerne toutefois le tempérament sanguin et non l'influence individuelle de chaque planète, déplacement typique des remaniements que subit alors le thème des Enfants des Planètes sous la main des graveurs flamands et hollandais.*"

The relationship between Venus and Cupid is also one that metamorphoses as the theme of Venus' children develops. On page 96, Trottein explains that in the fifteenth century, Venus finally takes over the role formerly enjoyed by her son in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: at last she becomes the goddess of love *par excellence*. Venus also begins to appropriate Cupid's attributes (arrow, torch, wings), while Cupid himself undergoes a transformation. The first blindfolded Cupids in the context of Venus' children appear in a 1421 Sieneese cake cover and, according to the pictorial evidence provided by Trottein, continues to hold sway until Sadeler engraved his *Children of Venus* after Marten de Vos during the second half of the sixteenth century. At this time Cupid sheds his blindfold, and masks accompany Venus, together with a sphinx adorning her chariot (this latter, first introduced by Baldini in 1460). In the interim, Georg Pencz adds a dolphin to Venus' chariot in his 1531 woodblock print. It is this dolphin that Marten de Vos replaces with a sphinx. Trottein neither notes, nor does she offer an explanation for these transformations.²² If one follows Panofsky's analysis of the "blind cupid," then one may suppose that Marten de Vos wished to restore to Cupid his positive connotations celebrated in antiquity.²³ And yet, despite his having shed the blindfold, one must nevertheless account for the appearance of the masks and the sphinx. The key to interpreting this transformation, it seems to me, is the pose of Venus, which is remarkably akin to that of Venus in Bronzino's famous *Allegory of Venus and Cupid*, c. 1546, in the National Gallery, London. In both works of art, Venus holds Cupid's arrow; her hair is elegantly coiffed (in the Marten de Vos, no doubt with the help of the mirror that now reappears as one of her attributes); two masks are located at her feet; and a grisly creature (sphinx, or "Pleasure," with honeycomb and reptilian stinging tail) is incorporated into the scene.²⁴ Far from Georg Pencz' exalted *Venus Genetrix*, signalled by the dolphin of the Julian clan, Marten de Vos' Venus and Cupid accordingly represent all that is deceitful, vain, and evil.

Nor is Cupid confined to depictions of Venus. In his 1533 *Planetenkinderbilder* series, Aldegrever has an armed

Jupiter accompanied by an arrow-shooting Cupid (could such a depiction relate to the Müller *Sanguine Temperament?*).²⁵ He also has an armoured Mars accompanied by his expected horse, and an unexpected bull - likely Venus' zodiacal Taurus infiltrating Mars' month of April. That Venus disarms Mars with Cupid's assistance is surely not unrelated to the goddess-cum-planet's appropriation of her son's attributes. Nor is it unrelated to the "contamination" of her children by Martian and Mercurial powers, and to the "contamination" of the children of Mars and Mercury by Venusian qualities. Indeed, the first representation of Venus and her children that presages the canonical format, the North Italian *desco da parto* in the Louvre, c. 1400, features Achilles, Tristan, Lancelot, Samson, Paris, and Troilus; it features not just "[des] héros païens, juifs et chrétiens d'époques très différentes [qui renforcent] la nature 'historique' et universelle du pouvoir de l'amour charnel représenté dans ce tableau," (page 32) but also famous "guerriers"—this latter noted, but not pursued by Trottein. In tandem with the hovering cupids flanking Venus, the *desco da parto* certainly carries with it connotations of the battle traditionally associated with love.²⁶ The heroes are like Mars, "who often casts himself upon thy [Venus'] lap wholly vanquished by the ever-living wound of love."²⁷ These children of Venus, like their relatives depicted throughout the Renaissance, seem of necessity to carry with them some of the characteristics of their more distant zodiacal relations.

CORINNE MANDEL

The University of Western Ontario

- 1 Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy. Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art* (New York, 1964); Rudolph and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn. The Character and Conduct of Artists: A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution* (New York, 1963).
- 2 The passage from Lib. XV, cap. 45, is as follows: "Venus est frigida, humida, et temperata, habens de metallis latonem, feminea, amans vestimenta ornata et redimicula aurea et argentea, et cantilenas, gaudia, et iocos, et ipsa est lasciva, dulcis loquele, pulchra oculis et superciliis, studens compositionem formae, corpus habens lene, plenum carne, mediocris stature."
- 3 Jonathan B. Riess, *Political Ideals in Medieval Italian Art. The Frescoes in the Palazzo dei Priori, Perugia (1297)*, Studies in the Fine Arts: Iconography, No. 1 (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1981), 65-75.
- 4 Another, to my mind, obvious omission is Ambrogio Lorenzetti's albeit problematic Sala della Pace in the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena, 1339-41. See the discussion in Jack M. Greenstein, "The Vision of Peace: Meaning and Representation in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Sala della Pace Cityscapes," *Art History* II, 4 (December 1988), 492-510, esp. 500 ff. But also see Randolph Starn and Loren Partridge, *Arts of Power. Three Halls of State in Italy, 1300-1600* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, 1992), 11-59, esp. 52 ff.
- 5 Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, 205.
- 6 Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology. Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*. 1st ed. 1939 (New York, 1967), Plate XLIII, fig. 75.
- 7 The Sun rules Leo, and the Moon, Cancer. The remaining planets each rule two zodiacal signs, as follows: Saturn oversees Capricorn and Aquarius; Jupiter, Sagittarius and Pisces; Mars, Scorpio and Aries; Venus, Libra and Taurus; and Mercury, Virgo and Gemini. The first signs in this list are the nocturnal houses of the planets, and the second, the diurnal.
- 8 The successive chapters treat German children of Venus (1430-60); the Italian cooption of the Northern theme (1460-70); the fresco cycle in the Palazzo Schifanoia (1469-70); the German children of Venus (1475-1550); and the Flemish and Dutch children of Venus (1550-1600).
- 9 Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods. The Mythological Tradition and its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art*, Bollingen Series XXXVIII, Trans. Barbara F. Sessions, 1st ed. 1953 (Princeton, 1972), 71-74.
- 10 Manilius assigned the following guardians of the zodiacal signs: Minerva and Aries; Venus and Taurus; Apollo and Gemini; Mercury and Cancer; Jupiter and Leo; Ceres and Virgo; Vulcan and Libra; Mars and Scorpio; Diana and Sagittarius; Vesta and Capricorn; Juno and Aquarius; and Neptune and Pisces, in *Astronomica*, Trans. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1977).
- 11 One only wishes that Trottein had incorporated into this excellent discussion an analysis of the central register containing Taurus' decans.
- 12 Illustrated in Émile Mâle, *Les Grandes Heures de Rohan (Bibliothèque Nationale)* (Paris, 1947), 17.
- 13 It is significant in this context that Baccio Baldini would later place wings on Venus' head in his 1460 and 1464-65 engravings of the *Children of Venus*, Trottein's figures 39-40.
- 14 I am following the diagram in Gert Kreytenberg, *Andrea Pisano und die toskanische Skulptur des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Italienische Forschungen herausgegeben vom Kunsthistorischen Institut in Florenz, XIV (Munich, 1984), 156; as well as Philippe Verdier, "L'Iconographie des Arts Libéraux dans l'art du Moyen Age jusqu'à la fin du quinzième siècle," in *Arts libéraux et philosophie au Moyen Age*, actes du quatrième congrès international de philosophie médiévale, Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada, 27 août - 2 septembre 1967 (Montréal, 1969), 324-326; and Mary D. Garrard, "The Liberal Arts and Michelangelo's First Project for the Tomb of Julius II (with a coda on Raphael's 'School of Athens')," *Viator. Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 15 (1984), 369.
- 15 Consult Paul E. Beichner, *The Medieval Representative of Music, Jubal or Tubalcain?*, Texts and Studies in the History of Medieval Education, 2 (Notre Dame, 1954), esp. 5-27.

- 16 Giovanni Boccaccio, *Della Geneologia de gli Dei, Libri Quindecim. Ne'quali si tratta dell'Origine, & discendenza di tutti gli Dei de' Gentili*. ... Trans. Gioseppe Betussi (Venice, 1585), 52v.
- 17 Boccaccio, *Della Geneologia de gli Dei*, treats the Graces on 52; music, singing, dancing, table games, odours and unguents, adultery, fornication, and lasciviousness, apples, swans pulling her chariot, doves, gold and silver, expensive clothing and tailors, laughter, and wine on 52v; Venus' control over the heart and ears, and waves on 53; her cold and wet complexion on 53v; flowers, myrtle, roses, and doves as birds of "gran coito," on 54; and mountainous regions on 54v.
- 18 One could also defer to such authors as Lucretius, Pliny, or Ovid in order to recognize the children of *Venus hortorum*, the rustic goddess of springtime. Consult Charles Dempsey, "Mercurius Ver: The Sources of Botticelli's Primavera," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XXXI (1968), 251-273, esp. 262 ff.; and recently, *idem*, *The Portrayal of Love. Botticelli's Primavera and Humanist Culture at the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent* (Princeton, 1992). Or, similarly, one could consult Pliny, *Natural History*, Trans. H. Rackham, 10 vols., Loeb Classical Library, 1st ed. 1940 (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1947), chaps. 15.10 and 12.7.15, respectively, for the Venusian quinces, and oranges not mentioned by Boccaccio.
- 19 It is noteworthy that in his 1498 *Men in the Bathhouse*, Albrecht Dürer includes a man holding a flower, another drinking ale, one playing the flute, and a woman playing a stringed instrument resembling a viol. In other words, Dürer's bathhouse is replete with Venusian symbolism.
- 20 I wonder whether the bird is not a crane? Consult Luisa Cogliati Arano, *The Medieval Health Handbook. Tacuinum Sanitatis* (New York, 1976), nos. 169 and 170 (Paris, f. 70v; Casanatense, f. CXXXIII), for image and text concerning a crane falling prey to a falcon, its natural enemy.
- 21 Illustrated in *Il Palazzo della Ragione di Padova* (Venice, 1964). I suspect that the answer is to be found in the age-old relationship between Mercury, Saturn and the melancholic. See, for example, Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life. A Critical Edition and Translation with Introduction and Notes by Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies (Binghamton, New York, 1989), chap. I, iv.
- 22 Her discussion of the Marten de Vos image is focused on the chorographic component of the work (*i.e.*, the notion that planets rule geographical locations).
- 23 Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, 95-128.
- 24 On the symbolism of masks, consult Moshe Barasch, "The Mask in European Art: Meanings and Functions," in *Art the Ape of Nature. Studies in Honor of H. W. Janson*. Ed. Moshe Barasch and Lucy Freeman Sandler (New York and Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1981), 253-264. On the sphinx, see, for example, Colin Eisler, *Dürer's Animals* (Washington and London, 1991), 292.
- 25 For this and the following, consult F. W. H. Hollstein, *German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts, ca. 1400-1700*. Volume I: Aachen - Altdorfer (Amsterdam, 1954), 48.
- 26 Noted in Phyllis Williams Lehmann, "The Sources and Meaning of Mantegna's Parnassus," in Phyllis Williams Lehmann and Karl Lehmann, *Samothracian Reflections. Aspects of the Revival of the Antique*, Bollingen Series XCII (Princeton, 1973), 156.
- 27 Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, 1.21 ff., quoted in Lehman, "Mantegna's Parnassus," in *Samothracian Reflections*, 160.

JOSEPH D. KETNER, *The Emergence of the African-American Artist: Robert S. Duncanson 1821-1872*, Columbia and London, University of Missouri Press, 1993, 235 pp., 114 black-and white and 20 color illus., \$39.95.

Robert Duncanson's contemporary reputation as one of the Midwest's premier exponents of the landscape style later called "the Hudson River School" is a remarkable fact in the history of North American art. As a man whose mother was a freed slave and whose paternal grandfather was a freed slave born of a slave and her owner, Duncanson laboured against powerful economic, social and educational disadvantages throughout his youth. Surmounting such obstacles to achievement in the realm of high culture, he came to produce very good paintings. Yet the correlation between status and gradations of colour that existed in the United States during the nineteenth century complicates this scenerio, for Duncanson's rather fair skin provided him with opportunities in the white-dominated world that were not available to a great many other African-Americans. Such a

system-within-a-system needs to be taken into account when assessing how Duncanson perceived himself, how he fared with other people in a variety of communities, and how people received his paintings.

In his new monograph, Joseph D. Ketner has assembled an impressive variety of material on a thirty-three-year career whose earliest document is an 1838 advertisement identifying Duncanson as one-half of a painter—glazier firm in Monroe, Michigan. Returning continually to the area around Cincinnati, Ohio, for much of his life, Duncanson travelled, painted and exhibited in other cities in the United States, Canada and Europe. Chronology organizes this well-illustrated book. Its reproductions are often very good; several of its twenty colour plates are excellent. Ketner supplements his text with a catalogue of extant paintings by the artist, judiciously noting that it represents an ongoing effort to gather data about Duncanson's *oeuvre*.

Yet the book neither argues nor gives substance to the broad thematic claims implicit in its title and embellishing its text: that there is such a thing as *the African-American*