

He strove earnestly to introduce a faithful imitation of the reality, where Taddeo had been most inclined to conventionalism and neglect. To the facility of the latter, he opposed careful minuteness of drawing and research of form; thus aiding the development of that grand line of progress which was likewise followed up by Giotto and Orcagna. But though skilled, he had not simplicity. Not content with Florentine, he studied Siennese examples. Whilst in types he affected the tenderness and formal grace of the latter, in colour, he combined Florentine lightness with Siennese warmth. Were the joint works of Taddeo and Giovanni, in the Company of the Spirito Santo at Arezzo, preserved, a more complete idea might be formed of the development of his manner than that which results from contemplating his pictures on panel. These, however, are of great interest, because they supply by their undoubted genuineness the place of records. The earliest of them is that of the Florence Academy of Arts,¹ an altarpiece removed from the convent of S. Girolamo sulla Costa and inscribed:

“Io govani da melano depinsi questa
tavola ï M.CCCLXV.”²

It represents the dead Saviour supported erect, but visible only to the knees, by the Virgin, the Magdalen, and S. John Evangelist. A long rigid form, regular in its anatomy, with a face and hands contracted by suffering, a head with well proportioned features, betray the realistic tendencies of the artist. In the aged features of the grieving Virgin a sort of Mantegnesque naturalism is apparent. The Magdalen, wailing as she holds the Redeemer's left arm, is youthful but vulgar in expression. The careful drawing defines every form with accuracy, and reveals a habit of excessive conscientiousness. There is a tendency to define the substance of various stuffs in drapery and embroidery, and a prying

¹ No. 16 Gal. des gr. tableaux. ² See the engraving in Rosini.
Vol. II. p. 112.