

Giorgio Vasari was an Italian architect and painter. He was also the author of a historical novel (*Lives of the Most Excellent Italian painters, Sculptors and Architects from Cimabue to our Times*) that contained a series of biographies – of which featured an article on Giotto and whether or not Vasari was convinced of Giotto's authorship of these frescoes. Vasari said in his article that Giotto was assumed to have been commissioned to paint a series of 32 frescoes in the Upper Church portraying details of S Francis's life. Vasari made a comment in the article that's aid "the great art of painting as we know it today, introducing the technique of drawing accurately from life, which has been neglected for more than two hundred years". Although this article was very influential it is difficult to deem reliable because of Vasari's confused writing style and his carelessness regarding date, places etc. This article had a lot of bias in favour of Florentine artists and because these events took place over 200 years earlier, there is the possibility of Vasari incorrectly interpreting comments made by previous historians because of his Florentine bias.

Lorenzo Ghiberti was another early renaissance artists from Italy. He had said that he believes Giotto painted the cycle in Assisi and confirmed that Giotto definitely painted the majority of the bottom half of the church. This means that due to there being many cycles painted throughout the Church we are not able to feel fully confident that he is talking about the *Life of St Francis* cycle. We can only assume that he is meaning this specific cycle.

There are certain historians that believe Giotto was partially responsible for the fresco cycle. There are theories that state that they believe that he was greatly involved with the design/concepts of each image but did not finish the paintings himself. This is supported by the differing styles throughout the works – as if many different artists completed them. A few chroniclers that are able to support this statement are: Giovanni Prevalti is the publisher of '*Giotto e la sue bottega*' from the year 1967. This book examined the stylistic and technical details of the frescoes in terms of Giotto's work. He has said that he believed originally that Giotto was the author but he was forced to quicken his pace of painting so got his assistants to help him.

Milliard Meiss and Leonetto Tintori are a dynamic duo. Meiss is one of the most well-known art historians and Tintori is a very famous art restorer. These two have conducted a very precise analysis of the fresco cycle with very powerful lighting and magnifying lenses. They came to the conclusion of the frescoes being painted by 3 or 4 different artists. The evidence to back this up is in the type of paint they used. They found that in a few paintings white lead paint had been used – Giotto was never known to have used white lead paint therefore they assume they were not painted by him.

So there are those who believe that Giotto was not the author at all. There have been people who have stated that the style and composition of these works are not what Giotto would have done. Here are a few historians who have supporting evidence to show this. *Bruna Zanardi* was an art restoration expert who dedicated almost 0 years of his life to the fresco works in Assisi. He thought up a theory that he called 'The Three Masters'. It is a theory that the frescoes were actually painted by 3 roman Masters instead of Giotto. It is based on the fact that each fresco was created using a set of traceable templates Each master had a set and would use them to create/recreate each scene and they would just make slight adjustments to the features when needed. This meant they could each paint different scenes but still have them looking incredibly similar. When he was trying to find out who the Masters were he found out the stencils were similar to those of Cavallini therefore it

can be assumed that he was one of the 3 artists. He also discovered there were 3 slightly different variations in shades of colour in the cycle which led him to believe that there were 3 different artists responsible for mixing the colours. Zanardi also identified the second of the 3 Masters who was responsible for the majority of the works, including the famous 'The Miracle of Spring'. We are able to identify that these were not painted by Giotto due to the brushstroke being very different when comparing them to his other works in the Assisi Chapel – Giotto tends to blend his brush strokes together leaving them almost unrecognisable compared to the strokes on those in the cycle.

Friedrich Rintelen was the publisher of a book called 'Giotto und die Giotto' in which he discussed who he believed was the author of the cycle in Assisi. He brought attention to the difference in style between the Assisi frescoes and Giotto's Scrovegni frescoes. In his conclusion he stated that Giotto did not paint the frescoes and that he believed that another master was the true author. He made this assumption due to the landscapes/architecture being more life-like than what Giotto was known for. The master who painted the frescoes also did not as successfully tie the whole image/scene together as one like Giotto was able to do.

Therefore to conclude, there is not actually a lot of definite evidence about who is the true author of the Assisi Chapel 'Life of St Francis' which leads us astray when trying to pinpoint who it actually was. This has created many different theories as to who/how many did it. Every single one of the different ideas contradict one another and all are very different, but all somehow have information that can support the argument making all of the research regarding authorship of this cycle not definite in anyway. **If anything, it leaves us even more confused as to who to believe. I honestly can say that my opinion is swayed each time I read a different article. However, after all of this, I personally believe that Giotto did not paint all of the paintings, but I do believe that he did have something to do with them.** And unless we travel back to the time of Giotto we will never actually know who was the true author.