

25 The key word to solve the mystery of

Giorgione' s painting

2019

Tomonori Manabe

Giorgione was a pioneer of the new type of painting categorized as “the mourning painting” on Venetian Renaissance art.

“The mourning painting” is different from a portrait on the expression. It is defined as a painting that painted a dead man' s living scene. And in most other cases, the passed man was painted as a full figure against a portrait' s half figure.

The special feature of a “portrait painting” is that it was done while the subject is alive, but in a “mourning painting ” it was painted after the man had passed away.

For now, I will present to you the backstory and see if you ‘ll agree with my ideas.

.....
At first, The Venetian People, especially the noble and the upper classes, built their wealth by the Mediterranean trade during the early sixteenth century.

The wealthy new Venetian asked Giorgione a new type painting such as mourning painting, as with a religious painting, a historical painting, and a portrait painting.

Of course, the boundary of art was not always clear, because a client can asked a variety of order.

Now, try to see the examples. (fig.1, fig.2)



fig. 1

“The Alter Painting of Castelfranco” 1505

200 × 152

Duomo, Castelfranco Veneto



fig. 2

“The Pray of Shepherding” 1505

89 × 111.5

Washington National Gallery

- The upper two paintings are religious painting and mourning painting.
- The left soldier's face is a little clearer than the shepherd's face on the right. But, the soldier has the helmet, so his total head figure is also perceived as unclear like the shepherd's face.

The upper two paintings (fig. 1, fig. 2) are both religious painting and mourning painting.

“The Alter Painting of Castelfranco” (Fig. 1) was painted to mourn the dead son of a noble family of Castelfranco Veneto.

“The Pray of Shepherding” (Fig. 2) might be painted to mourn the passing of a religious person. The central player is the dark and blurry face's man in the center of the painting.

The common point is each of them is a private painting.

“The Alter Painting of Castelfranco” (Fig. 1) is painted to remember the armed son, and “The Pray of Shepherding” (Fig. 2) might be painted to remember the religious person.



fig. 3

“La Tempesta” 1508

83 × 73



fig. 4

“La Pastorale” 1510

110 × 138

Try to see next paintings. (fig.3, fig.4)

“La Tempesta “ (fig. 3) and “La Pastorale” (fig. 4) common expression of Venus.

Giorgione was one of the first painters who expressed Venus as nude woman without veil.

Venus is not a living person, so the place where they seems be at is not a real space.

“La Tempesta” (fig. 3) means that the family love. The soldier is worried about his family’ s safety. And his wife is missing and worried about his husband.

The people in the painting (The man and his wife and son) had been dead in the war. This painting may have been offered to a Venetian noble as a symbol of mourning of his relatives.

“La Pastorale” (fig. 4) is also a mourning painting.

The red clothed man with a hat is the man who passed away .His face is painted dark and blurry on purpose.

The dark and blurry face of the departed is common with upper four paintings.
(fig.1, fig.2, fig.3, fig.4)

Giorgione’ s painting style to express a dead man’ s face dark and blurry

is very unique for us.

But, the unique painting style may be good for the bereaved to remember the silhouette of the man who passed away.

Now, on modern time, mourning painting genre is not so popular.

The reason is that we can easily take a picture on purpose to record of one' s life.

In short, we moderns can easily remember the man that passed away with a picture instead of a mourning painting.

But, the Venetian nobles or upper classes needs the mourning painting that made Giorgione a mourning painter.

So, the life style of moderns has made us forget the field of mourning painting.

Giorgione was the pioneer of the mourning painting on Venetian Renaissance art.

But, the mourning painting diminished due to Giorgione' s death on 1510 and the after effect did not help us to understand the meaning of the Giorgione' s mourning painting.

I believe the key word to solve the mystery of Giorgione' s painting is “ mourning” .

~~~~~

Please see another relational title on the web.

\* 5      What is painted in “La Tempesta” ? 2018