

compare and contrast two paintings which are of the same genre

Background

-Massaccio has quite a serious style which is very different from the International Gothic style of Gentile da Fabriano. The elements in his style is more of realism and narrative power (from the figures, tax collector) and the precise architectural, sculptural work than Gentile's painting. However, Gentile's Adoration of the Magi, has more gold and the naturalism of the nature in his painting presented elements of the everyday life.

historical social context

-Gentile's painting was commissioned by Palla Strozzi to paint for Strozzi's family chapel in Florence but in contrast the financial and political situations (the painting reflected the 1423 agreement between Pope Martin V and the secular authorities that the Florentine church could be taxed) of Massaccio's time might have been the causes for Masaccio to paint.

composition

-more sense of space in Massaccio's painting (we can see the half-dead trees, Amo river, mountainsclearly) whereas less space in Fabriano's where the figures are all packed in the painting and that the horse is also foreshortened

-the simplicity of the setting with the lake, river and mountains have a contrast of scene to Fabriano's painting with lots of decoration of gold and light for baby Jesus.

-both paintings tell stories in separate scenes as where in Gentile's painting, there is the manner of multiple narrative scenes and in Massaccio where he uses triptych which have the narrative elements of panels in the painting.

-The cloaks of the disciples goes back to the Roman antique and the garments look more like the ones from the sculptures Massaccio was inspired from. This creates the contrast from Gentile's style as the cloaks and tunics are quite different from Massaccio's painting.

colour, light, modelling

-both uses chiaroscuro. In Gentile's painting, it's used in the left hand panel of the predella where he shows the illumination in the foreground from a single light source within the picture. In Massaccio's painting, he uses it through an angle that casts shadows on the ground along with concealing some of the figures and highlighting others.

-the figures in Massaccio have more sharp, individualised, sculptural figures (more sense of depth and robustness) that have shadows on them from the use of chiaroscuro whereas Fabriano's uses naturalistic modelling by having his figures stamped with the gold leaf patterns.

-In the adoration, most of the figures' expressions are flamboyant whereas, in the tribute money, glances aren't very positive because of the tax collector and the confused, worried, anxious facial expressions.

perspective, pictorial space

-In Gentile's painting, there is the lack of perspective because of the figures cramming in the foreground of the picture which is a typical feature of the International Gothic style but on the other hand, there is aerial perspective in Massaccio's painting where the mountains and Peter by the river are painted darker than other objects which invents the illusion of depth. Also, it has an aerial perspective by Massaccio using lighter colour palettes to give the sense of distance. His lines of perspective which are orthogonal shows Massaccio painting and developing the technique of one point perspective.

-Unlike the adoration (selected places of light) Massaccio's painting has one light source of frame from the right on the wall. This is how he achieved his chiaroscuro.

materials, techniques and processes