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**History of Western Art**  
Part Three – Renaissance to Rococo

**Assignment Three – Exercise 2**

**Annotation of two paintings – Painting one**

Maesta  
Duccio di Buoninsegna  
1308-1311  
Tempera and gold on wood  
213cm x 396 cm  
Musea dell'Opera Metropolitana del Duomo, Siena

**Sources**

- Masterpiece Cards. 2017. *Famous paintings reviewed*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.themasterpiececards.com/famous-paintings-reviewed/bid/92327/Famous-Paintings-Duccio-s-Maesta>. [Accessed 15 August 2017].
- Web Gallery of Art. 2017. *The Maestr'*. [ONLINE] Available at: [http://www.wga.hu/html\\_m/d/duccio/maesta/](http://www.wga.hu/html_m/d/duccio/maesta/). [Accessed 15 August 2017].
- Khan academy. 2017. *Duccio, Maesta*. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/late-gothic-italy/siena-late-gothic/v/duccio-maesta-back-1308-11>. [Accessed 15 August 2017].
- Visual arts Cork. 2017. *Maesta Altarpiece, Duccio*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/famous-paintings/maesta-altarpiece.htm>. [Accessed 15 August 2017].

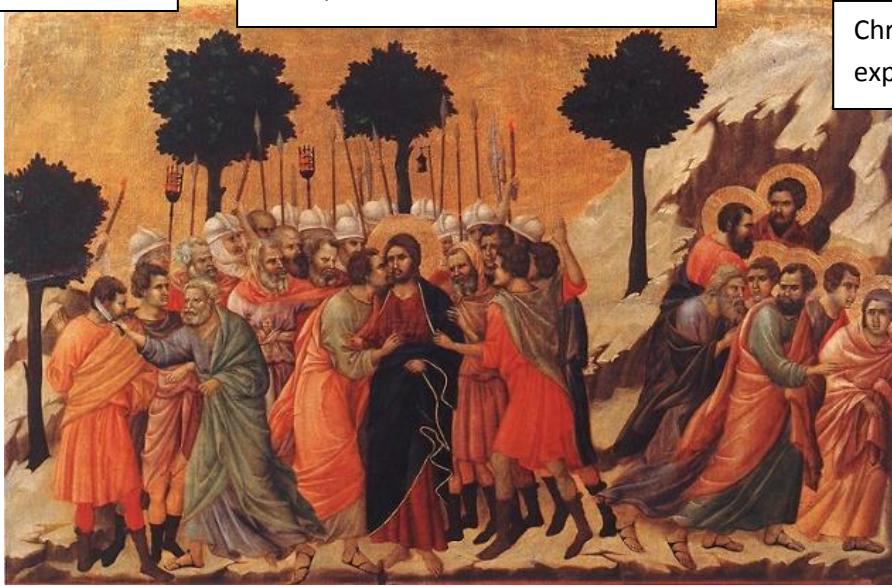
Christ is betrayed, identified by Judas by means of a kiss, leading ultimately to his crucifixion and resurrection

Christ and apostles have gold halos, indicating holy status with exception of Judas and Peter. Judas because of betrayal, Peter because of denial?

Colours vibrant, use of light and shade skilful, extensive use of gold indicates wealth of commissioners

Peter (the only one to remain true to Christ) angrily cuts off someone's ear (a bystander (?) – not wearing a helmet so not a guard)

Figures humanistic, individual, realistic.



Christ's followers scurry away, expressions clearly fearful.

Those against Christ brandish torches and weapons.

Expressions of those who are not guards but surround Christ appear angry (to immediate right one figure appears sympathetic); Judas' expression sly/cunning. Christ by contrast, serene, calm.

Composition places Christ central, hemmed in by guards and those against him. Creates feeling of claustrophobia.

Large, elaborate, high quality altarpiece commissioned by city of Siena for Siena Cathedral. Central panel 7 feet high by 13 feet wide. Painted in tempera on wood with gold. Duccio's painting influenced by Byzantine and Gothic styles. Maesta is the only surviving signed Duccio.

Dual-sided because sited in centre of sancturay so visible from both sides. Comprising many smaller paintings (50 in total); front depicts the Madonna and Child, the story of the Virgin and early life of Christ. Reverse depicts later life of Christ, the Passion (26 panels). Broken up in 1771 for sale. Some pieces lost, some dispersed into private collections. Betrayal of Christ is 15<sup>th</sup> Day of Lent. Referred to also as Christ taken prisoner (Web Gallery of Art)

Location of 3 of trees in background may foreshadow 3 crosses in double height panel above which depict Christ's (and two others') crucifixion. Same trees also visible in panel below where disciples are sleeping. (Masterpiececards)

Use of gold as aesthetic feature rather than just as function to add impact differentiates from Giotto. Giotto painted more naturalistic forms, however. Emphasis on decorative characteristic of International Gothic style (Visual Arts – Cork)