

## Art and Social Comment



**Calumny at Apelles – Botticelli**

Botticelli's *Calumny of Apelles* depicts injustice by using a past event that showed how truth and justice were abused by others. Calumny, with a torch that symbolizes truth, drags a victim to the judge sitting high above, with Ignorance and Suspicion whispering in his ears that are shaped like those of a donkey. Envy stands in rags before the judge, while Fraud and Conspiracy weave roses into Calumny's hair. Truth is standing naked in the back, with only Remorse glancing back at the naked Truth.

Ben Shan took Botticelli's *Calumny's* symbols for his *Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti* social comment on the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti. See if you can compare the symbolism between the two portraits.

D.H.Coop is a retired fire/paramedic and retired teacher having taught IB and AP World History 30 years. He continues to substitute, tutor and consult. [www.HistoryDepot.com](http://www.HistoryDepot.com)