

Central European University, Budapest

**Dóra Sallay**

**EARLY SIENESE PAINTINGS  
IN HUNGARIAN COLLECTIONS,  
1420-1520**

Ph.D. Thesis in Medieval Studies

Supervisor:  
Gábor Klaniczay

External advisors:  
Wolfgang Loseries  
Vilmos Tátrai

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAS = Archivio della Cura Archivescovile di Siena  
ASF = Archivio di Stato di Firenze  
ASS = Archivio di Stato di Siena  
BNCF = Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence  
BCS = Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena  
CM = Christian Museum, Esztergom  
FARL = Frick Art Reference Library, New York  
KHI = Kunsthistorisches Institut – Max-Planck-Institut, Florence  
MFA = Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest  
PNS = Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena  
Sopr. PSAE = Soprintendenza per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico e Etnoantropologico di  
Siena e Grosseto, Siena

attr. = attributed (to)  
bibl. = bibliography  
c. = century  
ca. = circa  
cat. = catalogue  
col., coll. = column, columns  
diam. = diameter  
doc. = document, documents, documented  
ed. = edition, edited by  
esp. = especially  
exh. = exhibition  
f., ff. = folio, folii  
fig., figg. = figure, figures  
inv., invv. = inventory number, inventory numbers  
It. = Italian  
p., pp. = page, pages  
pl. = plate  
n., nn. = note, notes  
no., nos. = number, numbers  
ms. = manuscript  
publ. = published  
pt. = part  
priv. = private  
repr. = reproduced (in), reproduction  
republ. = republished  
vol. = volume

## INTRODUCTION

Many special circumstances motivated the idea of writing a catalogue of Sieneese paintings created between ca. 1420 and 1520 and now preserved in Hungary. Hungary has an exceptionally large group of Sieneese works in its two museums that collect old European painting: the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest and the Christian Museum in Esztergom. The nearly one hundred works range in date from the late 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, but the vast majority are from the Gothic and Renaissance periods. They all arrived in Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, since the country has lost most of its medieval heritage during the Turkish wars in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and, with it, any Italian paintings that may have reached the country in the late medieval period and in early modern times. The works held in public collections today come from private collectors and from purchases at the 19<sup>th</sup> century art market. Only a few were acquired in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the course of the development of art history as a discipline in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, these works reached the world of scholarly discussion to a limited degree. They were regularly listed in Hungarian museum catalogues which were sometimes published in foreign languages too; yet, few works became well known to specialists and to the general public. Scholarly relations with foreign researchers and collectors were intense in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but began to decline already in the interwar period and came to a minimum, for well-known historical reasons, after World War II. The political changes after 1989 provided a new opportunity to bring together an in-depth study based on the examination of the works of arts themselves (many of them hitherto largely unavailable to foreign scholars), and the secondary sources necessary for their research but available only abroad, thus largely inaccessible to Hungarian scholars for many decades (libraries, archives, photo archives, comparative works of art in other collections). The systematic and complementary exploitation of these primary and secondary sources is the primary goal of this contribution.

The Sieneese paintings in Budapest and Esztergom have been little studied in general, but this holds true in a special manner to the later Gothic and Renaissance Quattrocento works, with the exception of a few masterpieces – Sassetta's *St. Thomas Aquinas in prayer* (Cat. 1), the Griselda Master's *Tiberius Gracchus* (Cat. 30) – that received wide attention on account of their outstanding quality and the fact that they formed part of renowned series. One of the main reasons why my choice fell on studying the period 1420-1520 was because this was where systematic research most urgently needed and most new results could be expected. The

material is worthy of attention also because the combined holdings in Budapest and Esztergom offer a nearly complete survey of Siene painting of the period in question through one or more works by the masters active in this period, even though a few important painters are represented by workshop pieces or followers only (Vecchietta, Francesco di Giorgio), or not at all (Domenico di Bartolo, Pietro Orioli). The completeness of the material is not fortuitous: as shall be discussed below, the majority of works now preserved separately in Budapest and Esztergom originally formed part of a single private collection, that of Bishop Arnold Ipolyi (1823-1886), who put together his collection on the basis of conscious choices. It thus seemed not only legitimate but necessary that his paintings now separated in the two museums be studied together.

The choice of chronological boundaries was suggested by stylistic considerations. The survey begins with a fragment from the first known work by Sassetta, which has been described as an “artistic light from the blue”<sup>1</sup> that heralded the advent of a new epoch in Siene painting. The last works discussed are by masters like Bernardino Fungai, Girolamo di Benvenuto and their circle, whose activity reaches well into the sixteenth-century but who were still trained in the Quattrocento and never truly abandoned its traditions. Consequently, the selection of works has not been done on a strictly chronological basis but rather by the artistic culture they reflect.<sup>2</sup> As Emil Jacobsen ironically noted: “*Das künstlerische Cinquecento fängt nicht mit dem 1. Januar im Jahre 1500 an. In einigen Köpfen war es schon längst da, in anderen ist es nach zehn, nach zwanzig Jahren noch nicht angefangen, und für einige ist es nie gekommen.*”<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, I will often use the term “Quattrocento Siene painting” in the stylistic, and not strictly chronological, sense.

The project started off with a survey of the two collections, identifying the thirty-three works that fall into this period by excluding wrong attributions and rehabilitating some pieces occasionally claimed or suspected to be forgeries. Museum deposits were searched and photographic campaigns started. It soon became clear that the fragmented and dislocated nature of the works called for the use of special methodologies that had been rarely employed worldwide and never previously in Hungary but proved to be enormously helpful in identifying the original context of the works. I shall return to some methodological questions

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<sup>1</sup> Israëls 2001, 532.

<sup>2</sup> For this reason, the following works are not included here: Giacomo Pacchiarotti: *Hercules at the Crossroads*, MFA, inv. 71.6; Girolamo del Pacchia: *Tiberius Gracchus (?)*, MFA, inv. 1376; Giovanni Antonio Bazzi called Sodoma: *Death of Lucretia*, MFA, inv. 77.16; Giovanni Antonio Bazzi called Sodoma (and workshop?): *Capture of Christ*, MFA, inv. 1230, *Flagellation of Christ*, MFA, inv. 1161, *Way to Calvary*, MFA, inv. 1231. For a complete list of Siene paintings in Hungary, cf. Sallay 2008, 14-16.

<sup>3</sup> Jacobsen 1910, 5.

below.<sup>4</sup> The possibilities of research were limited in certain aspects for the lack of infrastructure, especially as far as technical investigations are concerned. Although I received more generous assistance from conservators than what I could ever imagine, the works have not all been examined to the same degree. Technical investigations are still in course and will almost certainly yield further results in the future.

Provenance research, reception history, and historiography were other important aspects to be examined, as the later history and reception of this school of painting – and these works in particular – form an essential part of our understanding of them. Through these chapters I also wish to pay a tribute to the selfless private collectors to whose generous bequests we owe most of the works in question, and to the scholars and curators whose work provided the foundation for my own.

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<sup>4</sup> See Notes on Methodology on p. 92 below.

## CHAPTER I

### QUATTROCENTO SIENESE PAINTING AND THE STATE OF RESEARCH

Renaissance Siena has been living its own Renaissance in the last two decades. For many centuries compared to Florentine Renaissance art and judged to be inferior, it did not elicit an interest comparable to that shown for the city of the Arno, and was mostly studied by local scholars and some dedicated foreign – mainly Anglo-Saxon – specialists. Its growing appreciation in recent times is due to the recognition of the special nature of the Sieneze Renaissance: to the deeper understanding of the fact that the art and culture of this city must be viewed, interpreted, and evaluated in its own context, and only then discussed within the wider framework of contemporary – and not only Florentine – culture.

The interest of a large international public in Sieneze Quattrocento art was raised especially through a series of great exhibitions dedicated to this subject from the 1980s on. Exhibitions on the preliminaries, the Gothic in Siena, were shown in Siena and Avignon in 1982 and 1983.<sup>5</sup> A milestone in introducing “Painting in Renaissance Siena, 1420-1500” to the public was the show of this title in New York in 1988 and 1989, which was followed by two exhibitions in Siena covering different periods: the times of Domenico Beccafumi (1500-1550) in 1990 and of Francesco di Giorgio (1450-1500) in 1993.<sup>6</sup> Besides many smaller exhibitions, a momentous Sieneze exhibition dedicated to the time period 1460-1530 was recently held in London (2007-2008),<sup>7</sup> and a similarly vast exhibition on the first half of the Sieneze Quattrocento is in preparation to be held in Siena in 2010. In the same time period, there was an unprecedented boom of scholarship in the field, far-reaching research projects like *Die Kirchen von Siena* were started,<sup>8</sup> and many introductory surveys were published for the general public.

Among the latter, the reader will find especially enlightening two essays by Keith Christiansen and Carl Brandon Strehlke in the catalogue of the 1988-89 exhibition,<sup>9</sup> a survey by Giulietta Chelazzi Dini, Alessandro Angelini and Bernardina Sani,<sup>10</sup> Diana Norman’s works,<sup>11</sup> the contributions in a volume on art in the time of Pope Pius II,<sup>12</sup> and the catalogue

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<sup>5</sup> Chelazzi Dini ed. 1982; *L’art gothique siennois*, 1983.

<sup>6</sup> Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988 (It. ed. 1989); *Domenico Beccafumi...1990*; Bellosi ed. 1993.

<sup>7</sup> Syson et al. 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Riedl and Seidel ed. 1985-2006; see also Loseries 1994; De Marchi 1987; Loseries 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Keith Christiansen, “Painting in Renaissance Siena” in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 3-32 (It. ed. 3-36); Carl Brandon Strehlke, “Art and Culture in Renaissance Siena”, *ibid.*, 33-60 (It. ed. 37-74).

<sup>10</sup> Chelazzi Dini, Angelini, and Sani 1997.

<sup>11</sup> Norman 2003 (chapters 4 and 5); Norman 2007<sup>1</sup>.

of the London exhibition of 2007, to name only a few of the most important recent publications.<sup>13</sup>

In the light of recent studies, Sieneese Renaissance art gained a new profile as a movement of intrinsic value which had its own, organic development equally building on, reformulating, and modernizing its famous Trecento heritage on the one side, and autonomously incorporating foreign influences into its culture on the other. The Renaissance in Siena was not indigenous as it was in Florence but neither was it imported in the sense as it was, for example, in Rome, Urbino, or Milan. It grew out of the city's Gothic heritage and, despite the growing dominance of true *all'antica* art, its Gothic roots remained perceptible until the very end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when the incursion of foreign artists brought radical changes. A brief overview of Siena's geographical and geopolitical position, key moments of its history, and its cultural and artistic traditions will illuminate this development.

### **1. Siena: The city state, its location and origins**

Siena is located on three hills in Central Tuscany, far from major rivers and the sea, in the centre of a pleasant, fertile territory and along the Via Francigena, the major medieval road of commerce and pilgrimage which lead from the West to Rome on the route Lucca-Siena-Viterbo-Rome. Due to historical circumstances, Siena has preserved to a great degree its late medieval appearance of narrow, irregular streets winding between buildings built of local red brick. In the Middle Ages, the Republic of Siena governed large outlying territories (the *contado*), and, as other medieval city-states, it constantly aimed at expanding its territory by subjugating smaller towns in the surrounding areas. The city's major sources of income came from banking, trade, manufacture (especially the wool industry) and some silver mining, which made her one of the wealthiest and most powerful European cities in the Middle Ages. Traditionally, Siena was a Ghibelline city wedged between the Papal State and Guelph Florence, for which reason it was important for the Holy Roman Emperor and often enjoyed his support. Yet, due to the influence of its bankers and rich merchants, it had Guelph-

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<sup>12</sup> Angelini ed. 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Syson et al. 2007. For earlier surveys of Quattrocento Sieneese art, see Pope-Hennessy 1947<sup>2</sup>, Brandi 1949 (for its assessment: Angelini 2001); Cole 1985. Hyman's survey from 2003 is less reliable but still informative in many respects. On the history of Siena: Douglas 1902; Schevill 1937; Hook 1979; Bowsky 1981; Bortolotti 1983; Ascheri 1985; Mario Ascheri, "Siena nel Quattrocento: una riconsiderazione," in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1989, It. ed. XIX-LVI; Ascheri 1993; Barzanti, Catoni, and De Gregorio ed. 1995-1997 (esp. vol. 1). An indispensable cultural and artistic guide to Siena: Torriti 2000. On the history of scholarship on Renaissance Siena, with a special focus on historiography, see A. Lawrence Jenkins, "Introduction: Renaissance Siena, the State of Research," in Jenkins ed. 2005, 1-20.

dominated periods as well, and the city's relations with the papacy were at times especially good, above all during the papacy of the Sieneze Pius II (1458-64).

The origins of Siena go back to Celtic and Etruscan times, not so much in the form of an actual settlement, of which no identifiable traces remain, but with the territory belonging to Etruscan family *Saenia*, who in the 1<sup>st</sup> c. B. C. had the status of Roman senators. Some written records and archeological finds from Roman times (columns, a sarcophagus, inscriptions, statue fragments) testify to life in the Roman military colony *Saena Iulia*, which however had minor importance and did not leave a real antique heritage to the city.<sup>14</sup> The idea of a Roman past, however, was crucial for the civic identity of the town and contributed to the preparation of a fertile ground for Humanistic ideas and Renaissance art.

According to legendary accounts, Siena embraced Christianity at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when the young Roman soldier Ansanus baptized her inhabitants (cf. Cat. 9, Fig. 9/1). The foundations of the present-day city were laid in the early Middle Ages, when Siena was part of the Longobard Kingdom. The first traces of a Sieneze communal government survive from 12<sup>th</sup> century: it was first lead by the bishop, then, from 1167, by various types of magistratures, among whom eventually an elite of non-nobles (*popolo*) acquired the leading role.

## **2. The roots of Quattrocento Sieneze painting: Siena and its art in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries**

The Sieneze Republic was most powerful in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, when it had banking branches all over Europe and when it witnessed a great urban expansion as well as the foundation of its university (1240), the settlement of the great mendicant orders – Dominicans, Franciscans (Cf. Cat. 16, 28), Augustinians (Cf. Cat. 23), Servites, Carmelites (Cf. Cat. 1, 18) –, and the development of its early city hospital, the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, into a large and powerful institution. Since the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the city often fought for Tuscan dominion with its prime rival, Florence. Especially one battle left its mark on civic memory and patriotic pride: that of Montaperti in 1260, when the Sieneze, turning to their advantage the complex political situation after the death of Frederick II, had an overwhelming victory over the Florentines with the aid of the Hohenstaufen house (Manfred). Before the battle, the city ceremoniously placed her fate in the hands of the Virgin, who became her major patron saint after the victory. From then on, the most important self-imposed epithet for

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<sup>14</sup> For the origins of Siena, see esp. Cristofani ed. 1979. The earliest sign of a settlement on the site – an archeological find – is from the Bronze Age (11<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> c. B. C.).

Siena became the *civitas virginis*, and the offering of the city to the Virgin was repeated in moments of crisis.

Although the victory at Montaperti brought long-term independence from Florence, it could not lead to the desired Tuscan hegemony because of Charles of Anjou's eventual victory over the Hohenstaufen house and the subsequent strengthening of the Guelphs. In fact, already a decade later, the Sieneese suffered several defeats from the Guelphs, and guelphism soon took root in Siena because of the financial and political interests of the bankers and the rich bourgeoisie. In 1287, the most stable and long-lasting government, the Guelph government of the *Nove* rose to power, which signalled the beginning of the most prosperous period for the Republic. By the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the monumental cathedral was constructed; the 14<sup>th</sup> century saw the erection of the imposing Palazzo Pubblico and the Baptistry under the sanctuary of the Cathedral. In the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the population was at its peak, making Siena one of the largest cities in Europe. An immense extension to the 13<sup>th</sup>-century cathedral was planned and partly built. The city had close relationships with north-west centres and Rome through the Via Francigena, and with Avignon, where his artists travelled to work. Territorial expansion towards the south was successful albeit the final goal of establishing an important sea port on the Mediterranean coast of the Maremma was not reached.

The period of the “buon governo” has often been considered as the apex also in the field of the arts, whose Byzantine-influenced origins are traceable back to the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and whose 13<sup>th</sup>-century achievements were even more substantial than previously believed, as the recent discovery of an extensive fresco cycle under the Cathedral (ca. 1270s) made clear. During the late 13<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup>, Duccio, Ugolino di Nerio, Segna di Bonaventura and his son Niccolò, Simone Martini and his partner Lippo Memmi, Ambrogio and Pietro Lorenzetti, Bartolomeo Bulgarini and many other masters created a supremely elegant Gothic school of painting, developing their style in close dialogue with contemporary Florentine painting and incorporating influences from French Gothic art. Their interest in naturalism, in the exploration of the human body, human emotions and interaction, the rendering of complex and spatially convincing architectural interiors, landscape, and town life, the representation of the moment captured in time, of the vivacity of life, and the discovery of the power of allegoric representations all made a long-lasting effect on not only Sieneese but European art. More importantly for our topic, they became a never-exhaustible source of inspiration and model for Quattrocento Sieneese art: the highly refined, decorative technique and the predominance of linear rhythms and brilliant colours remained the hallmark

of Sienese painting for a long time. In this half a century, the city's artists were widely sought after in the great political and artistic centres of Italy (Duccio and Ugolino da Nerio worked for Florence, Simone Martini for Assisi, Naples, Pisa, Orvieto, and Avignon; Pietro Lorenzetti for Assisi, Arezzo, Cortona, and Florence and his brother, Ambrogio, regularly for Florence, to name but a few of the important commissions), and the same is true of the outstanding sculptors of the period (Tino di Camaino).

As elsewhere in Europe, the Black Death in 1348 brought a great set-back in all areas of life.<sup>15</sup> In 1355, the government of the *Nove* fell, leaving the field to a series of unstable governments formed by various *monti* (political factions based on a common social background) who no longer sympathized with the Guelph side. The plague deeply affected art production as well, though the change was less due to changes in mentality, as previously supposed, than to economic, social, and demographic factors.<sup>16</sup> Nearly all the leading painters died shortly before or during the plague. Yet, great masters like Bartolomeo Bulgarini, Niccolò di Ser Sozzo, and Lippo Vanni handed down the tradition of the *primo trecento*, and the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century produced outstanding talents such as Jacopo di Mino Pellicciaio, Francesco di Vannuccio, Luca di Tommè, Paolo di Giovanni Fei, and other important masters who preserved, reflected upon, and further elaborated the artistic traditions.

The city's political importance declined, although the charismatic mystic, Catherine of Benincasa (1347-1380) (cf. Cat. 13) still had her voice heard, with unprecedented audacity, in the matters of world politics, in relation to the popes' Avignon captivity.<sup>17</sup> Testimonies to the religious and spiritual intensity of the times are not only Catherine's personality and activity, but the foundations of new, local religious orders, such as the Gesuati in 1354 (cf. Cat. 5-6) and many minor religious houses (cf. Cat. 4), or the acquisition in 1357-59 of a large group of invaluable relics that were preserved in the Hospital (cf. Cat. 2).

The city was torn by factionalism, internal feuds, and workers' revolts (1371). Political instability and the hope to defy Florence eventually lead to a short period of monarchy between 1399 and 1404, when the government of the Republic was ceded to the Duke of Milan, Gian Galeazzo Visconti. The attempt failed: shortly after Gian Galeazzo's death in 1402, his heir was violently ousted from the city, peace with Florence was made, and the communal government form resumed.

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<sup>15</sup> Bowsky 1964.

<sup>16</sup> On this aspect see the famous thesis of Millard Meiss (1951), who proposed that the stylistic changes after the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century were due to religious feelings of remorse which resulted in the deliberate choice of rejecting the progressive and naturalistic art of the first half of the century. For a summary of Meiss' theory and the many arguments brought against it, see Steinhoff 2006 (2007), 9-26.

<sup>17</sup> Luongo 2006.

### 3. 15<sup>th</sup>-century Siena

#### Introduction

It was under these circumstances that the new century opened. The turn of the century brought no artistic change; the great models of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and especially Simone Martini's works remained a major point of reference for many painters active at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> (the older Bartolo di Fredi and his son Andrea di Bartolo, Taddeo di Bartolo and his adopted son, Gregorio di Cecco di Luca, Benedetto di Bindo, Martino di Bartolomeo, and others). This generation absorbed many influences from the International Gothic Style as well. The Sieneese artists worked much outside the Sieneese territory – artistic relations with Pisa and Lucca were especially intense – but few foreigners came to work in the city. It was more of an exception than normal practice that a foreign artist, Spinello Aretino, received a major fresco commission in the Palazzo Pubblico (1407-1408). Art production was generally ruled by the guild structure that conserved traditions (statutes and three lists of members survive from 1356, 1389 (?), and 1428), and art patronage was based on a consensual civic, bourgeois taste. In Siena, there was nothing comparable to court culture or to the art patronage of an enlightened, progressive, and authoritative personality before the short period of the papacy of Pius II (1458-64) and the signorial rule of Pandolfo Petrucci (1487-1512), both of which brought about an artistic paradigm shift.

The lack of court culture meant the absence of court artists who could have worked independently of the local guild system, which would have helped the appearance of bold innovations in art. Foreign influence did reach Siena and local artists were more open to it than it is often recognized. But they carefully and selectively wrought together the new impressions with their traditions in many different interpretations, and it was precisely this state of the arts that gave the Sieneese early Renaissance its individual character.

Politically, a Republican coalition government consisting of three *monti* (*Nove*, *Popolo*, and *Riformatori*, with the exclusion of the *Gentiluomini* and the *Dodici*) ruled in Siena in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and relations with Florence alternated between periods of peace secured by treaties (1404-1431) and war and strained relations (1431-56). Good relations with Florence in the first three decades contributed to a greater intellectual and artistic exchange between the two cities.

#### 3.1 Painting in Siena, ca. 1420-1460

New tendencies in painting appeared in the 1420s with Sassetta's (ca. 1400-1450) activity, and, specifically, with his *Arte della Lana* altarpiece painted between 1423 and 1425

(Cat. 1). It has been a matter of long-standing scholarly dispute whether Sassetta arrived alone at his amazing results of depicting the world as tangible reality or if he was in contact with the Florentine representatives of the transition between the Gothic and the early Renaissance, such as Masolino or Gentile da Fabriano, with whom his interests and results are often parallel. Later on, he was certainly exposed to the works of these artists and those of Masaccio. With great imagination and creative power, Sassetta unfolds a microscopic world to the viewer, rendered with great precision and with a boundless interest in the natural world. He observes the flight of birds, the cloud-streaked skies and other atmospheric effects over sun-drenched landscapes, the minute details of interior settings, and the psychological state of his characters, many of whom – especially his ascetic, monumental figures – have an exceptional intensity of facial expression. In his narrative scenes, Sassetta deployed his talent to convey sinister events, sacred ceremonies, and familiar, everyday scenes, which, despite their life-likeness, often contain an irrational, individual component that enchants the viewer. Deservedly, Sassetta was the first Quattrocento Sienese painter to be rediscovered by 20<sup>th</sup>-century art historiography; several monographs were dedicated to him and he has been the object of much serious research in recent times by Machtelt Israëls, in preparation for a new monograph.<sup>18</sup>

In the wake of Sassetta worked his short-lived student Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio (1410-1449) (Cat. 2-3), who never distanced himself far from his master's style, but his eccentric disposition and foreign, probably Florentine, influences drove him to create a peculiar style of somewhat acerbic tones that gives a personal and rather arbitrary interpretation of reality. Pietro di Giovanni may have been absent from Siena in the first half of his career and documented works survive only from the last five years of his life. He has been little researched and his formation and career remain somewhat shadowy.<sup>19</sup>

Another artist who took his point of departure from Sassetta is the anonymous master named after a triptych dated 1436 in the church of the Osservanza near Siena. His works were attributed to Sassetta by early scholarship but separated from Sassetta's oeuvre by Roberto Longhi and Alberto Graziani because of their more Gothic approach.<sup>20</sup> The historical identity of the Osservanza Master remains a mystery and is one of the most debated questions in present-day scholarship. Following Cesare Brandi and Bernard Berenson, the majority of art historians believe today that he is identical with the young Sano di Pietro (1405-1481) (Cat. 4-

<sup>18</sup> See Berenson 1903 and 1946; Pope-Hennessy 1939<sup>1</sup>; Carli 1957, and further bibl. on p. 102 below.

<sup>19</sup> The only systematic study on Pietro di Giovanni is a university thesis by Giulia Raffaelli (2004-2005). For further bibl., cf. p. 114 below.

<sup>20</sup> Longhi (1940, republ. 1975); Graziani 1948 (published posthumously).

7), from whose early period no works are known and whose first documented works appear just in the 1440s, when traces of the Osservanza Master vanish.<sup>21</sup> There are indeed many stylistic similarities and other common points (various motifs, identical punchmarks) between the works of the Osservanza Master and Sano di Pietro, but scholars who do not accept the hypothesis of the identification of the two painters point out the great qualitative difference between the two corpuses and propose that the two masters collaborated in the same workshop.<sup>22</sup>

Sano di Pietro worked with Sassetta on several occasions, and Sassetta's influence is dominant in his earliest known works. Scholars had a high appreciation of Sano until the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century, which earned him several studies and two monographs.<sup>23</sup> Later he came to be viewed as a self-repeating artist with little creativity, appreciable above all for the high standard of his craftsmanship. Yet Sano was a very prolific and popular artist in his time, and, with the increase of scholarly interest in questions of patronage, many of his works were studied from new points of view.<sup>24</sup>

Another painter of the same generation was Giovanni di Paolo (1398-1482) (Cat. 9-12), one of the most original and imaginative painters of the Sienese Quattrocento. With remarkable autonomy, Giovanni di Paolo incorporated influences from artists of the preceding generation (Taddeo di Bartolo, Benedetto di Bindo, and others), from his contemporaries in Siena (especially Sassetta) and from foreign exponents of the courtly International Gothic art, above all, Gentile da Fabriano, who spent some months in Siena in 1425. Giovanni copied with great fidelity compositions by Gentile and other artists from Giotto to Donatello, but freely transformed his sources into highly personal pictures that deliberately disregard the rational principles of representation – developed in Florence just at this time – in favour of a characteristically distorted, fable-like, self-directed style. Giovanni di Paolo's art has enjoyed

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<sup>21</sup> Brandi 1946, 31; Brandi 1949, 75. Berenson (1946, 32 n. 32, 51-52) came to the same conclusion independently. For the history of this proposal and its reception, cf. Angelini 2001, 159-160. The identity of Sano and the Osservanza Master was accepted, among others, by Boskovits 1983, 267; Loseries 1987; Andrea De Marchi 2002<sup>2</sup>, 216-218, esp. caption to fig. 228; Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al., 2003, esp. p. 479. Arguments for the identity of Sano di Pietro with the Osservanza Master are summarized by Wolfgang Loseries, in Boskovits and Tripps 2008, 123.

<sup>22</sup> Those who argued against the identification of the Osservanza Master and Sano di Pietro include Laclotte 1960; Daniele Benati, in Chelazzi Dini ed. 1982, 393; Keith Christiansen, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 99-136 (It. ed. 113-150); Laura Cavazzini, in Bagnoli ed. 1998, 20; Kanter 2004, 107. The possibility that the Osservanza Master could be identical with Francesco di Bartolomeo Alfei (as proposed in Alessi and Scapecchi 1985<sup>1</sup>, 1985<sup>2</sup>) has not been accepted by later critics. For a summary of previous opinions, cf. Linda Pisani, "Maestro dell'Osservanza", in Bollati ed. 2004, 608-10.

<sup>23</sup> Gaillard 1923; Trübner 1925.

<sup>24</sup> Studies focusing on Sano and his patrons include Eisenberg 1981; Loseries 1987; Mallory and Freuler 1991; Christiansen 1991; Christiansen 1994; Norman 2005; Fattorini 2007, Loseries and Sallay 2007, and many contributions in *Sano di Pietro. Qualità, devozione e pratica nella pittura senese del Quattrocento* (Siena and Asciano, 5-6 December, 2005), conference proceedings (in course of publication). See also p. 136 below.

continuous appreciation since the monographic studies of John Pope-Hennessy (1937) and Cesare Brandi (1941, 1947), and a vast number of publications deal with the hundreds of works that survive by his hand. Perhaps the very number of his works and the complexity of his production discouraged the appearance of a new monograph that is now long overdue.<sup>25</sup>

These artists never fully abandoned the traditions of earlier Sieneese art. As has been frequently noted, their art is a personal and autonomous reinterpretation of tradition in the light of new achievements. For their work, the *Renaissance* – a thoroughly Florentine phenomenon – is not a useful term; in fact, interpretations of this current in Sieneese art resulted in the introduction of such modulated terms as “gotico ombreggiato di rinascimento” (Roberto Longhi), “pseudo-Rinascimento” (Federico Zeri), or “authentically Sieneese post-Gothic” (Keith Christiansen).<sup>26</sup>

Many minor painters followed in the wake of these great masters, some of whom (Pietro di Rufolo, the Sant’Ansano Master) were only recently studied.<sup>27</sup> Followers of Sano di Pietro and Giovanni di Paolo included Carlo di Giovanni and Pellegrino di Mariano (doc. from 1449-died 1492).<sup>28</sup> The latter was strongly impressed by 14<sup>th</sup>-century models as late as in the 1470-80s, when he copied and reinterpreted works by Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi (cf. Cat. 14).

Parallel with Sassetta and the other artists mentioned so far in the first half of the Quattrocento worked other masters like Domenico di Bartolo (doc. from 1420-died 1444/45) and Lorenzo di Pietro called Vecchietta (1410-1480), who, though not detached from tradition, introduced a thoroughly Renaissance language to Siena in the 1430s and ‘40s. Both

<sup>25</sup> Pope-Hennessy’s monograph on Giovanni di Paolo (1937) was unfavourably received by Brandi, who responded with a counter-monograph first formulated in the form of a review (1941) and then published separately in an amplified version (1947). Both studies have greatly contributed to our knowledge of the artist. Pope-Hennessy returned to the study of Giovanni di Paolo on several occasions (Pope-Hennessy 1988, 1993). For further bibl. cf. p. 173 below.

<sup>26</sup> Longhi 1928, 35 (republ. 1968, 23); Federico Zeri, “Rinascimento e Pseudo-Rinascimento,” in Zeri ed. 1983, 543-72, esp. 557-60 (who extends the term “Pseudo-Rinascimento” to analogous phenomena elsewhere in Italy but nonetheless referring to Siena as its “Tuscan capital”). He notes, furthermore, that “*Siena mostra anche un singolare fenomeno, molto imbarazzante per le rigide classificazioni storico-artistiche: quello degli artisti che sono ad un tempo razionali e irrazionali, scientifici e intuitivi, padroni della prospettiva ragionata e ignari dei suoi postulati* [p. 559]”; Keith Christiansen, “Painting in Renaissance Siena” in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 3-32, esp. 10 (It. ed. 3-36, esp. 11). Symptomatic of this “intermediate” style is the fact, pointed out by Loseries (1989, 657; 1991, 299), that Sassetta’s works were used for the inside cover of the exhibition catalogue “Il Gotico a Siena” in 1982 (Chelazzi Dini ed.) and on the front cover of the catalogue of “Painting in Renaissance Siena” in 1988 (Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke).

<sup>27</sup> Boskovits 1983, esp. 269; Merlini 1999 (with previous bibl.); Catoni 2002.

<sup>28</sup> Carlo di Giovanni is known by a few works only, and has been studied by Daniela Gallavotti Cavallero (1974/75-1975/76). Some works attributed to Carlo in this article seem to be in fact by Pellegrino di Mariano, a minor artist previously known almost exclusively for his miniatures and recently studied by the present writer, cf. p. 206 below.

of them had significant experience abroad where they were exposed to the new, realistic style of the *primo rinascimento*.

Domenico di Bartolo left us very few works besides his monumental fresco cycle in the *Pellegrinaio* (Pilgrims' Hospice) of the Sienese hospital. Domenico was in contact with Jacopo della Quercia, from whom his massive, sculptural forms derive, and with artists in Florence and Perugia, where he received important altarpiece commissions. His interest in anatomy, foreshortening, and life-like rendering made him the optimal candidate to execute a portrait of King Sigismund – now unfortunately lost – during the sovereign's stay in Siena in 1432-33. It is in Domenico's works, too, that Antique type of lettering on three-dimensionally curling parchment strips and scientifically constructed perspective make their first appearance in Sienese art.<sup>29</sup>

Vecchietta participated in the *Pellegrinaio* fresco cycle under Domenico's leadership, and he painted other extensive fresco cycles in the Hospital and in the Sienese Baptistry. He was also a talented sculptor, whose expressive style evolved under the influence of Donatello. Vecchietta was a highly influential artist; impressing talented masters of his own generation (Cat. 8) and providing the link between the artists of the first half of the fifteenth century and those who became active around 1460. Among the latter, his most talented students – Francesco di Giorgio, Neroccio de' Landi, Benvenuto di Giovanni – had a leading role.

In the first half of the Quattrocento, then, Gothic and early Renaissance elements mingled in the most natural way in Sienese painting. Although most painters clearly had a vivid interest in artistic innovations, their prime preference was to create a style that was a modernized continuation of their treasured artistic tradition which lay at the heart of their civic identity. Several commissions for the Palazzo Pubblico that required artists to imitate powerful Trecento models give an idea of the value attached to artistic continuity.<sup>30</sup> The *all'antica* style appeared gradually in the paintings of the most progressive artists with an experience outside of Siena (painted Renaissance architecture and the imitation of antique reliefs in the frescos by Domenico di Bartolo and Vecchietta).

In sculpture, a new realism in the representation of the human body and psyche made its appearance in the mature work of Jacopo della Quercia, not only in parallel with the

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<sup>29</sup> In general, both Domenico di Bartolo and Vecchietta has received less attention than what they would deserve on the basis of their artistic importance. Fundamental work on Domenico di Bartolo is the merit of Carl Brandon Strehlke (1985). Vecchietta's manifold activities have been studied extensively (see pp. 160-61 below) but he has not been the object of a monographic study since Vigni's work in 1937.

<sup>30</sup> I refer to the commissions given in 1446 to a French tapestry maker for three tapestries based on Ambrogio Lorenzetti's "buon governo" frescos and in 1448 to Sano di Pietro for the painting of the Cappella dei Signori predella based on the lost fresco cycle by Simone Martini and the Lorenzetti brothers, cf. Kawsky 1995, 126-38, 171-200, for Sano's predella, Eisenberg 1981 and Wolfgang Loseries, in Boskovits and Tripps ed. 2008, 124-31.

achievements of Lorenzo Ghiberti, Donatello, and Nanni di Banco, but in close contact with them. Jacopo participated in the competition for the Baptistry doors in Florence already in 1401, and Ghiberti and Donatello were among the first important Florentine artists to work in Siena in the 15<sup>th</sup> century on the Baptistry fountain (1423-27), parts of which were executed by Jacopo della Quercia. Yet, whereas the Florentine innovations were directly based on an experience of the Antique, following the Roman experiences of Brunelleschi and Donatello, the reception of Antique art in Siena came through secondary sources.<sup>31</sup> The Antique past for Siena in fact materialized more in the form of foundation legends, crucial for civic identity, and in the form of themes related to Antiquity that appeared in the fine arts already in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>32</sup> Renaissance architecture was not present until the second half of the century.

In the first half of the Quattrocento, Fra Bernardino degli Albizzeschi's impact on the fine arts was significant. The friar had a vivid interest in the arts; he promoted it through numerous references to works of art in his sermons,<sup>33</sup> and commissioned art himself for the church of the Osservanza.<sup>34</sup> After his death in 1444, efforts to create life-like images of him may be seen as an important stage in the development of portraiture (Cat. 7).

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<sup>31</sup> Most importantly, through the sculptural works in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with Florentine intermediation, but the indirect influence of late antique-early Christian sarcophagi intermediated by Nicola Pisano's pulpit in the Cathedral should also be mentioned. The compositions in this masterpiece were widely imitated in 15<sup>th</sup>-century painting, but without the consciousness of its stylistic roots in antique art. For "desiderata" on the relationship of Siena to Antique heritage, see Giovanni Agosti, "Su Siena nell'Italia del secondo Quattrocento," in Bellosi ed. 1993, 494-497.

<sup>32</sup> There were various legends about the antique origins of Siena, among which the most widely spread one was modelled on the foundation of Rome. According to this, Siena would have been founded by Senius (or Senus) alone or together with his twin brother Aschius, the sons of Remus (cf. Barbara Scardigli Foster, in Cristofani ed. 1979, 93, with earlier bibl. and an account of alternative legends according to which Siena was founded by Roman senators). Accordingly, the she-wolf with the twins became the emblem of Siena as well (cf. Marilena Caciorgna and Roberto Guerrini, "Imago urbis. La Lupa e l'immagine di Roma nell'arte e nella cultura senese come identità storica e morale," in *Siena e Roma...* 2005, 99-118) and found an important expression when a copy of the Roman bronze was ordered in 1428 and placed on a *spolio* Roman column in 1429 in the most important civic place: in the piazza del Campo (Cristofani ed. 1979, 117, with further bibl.). Perhaps the best known public expressions of the foundation legend of Siena are Jacopo della Quercia's statues on the Fonte Gaia between 1414-19. The black and white heraldic colours of the *balzana* also refer to the Roman foundation legend. For humanistic themes in Quattrocento art, see the numerous publications of Roberto Guerrini and Marilena Caciorgna. Material remains of the local Antique past were extremely scarce. A sarcophagus, reputedly found on the site of the Cathedral, where a temple of Venus was believed to have stood in antique times, was used as a public fountain in the Quattrocento (Cristofani ed. 1979, 118.)

<sup>33</sup> Carli 1976, republ. 1996.

<sup>34</sup> See note 331.

### 3.2 Painting in Siena, ca. 1460-90

The ascent to the papal throne of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, the former bishop of Siena, under the name Pope Pius II in 1458 brought an occasion for full-fledged Renaissance art to take root in Siena. Enea Silvio was a widely travelled man of exceptional international experience and education, who he had served several Holy Roman Emperors before he undertook an ecclesiastical career. He was a man of enough determination, ambition and education to establish a type of humanist art patronage previously unknown in Siena, and to commission Renaissance art and architecture in Siena and in his native Corsignano (where his family had been exiled in the 14<sup>th</sup> century) that were not rooted in earlier traditions. In Siena his major projects included the Piccolomini Loggia, which was built for family events and rivalled in size and grandiosity the civic Loggia della Mercanzia. It was built by Antonio Federighi, a student of Jacopo della Quercia and Pius' favourite sculptor, whose works are characterized by a pure *all'antica* repertory of motifs, as is evinced by another, now fragmented project that Pius entrusted to him: the white marble tomb monument of the pope's parents in the church of San Francesco in Siena. For grand architectural projects, Pius commissioned the Florentine architect Bernardo Rossellino. Rossellino built Florentine-type Renaissance palaces in Siena (the so-called Palazzo delle Papesse, constructed for Pius' sister Caterina) and in Corsignano, renamed Pienza after Pius (whose town centre Rossellino fully transformed by constructing the new Cathedral and a residence for the pope).

At the same time – perhaps to mitigate the public resentment expressed at the invitation of the Florentine architect – Pius seemed less intent on breaking with tradition and on introducing Florentine stylistic elements in the field of painting. For the famous altarpiece-program of the Pienza cathedral in the 1460s, he chose a stylistically heterogeneous team of “illustrious painters” that included Sano di Pietro, Giovanni di Paolo, Vecchietta and the young Matteo di Giovanni. The prescribed Renaissance elements regarded above all the use of *all'antica* framing, a unified central field (but exception was made for Vecchietta's work, probably for iconographical reasons<sup>35</sup>) and, to some extent, linear perspective. The result is of mixed quality but can be seen as a fascinating dialogue between painters of various approaches, and appears almost as homage to the outstanding achievements of the Sieneese school. For the codices of the new cathedral, artists from an even more widely ranging

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<sup>35</sup> Possibly to follow the arched-topped composition of the *Assumption of the Virgin* on the *antiporto* of the Porta Camollia, cf. Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 22 and Cat. 2.

background were chosen: hitherto unidentified Florentine masters worked side by side with Sano di Pietro, Pellegrino di Mariano, and other minor Sieneese artists.<sup>36</sup>

Even if no ruling aesthetic canon was established with the Pienza altarpiece project, it catalyzed a long-lasting artistic change that made Sieneese painters more open to innovations and foreign influences. Matteo di Giovanni (ca. 1430-1495, Cat. 20-25) became one of the dominant artistic personalities in the second half of the century, who produced a long series of magnificent Renaissance altarpieces – *pale quadrate* and *pale centinate* – for a wide range of prestigious corporate and private patrons in Siena and other towns. His works for his native Borgo San Sepolcro brought him into contact with the art of Piero della Francesca, and his works also reveal his attention to, and fascination with, Florentine painting, especially the works of Antonio del Pollaiuolo and Andrea del Verrocchio. Matteo was at the head of large workshop, in which Guidoccio Cozzarelli (1450-1517, Cat. 26) and one of the most progressive artists of the late 15<sup>th</sup>-century, Pietro di Francesco degli Orioli (1458-1496), were trained.<sup>37</sup> Matteo di Giovanni has for long been among the most appreciated and studied artists of the Sieneese Quattrocento, and one can only regret that Erica Trimpi's monograph on him (1987) remained unpublished – though widely used and cited – PhD dissertation. More recently, a conference and an exhibition provided the opportunity for further studies on Matteo's art.<sup>38</sup>

When Vecchietta was painting for Pius II (1462), he was at the head of the workshop that formed the key artistic personalities of the second half of the fifteenth century. Whether Matteo di Giovanni was among the students is a matter of debate, but Francesco di Giorgio, Neroccio de' Landi, and Benvenuto di Giovanni certainly trained with Vecchietta. The oldest, Francesco di Giorgio (1439-1501) became a universal artist, architect, engineer, and theoretician with such a wide intellectual horizon and humanistic mentality to which this short introduction cannot do justice. His manifold activities have been amply discussed both in early and more recent scholarship.<sup>39</sup> His stature is well indicated by the fact that he was the only artist of his time whose services were widely sought after in the large political and artistic centres of the entire Apennine peninsula. Francesco worked with many assistants

<sup>36</sup> For the Pienza altarpiece programme, see Palladino 1994, with previous bibl.; Laura Martini, in Angelini ed. 2005, 251-79. On the miniatures of Pienza, cf. note 563.

<sup>37</sup> Despite several recent contributions, there is still much uncertainty about Cozzarelli's production and development; especially his early and late artistic phases remain obscure. Cf. bibl. on p. 313 below. Orioli's works were for a long time attributed to Giacomo Pacchiarotti and the reconstruction of his real artistic personality is the merit of Alessandro Angelini (1982<sup>1</sup>, 1982<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>38</sup> Gasparotto and Magnani ed. 2002; Alessi and Bagnoli ed. 2006. For further bibl. on Matteo, see p. 267 below.

<sup>39</sup> Among the early monographs, especially Weller's merits mention (1943). For more recent contributions, see Angelini 1988, Bellosi ed. 1993; Iorio 1993; Bellosi 2004; Syson et al. 2007 and bibl. on p. 222 below.

(Giacomo Cozzarelli, Pietro Orioli) and is recorded more than once in artistic partnerships (with Lotto di Domenico and with Neroccio de' Landi). Francesco's painterly activity is the subject of an ongoing debate that focuses on the nature and extent of assistants' participation in his many paintings, few of which appear to be fully autograph except for the works created in his early period. His characteristic style impressed artists of minor importance (Cat. 15) and his younger co-disciple in Vecchietta's workshop, Neroccio de' Landi (Cat. 16-17).

Neroccio's (1447-1500) art is inimitable for its grace, elegance, and serenity. He was also a talented sculptor working in wood, terracotta, and marble but he is best known today for his devotional paintings that portray sensitive and fragile blond figures and which he produced in large numbers especially after the dissolution of his partnership with Francesco di Giorgio in 1475.<sup>40</sup> Similar blond and pale but more schematic and eccentric figures appear in the paintings of Benvenuto di Giovanni, who was a prolific painter and illuminator, responding with success to the new currents in art (Cat. 18).<sup>41</sup>

No painter active in the 1470s could subtract himself from the influence of two foreign painters, Liberale da Verona (ca. 1445–1527/29; active in Siena and surroundings 1466-1476) and Girolamo da Cremona (doc. 1460-1483; in Siena 1469-1476), who arrived to Siena to work especially on codex illumination. Their boldly innovative compositions, high-keyed palette, intricate decorative patterns, dynamic figurative and drapery style had an enormous general impact. This was in great part due to the fact that they collaborated with a large number of painters on the greatest illumination project of the time: a monumental new series of choir books for the Sienese Cathedral.<sup>42</sup> Such collaborative projects involving a large number of artists from the most celebrated ones to those of humble talents were not unusual for vast artistic enterprises: another example is the pavement decoration of the Sienese Cathedral, also commissioned by the Opera del Duomo. Nearly every artist contributed with designs to this project that protracted over a long period of time, but of which the 1480s was an especially fruitful period, under the leadership of the *operaio* Alberto Aringhieri.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> The basic work on Neroccio is Gertrude Coor's monograph (1961). Various aspects of the artist's sculptural activity have been studied recently (see esp. Seidel 1993, republ. 2005; Martini 2003); interest in his paintings has been less intensive. Cf. bibl. on pp. 231-32 below.

<sup>41</sup> For works of Benvenuto di Giovanni, the monograph of Maria Cristina Bandera (1999) provides a useful reference tool. See also bibl. on p. 253 below.

<sup>42</sup> For the choir books, see esp. Ciardi Dupré 1972. On Liberale da Verona and Girolamo da Cremona, cf. Del Bravo 1967; Eberhardt 1983; Eberhardt 1985; Andrea De Marchi, "I miniatori padani a Siena," in Bellosi ed. 1993, 228-261; Keith Christiansen, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 286-299 (It. ed. 300-13); Federica Toniolo "Girolamo da Cremona", in Bollati ed. 2004, 310-315; Hans-Joachim Eberhardt, "Liberale da Verona", in Bollati ed. 2004, 378-87.

<sup>43</sup> From the vast literature on the Cathedral pavement, I cite only Cust 1901 (2000); Aronow 1985; Caciorgna and Guerrini 2004; Caciorgna, Guerrini, and Lorenzoni ed. 2005.

The decades between ca. 1460 and 1490 were an especially fertile and happy period for Sieneese art, marked by artistic pluralism, where very different artistic concepts coexisted and often enjoyed the patronage of the same commissioner. Renaissance formal language gradually became dominant but blended seamlessly with older traditions, resulting, among other things, in highly original and often unique altarpiece forms. New art forms such as decorated *cassoni* appeared, and it is also from this period that medals, drawings<sup>44</sup> and the first portrait, by Neroccio, survive.<sup>45</sup> Siena was open to foreign artists and fully profited from their fertilizing ideas. At the same time the growing disparity of taste between Siena and other art centres dominated by the Florentine style resulted in reduced possibilities for Sieneese artists to secure commissions in important art centres outside Siena. Their work outside the city was mostly limited to the geographical orbit of the Sieneese state, and also beyond its borders, but usually in small towns without strong local schools to where the Sieneese artists imported their own artistic ideas.

### 3.3 Painting in Siena, ca. 1490-1520

The quickly changing political situation in the 1480s eventually led to long-lasting effects on the arts as well. After the Pazzi conspiracy in Florence (1478), Siena sided with the pope and Naples, which resulted in war with Florence again. After the Florentines made peace with the pope and Naples in 1480, Alfonso of Calabria, son of King Ferdinand of Naples, interfered with Sieneese governmental issues, bringing with him the members of the *Nove* who had been exiled in 1456 after a failed *coup*. A series of political changes followed, among which the exile of the *monti* of the *Nove* and the *Gentiluomini* in 1482 was the most significant. In 1487, the *Noveschi* returned in power by force, lead by Pandolfo Petrucci. The Petrucci family rose to an unprecedented power and controlled Sieneese politics until 1524. Most importantly, after the death of his brother and rival, Giacomo in 1497, Pandolfo instituted something like a signorial rule that lasted until his death in 1512.

Art patronage dramatically changed under the new political system. Foreign artists were openly preferred and invited to work for the city, receiving virtually all the important public and private commissions. Luca Signorelli was the first artist to arrive in the late 1480s,

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<sup>44</sup> Drawings were certainly widely used in Siena as an aid to painting and other forms of art, but virtually none survive until the later decades of the Quattrocento.

<sup>45</sup> Portraiture as a self-standing genre never really took root in Renaissance Siena. The few Quattrocento examples known from documents are the already mentioned one of King Sigismund by Domenico di Bartolo. Liberale da Verona and Matteo di Giovanni also painted portraits in the first half of the 1470s. Cf. Giovanni Agosti, "Su Siena nell'Italia del secondo Quattrocento, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 489-91; Seidel 1993, 58-60 (republ. 2005, 553-56); Boskovits 2003, 534 n. 8, De Marchi 2002<sup>1</sup>, 68.

probably at the invitation of Agostino Bichi, a prominent member of the *Nove*, to work on the family's private chapel in the church of Sant'Agostino. In this decorative programme, Signorelli collaborated with Francesco di Giorgio and his assistants, including Pietro Orioli.<sup>46</sup> Shortly afterwards an artist of mysterious identity and origins, the so-called Griselda Master appeared in Siena and painted three *spalliera* panels showing Boccaccio's story of the patient Griselda (National Gallery, London) for the Spannocchi family around 1494. He also had the lion's share in a series of virtuous men and women executed either for the Piccolomini or the Spannocchi family about 1493-94 (Cat. 30). This large project seems to have been supervised by Francesco di Giorgio and involved also Matteo di Giovanni, Neroccio, and Pietro Orioli. The origins and identity of the Griselda Master have been very much discussed and are not yet resolved;<sup>47</sup> what seems certain that this was the last highly prestigious commission in which the then dominant generation of Sieneese painters participated. Matteo di Giovanni died in 1495, Pietro Orioli, in 1496, and the role of the surviving painters were marginalized.

The artistic scene in Siena came to be dominated by some Florentine and especially by Umbrian artists who had previously worked in Rome. Davide Ghirlandaio and Bastiano Mainardi worked in Siena in 1493 and 1494 on *spalliera* panels for the Spannocchi family (almost certainly as part of the same series as the three panels by the Griselda master mentioned above); in this period Davide Ghirlandaio was employed also to restore the mosaics of the façade of the Cathedral.<sup>48</sup> In the first years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Florentine Pietro Torrigiani and Michelangelo created statues for the monumental Piccolomini-altar erected in the Cathedral in the 1480s by the northern Italian sculptor Andrea Bregno. Close to this altar, one of the most imposing decorative programmes was realized between 1503 and 1507: the Piccolomini library commissioned by Archbishop Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini (later Pope Pius III) to commemorate his uncle, Pope Pius II in a magnificent frescoed biography. Pinturicchio moved to Siena for the sake of the project and stayed there until the end of his life (cf. Cat. 29). Some of the scenes were designed by Raphael. How the ideas of Humanism and the interest in the Antique gained full ground by these years is well

<sup>46</sup> On the Bichi chapel, see above all Ingendaay 1979; Seidel 1979 (republ. 2005); Seidel 1990 (republ. 2005); Norman 2003, 233-236.

<sup>47</sup> See discussion on pp. 342-44 below.

<sup>48</sup> For Davide's work on the mosaics, cf. Milanese 1854-1856, II, 452-454; Monika Butzek, in Riedl and Seidel ed. 3.1.1.1 (2006), 171; on Davide and Mainardi in Siena, Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 230-233, esp. 231. It is interesting to note three predella fragments once in the Ramboux collection (no. 184-86, cf. Ramboux 1862, 32; [Ramboux] 1867, 34), one of which is now in the MFA (inv. 41), ascribed to Davide Ghirlandaio. The predella fragments once bore the date 1494 and were purchased by Ramboux in Siena (he attributed them to the school of Pietro Perugino but noted that they resembled the works of Pinturicchio around 1494), and may thus constitute a further addition to the activity of Davide in Siena.

indicated by the commissioner's decision to place the famous Antique statue of the *Three Graces* in the centre of the library.<sup>49</sup> Pinturicchio (in collaboration with Raphael), Perugino, and a north Italian artist who arrived to Siena in the first years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Giovanni Antonio Bazzi known as Sodoma (1477-1549), painted several altarpieces for the leading families of the city.<sup>50</sup> During Pandolfo Petrucci's reign, court art existed in Siena: Signorelli returned and painted with Pinturicchio and the Urbino-born Girolamo Genga the *camera bella* in Pandolfo's *palazzo* near the Baptistry around 1509.<sup>51</sup> Genga also painted a *Transfiguration* for the cathedral (Museo dell'Opera, Siena).

The list of important commissions given to foreign artists in Siena in this period could be extended much further. While these highly important achievements have been amply researched and discussed, the fate of local artists received less attention. In these decades, it could not have been easy to try to make a living as a Siennese painter trained in Quattrocento traditions. A general overview shows that after about 1490, these artists worked in the city's mendicant and smaller parish churches, received commissions from some confraternities, and from small towns in the *contado*. A considerable number of surviving devotional images indicates another source of their income. This fate befell already to the most talented members of the older generation – Benvenuto di Giovanni, Matteo di Giovanni, and Neroccio. Although the latter two artists still participated in the series of famous men and women, their important late works are all for mendicant churches and rural towns. Matteo di Giovanni worked for the Servites (1491) and the Dominicans (before 1495) in Siena and for the Servites in Borgo San Sepolcro (1487-1495); Neroccio's late altarpieces were all painted for little towns – Rapolano, Montepescini, Montisi – in the countryside. Minor disciples of Vecchietta like Andrea di Niccolò (ca. 1445-ca. 1525) did not have the least chance for a major commission in the city in this period.<sup>52</sup> Guidoccio Cozzarelli's career can be followed only until 1498: after the works executed for Sinalunga and its vicinity (Cat. 26), he painted altarpieces for Rosia, Ancaiano, and Pitigliano in the far Maremma region but none in Siena.

<sup>49</sup> Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini acquired this Roman copy of a Hellenistic original in 1502 in Rome; cf. Battista Sanginetto and Mauro Cristofani in Cristofani ed. 120-134.

<sup>50</sup> Perugino's *Crucifixion* altarpiece for the Chigi family survives *in situ* in Sant'Agostino (1502-04), cf. Monika Butzek and S. Ferino Pagden, in Riedl and Seidel ed. 1.1 (1985), 62-66. In the church of San Francesco a whole series of altarpieces were painted by Pinturicchio, Perugino, and Sodoma. None but Sodoma's Cinuzzi's altarpiece (*Deposition*; PNS, inv. 413) escaped the fire that ravished the church in 1655. On the decoration of San Francesco in general: Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 247; for Perugino's Vieri altarpiece made before 1510, Milanese, 1854-56, III, 47. Sodoma settled in Siena and became one of the most favoured artists, working for Agostino Chigi also in Rome, in the Villa Farnesina.

<sup>51</sup> On the *camera bella* or "magnificent chamber" (now dispersed in various collections) see Tátrai 1978 and recently Philippa Jackson, in Syson et al. 2007, 270-278, with previous bibl.

<sup>52</sup> On this artist, see Vatne 1989. His major works were made for Paganico (1480s), Casole d'Elsa (1489), Radicondoli (1500, now PNS, inv. 298), Casciano di Murlo (fresco, 1514).

In the city, he received commissions from confraternities (1494, 1498) and a German lawyer (1495), and no further documented works survive although he was certainly active until 1512 and died only in 1517. Some devotional Madonnas that appear to be his late works hardly explain how he made ends meet for nearly two decades.

After about 1490, the long-lived Benvenuto di Giovanni appears to have teamed up with his son Girolamo (1470-1524) and executed a large number of altarpieces and frescos for minor places in the Sieneese state (Asciano, Torrita di Siena in 1497; Grancia near Grosseto in 1498, Montalcino, Buonconvento; Sinalunga in 1509). It is suggested here that in Siena he worked for a less prestigious mendicant order, the Carmelites (Cat. 18), for which also his student, Bernardino Fungai executed an altarpiece in 1512, and where many Sieneese artists participated in an extensive redecoration programme in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>53</sup>

It is most interesting to observe how the youngest members of the Quattrocento-trained generation coped with the changed situation. Two students of Benvenuto di Giovanni, his own son Girolamo and the somewhat older Bernardino Fungai (1460-1516), made serious attempts to take up the challenge and update their art according to the new standards.<sup>54</sup> Although they could not compete with the influx of foreign masters, they did achieve some success and secured themselves some noteworthy commissions in Siena, albeit none comparable in prestige to those that went to the leading foreign painters of the time. After the 1490s, Fungai absorbed increasingly more of the Roman-Umbrian style; he abandoned the traditional gold-ground and tempera technique; he painted *spalliera* and *cassone* panels, and even *tondos* around 1510. He worked for the Servites (high altarpiece, 1498-1501), the Dominicans (ca. 1495-1500), the Carmelites (1512), and for the church of Santa Maria in Portico a Fontegiusta (altarpiece in the first decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> c.). Girolamo's career resembled Fungai's in many respects. In Siena, he was employed in San Domenico (Sozzini altarpiece, 1508) and in the church in Santa Maria in Portico a Fontegiusta (frescos completed by 1515). He went through comparable stylistic and technical changes (Cat. 31); painted several *deschi da parto* and *spalliera* panels, and at least two portraits. He seems to have worked extensively for the Franciscan order, especially its Observant branch (Cat. 32).

The situation was different for those Sieneese artists – some of them hardly younger than the ones discussed above – who by their training and circumstances could insert themselves

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<sup>53</sup> Lusini 1907.

<sup>54</sup> Bernardino Fungai and Girolamo di Benvenuto have been relatively little studied. After a monograph by Pèleo Bacci in 1947, Fungai's art was systematically overviewed by Marcella Parisi (1988-89) in an unpublished university thesis. Girolamo has never been the object of monographic attention. Much of his activity is discussed together with that of his father by Bandera (1999); a cursory account of his activity is provided in Alessi 2003. For further bibl. on both artists, see pp. 325 and 359, respectively, below.

with facility in the High Renaissance artistic ambience. Many of them collaborated, often in subordinate positions, with the dominant masters, especially with Pinturicchio, Sodoma and the single great Sieneese Cinquecento master, Domenico Beccafumi (ca. 1484-1551). Others sought more Florentine-oriented, individual paths of the *maniera moderna*. Though in part chronologically overlapping those discussed in this study, the achievements of Giacomo Pacchiarotti (1474-1539), Girolamo del Pacchia (1477-ca. 1530), Baldassare Peruzzi (1481-1536), Bartolomeo di David (1482-1545/46), Andrea del Brescianino (ca. 1486-after 1525); Giovanni di Lorenzo (1494?-doc. until 1551), Sodoma's student and son-in-law Bartolomeo Neroni known as Riccio (doc. from 1532-died 1571) already belong to a different artistic context, to the new and artistically flourishing era in the last half century of the Sieneese Republic.<sup>55</sup>

#### **4. THE SUBSEQUENT FATE AND THE RECEPTION HISTORY OF SIENESE QUATTROCENTO PAINTINGS**

A long and glorious period of Sieneese history came to an end with the fall of the Sieneese Republic to Florence in 1555. After its incorporation into the Duchy of Tuscany, the city hardly had further urban and economic development for centuries. In the arts, a vigorous local Baroque school developed, which, like Quattrocento Sieneese art, has been the object of renewed scholarly attention lately.

As elsewhere in Italy, the passing of time and the changes in function and taste resulted in the massive destruction and dispersion of the Sieneese primitives, which culminated in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and in the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>56</sup> The names of most of the great masters of the Quattrocento fell into oblivion. Their modern rediscovery owes much to surviving archival records and to the research and documentation of local historians.

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<sup>55</sup> On the High Renaissance in Siena, see Sricchia Santoro ed. 1988, and above all *Domenico Beccafumi...* 1990, with previous bibl. For Beccafumi, most recently Gabriele Fattorini, Jennifer Sliwka, Carol Plazzotta, Hugo Chapman in Syson et al. 2007, 296-349.

<sup>56</sup> On the fate and rediscovery of the Italian "primitives" (a term not always used without some negative connotations) in general see Borenus 1923; L. Venturi 1926; Previtali 1959; Previtali 1964 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989); Haskell 1976; a summary by Cristina De Benedictis, "La fortuna dei primitivi", in De Benedictis 1998, 125-133; essays in Rossi Pinelli ed. 2002, and Gordon 2003, xxv-xliv, xxxvi.

## 4.1 Sources and early local historians (16<sup>th</sup>- early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries)

Many sources on early Siennese art survive from the period between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. A large number of manuscript and published sources that deal systematically with the Siennese primitives are now well-known to art historians and have been used extensively for research. For individual works of art, the rich holdings of the Siennese (and other) archives continue to yield new discoveries.

Among the general sources, arguably the most important 16<sup>th</sup>-century document is a *visitatio apostolica* by the Perugian bishop Francesco Bossi from 1575, which is not detailed in its description of works of art but still enormously useful because it describes the furnishings of churches, lists altar *tituli* and often provides the names of patrons and a basic description of the decoration.<sup>57</sup> From the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the writings of Giulio Mancini, Isidoro Ugurgieri Azzolini, Alfonso Landi, Filippo Montebuoni Buondelmonte should be mentioned.<sup>58</sup> The most important inventory-like source from this period is by Fabio Chigi, the later Pope Alexander VII, who compiled a very detailed but unfortunately incomplete “L’elenco delle pitture, sculture e architetture di Siena” in 1625-26, which, among many other data, usually gives the position of the altar, its title and patron, describing its decoration, providing the names of artists, often transcribing signatures and dates.<sup>59</sup>

The 18<sup>th</sup> century is relatively rich in sources, which is fortunate, since much of it predates the great waves of the alienation of the works. Important manuscript sources include the writings of the Dominican friar Angiolo Maria Carapelli, Giovanni Antonio Pecci, and the Abbot Giovangirolamo Carli.<sup>60</sup> Girolamo Gigli’s *Diario Sanese* (1723) is an inexhaustibly

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<sup>57</sup> AAS, Visite Pastorali, ms. 21. For paintings, Bossi usually specifies whether they are on wood or canvas, and mentions if they have gold ground. There is often a summary statement of the subject matter but artists’ names are not recorded. The source is yet unpublished. Much of the information provided by Bossi is repeated in Italian in a manuscript by Benedetto Spinelli (BCS, ms. A.VIII.49-55).

<sup>58</sup> Besides the famous *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, many manuscript sources survive by the Siennese-born physician and art collector Mancini (BCS). In Ugurgieri Azzolini’s work (1649), especially pertinent are the parts “Pittura” (I, Chapter XX) and the “Sanesi pittori, scultori, architetti, ed altri artefici famosi,” which contains a list and comments to many artists from the 14<sup>th</sup> c. on (II, Chapter XXXIII). For Alfonso Landi, see his “Racconto di pitture, di statue, e d’altre opere eccellenti che si ritrovano ne’ tempi e negli altri luoghi pubblici di Siena cominciato fin dall’anno 1655” (BCS, ms. L. IV.14). Filippo Montebuoni Buondelmonte’s “Notizie de’ pittori sanesi” survives in a transcription from 1717 (BCS, ms. L. V. 14).

<sup>59</sup> BAV, ms. Chigiano I.i.II. (published by Bacci 1939<sup>2</sup>); copied and amended by Giovacchino Faluschi in 1821 (BCS, ms. E. VI. 20).

<sup>60</sup> Some of their important works are Angiolo Maria Carapelli, “Notizie delle chiese e cose riguardevoli di Siena” (BCS, ms. B.VII.10, 1717-18); *id.* “Notizie del convento di S. Domenico” (BCS, ms. B.VII.7-9); Giovanni Antonio Pecci, “Raccolta Universale di tutte le Iscrizioni, Arme e altri Monumenti, sia antichi come moderni, esistenti nel Terzo di S. Martino fino a questo presente anno MDCCXXX” (ASS, ms. D.5); *id.* “Giornale Sanese” (BCS, ms. A IX 4-6, 1715-1772); *id.* “Diario Sanese” (BCS, ms. A IX 7-8, 1772-94), *id.* “Memorie storico-critiche della città di Siena raccolte dal Signor Cavaliere Giovan Antonio Pecci, patrizio senese,” 4 vols. Siena, 1755-60 (fascimile ed. M. Pavolini and Innocenti, Siena: Cantagalli, 1988, with an introduction by Mario

rich source of Sienese life, history, culture, traditions, feast days, religious customs, economic situation, notes on families, and much more. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century begins the long series of published cultural guides that are so important for the identification of works of art and for following changes especially in ecclesiastical ambiances.<sup>61</sup> The most important art historical publication from this period is Guglielmo Della Valle's *Lettere Sanesi ... sopra le belle arti* (1782-1786), which in a series of letters discusses and promotes Sienese artists, including those of the Quattrocento.<sup>62</sup> In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Assunto Picchioni gathered much information on the history and furnishings of Sienese churches.<sup>63</sup> Finally, Ettore Romagnoli's (1772-1838) activity must be mentioned, whose monumental, 13-volume "Biografia cronologica de' Bellartisti senesi dal secolo XII a tutto il XVIII" completed some time before 1835 is an indispensable research instrument. Over many years, Romagnoli systematically collected data on Sienese artists; his main sources were previous publications (Della Valle, for example), archival documents, and the works of art themselves, which he described in detail.<sup>64</sup>

Many of these writers paid particular attention to early Sienese art, were indefatigable documenters of the buildings, inscriptions, artistic decorations of their city; they defended her artistic values, argued for the independency of the local painting school, and disputed the Vasarian notion about the chronological primacy Florentine art.<sup>65</sup> Their contribution to the history of early Sienese art is inestimable, yet they formed an erudite minority whose special interest in the Sienese primitives had very little effect on public taste. They themselves

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Ascheri); Giovangirolamo Carli, "Notizie di belle arti" (BCS, ms. C. VII. 20, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 18th c.). A useful list of manuscript sources can be found in the volumes of *Die Kirchen von Siena* (Riedl and Seidel ed.).

<sup>61</sup> The earliest of these were written by Giovanni Antonio Pecci, specifying that they are for the use of foreign visitors (*forestieri*). Cf. Pecci 1752; Pecci 1759. The series of guides was amplified and continued by Giovacchino Faluschi (1784, 1815), Ettore Romagnoli (1822, 1836 and two posthumous editions in 1840 and 1861, cf. Iacometti 1927), Everardi Micheli (1863), and others.

<sup>62</sup> Della Valle was a Franciscan friar of Piemontese origin who spent only a few years in Siena, during which he researched and wrote this book. The concept of the book – due to the Sienese librarian and scholar, Abbot Giuseppe Ciaccheri –, its history and reception have been analysed by Martina Dei (2002). The other major art historical undertaking of Della Valle was a Sienese, annotated edition of Giorgio Vasari's *Vite* (Della Valle 1791-94; on this, see Ercoli 1976).

<sup>63</sup> Assunto Picchioni, "Notizie sulle Chiese di Siena" (BCS, ms. A.VIII.1-4).

<sup>64</sup> Romagnoli *ante* 1835 [1976]. On Romagnoli, see Iacometti 1927. Romagnoli's work remained in a manuscript form until its fascimile edition in 1976. A critical edition of his work in print would be much needed. Despite the title, Romagnoli's contributions are not so much biographies than loosely organized compilations of documents and notes. They are "biographical" in the sense that Romagnoli collected all types of archival documents relating to the lives of the Sienese artists, not only those that refer to works of art.

<sup>65</sup> Ugurgieri Azzolini 1649, vol. 1, 653-654; for the position of Della Valle and Giuseppe Ciaccheri, see Dei 2002, 52. When a guide to Galgano Saracini's gallery (opened in 1806) appeared in 1819, it gave the reason for the creation of the collection to demonstrate that painting (and its "sister arts") came to exist in Siena "*molti anni prima che in qualunque altra città, o luogo d'Italia*" (Colle and Sisi 2005, 14).

studied these works less for their aesthetic and artistic qualities; rather, they treasured them as relics of their past and proofs of the antiquity of their culture.

The modern artistic appreciation of the early schools of Sieneese painting took a long time to come along. During the oblivion into which these works fell during the centuries that preferred Baroque, then Neo-Classical and High Renaissance art, an enormous part of the Sieneese late medieval artistic heritage, at whose extent which we can now only guess at, was destroyed through lack of maintenance, negligence, ignorance, sackings, institutional reforms, and functional transformations. Another substantial, but fortunately surviving, part emigrated from Tuscany to find its final place of conservation in museums and private collections mainly outside of Italy.

#### **4.2 Suppressions of Religious Institutions in Tuscany (1770s – 1860s)**

In the middle of 18<sup>th</sup> century, before the onset of a series of events that were to affect radically the fate of the medieval Sieneese artistic heritage, Siena was a small, provincial, depopulated city with little industry or commerce on its own.<sup>66</sup> In her private residences, street tabernacles, churches, monasteries, friaries, convents, chapels of confraternities and lay congregations, were works that escaped the ruin of time and the transformations in Baroque taste. With some exceptions of miracle-working images, votive panels or family-heritages, they meant little more to the locals than mementoes of a distant past, and travellers – who crossed Siena on their way to Rome during the “Grand Tour”<sup>67</sup> and stopped only briefly to admire works by Michelangelo, Bernini, Guido Reni or Luca Giordano – rarely took notice of them, and then only to note their “barbarism”.<sup>68</sup> As the historian, poet, and Dante-scholar

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<sup>66</sup> Cfr. for example, the notes of Abbot Richard travelling in Siena in 1864, cited in Misciattelli 1931, 216.

<sup>67</sup> The Via Francigena crossing Siena remained one of the most important travel routes in Italy, with the religious pilgrimage of the earlier centuries being gradually replaced by the cultural pilgrimage of the Grand Tour that formed a compulsory part of the education of upper-class youth in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. On the Grand Tour, see Brilli 1987, 50 n. 1 and Attilio Brilli, “Siena nel ‘Grand Tour’,” in Barzanti, Catoni, and De Gregorio 1995-1997, II (1996), 179-192.

<sup>68</sup> On visitors to Siena, see Misciattelli 1931, 185-238; Brilli 1986, Brilli 1987 and, especially for the changing perception of early Sieneese art, Loseries 1998. As a few random examples, J. A. Addison’s consternation could be quoted with which he noted at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the pains that “our forefathers” took to build such a “barbarous building” as the Sieneese cathedral (cited in Hook 1979, 209). In 1764, the Abbot Richard took note of High Renaissance and Baroque treasures (the Chigi chapel in Cathedral, Sodoma’s *Holy Family* in the chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico, works by Francesco Vanni and Luca Giordano) but did not waste many words for early Sieneese painting. The same holds true for James Forsyth who visited Siena in 1802: he admired Mecherino [Domenico Beccafumi], Vanni, Casolani but ignored Simone Martini and Ambrogio Lorenzetti (cf. Misciattelli 1931, 215 and 222, respectively).

Pietro Misciattelli (1882-1937) noted, “*Allora non si conosceva il valore immenso delle tavole dei primitivi, e nessuno le ricercava*”.<sup>69</sup>

The situation was soon upset by changes in local ecclesiastical policy and by political events that prepared the way for what was to be, not only in Siena, one of the greatest and most regrettable systematic destruction and dispersal of works of art in western civilization.

### ***Suppressions under Peter Leopold (1770s-1780s)***

Centuries-long traditions were changed by the ecclesiastical policy of Peter Leopold of Lorraine, Grand Duke of Tuscany.<sup>70</sup> The enlightened ruler, intent on progress, reform and the eradication of superstition and “useless” religious practices, ordered in a series of decrees the abolition of nearly all the lay confraternities<sup>71</sup> and the partial suppression of monasteries, friaries, and convents in the 1770s and 1780s. During the institutional reforms, above all, usefulness to the public was kept in mind. By the suppression of confraternities, religious life was concentrated to the parishes, which were also helped financially with the goods and furnishings of the abolished companies. Convents, friaries, and monasteries which had few members, which had difficulties in functioning, or were judged to have little utility to the public were dissolved or turned to useful purposes, for example, to educational institutes for young women.<sup>72</sup> Some of the movable property of the suppressed institutions was given to poor parishes or hospitals; some – of lesser value – was sold, and the money was used for public good. Their buildings were given to parishes or sold and subsequently secularized. Further decrees in the 1770s prohibited burial within the city, which led to the abandonment and decay of private funeral chapels in churches and their artistic decoration.<sup>73</sup> Further decisions which ordered the removal of pictures from the main altars and the reduction of the number of altars in convents to one were only partly or not at all realized because of the great opposition they raised.

The fate of the enormous artistic heritage affected by these transformations was predetermined by the prevalent artistic taste. Books and codices of special value and paintings “of excellent authors” had to be indicated to the authorities. The books were transferred to public libraries, as they were considered to be more useful this way to scholars. The orders to preserve valuable pictures mention artists’ names from the Cinquecento and the Seicento

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<sup>69</sup> Misciattelli 1931, 218.

<sup>70</sup> For an in-depth survey of the period, its major events, legislature and practices, see Bisogni 2000, on which I mainly relied here.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Jacona 1988, 470; Bisogni 2000, 574-79.

<sup>72</sup> Bisogni 2000, 570.

<sup>73</sup> Bisogni 2000, 573.

only.<sup>74</sup> The omission of the names of earlier artists clearly indicates that early Sieneese works were not held in high regard. Works of major importance were taken to Palazzo Pubblico for public display, those of lesser value, to the Archbishop's palace for redistribution between the parishes. Some works were requested by patron families; others were sold to privates.<sup>75</sup>

It is important to emphasize that during these religious suppressions the enormous loss of Sieneese primitives occurred not because the authorities did not take measures to preserve precious works of arts. The early Sieneese panels escaped attention because of the generally little value attributed to them.

### ***The Napoleonic Era***

During the French occupations, Siena was invaded in 1799 and again in 1800. These occupations, although severe for the city itself, did not affect in a particular manner the early pictures of the Sieneese school, which were perceived more as a historic curiosity than valuable works, thus they did not become the object of the sackings that caused so much damage to the artistic treasures of Italy (and elicited the criticism of Quatremère de Quincy, who advocated politics aimed at the preservation of works of art in their own context).<sup>76</sup>

Far more disastrous was the new wave of suppression of all the convents and monasteries between 1808 and 1810, when Tuscany became part of the Napoleonic Empire (1808-1814). The suppressions occurred on a much larger scale than in the times of Peter Leopold.<sup>77</sup> In the course of the systematic alienation of goods, numerous works of art were taken by private families (some of whom claimed works commissioned by their ancestors); while pictures "of lesser value" were cut up and sold in a chaotic way.<sup>78</sup>

For the history of the appreciation of the Sieneese "primitives", it is worth noting that there were hardly any early Sieneese pictures transported to Paris. Although the general concept for the organization of an universal, encyclopedic museum in the French capital was

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<sup>74</sup> Bisogni, 2000, 578.

<sup>75</sup> The authority supervising the suppressions from an art historical point of view was Lorenzo Feliciati, *maestro di disegno pubblico*, from the *scuola di disegno* at the University of Siena. After Leopold departed for Vienna in 1790, revolts broke out and numerous religious practices were reintroduced, companies reestablished, altars reconstructed, venerated images recovered, forbidden processions held, and relics reacquired. Between 1791 and 1794, under the rule of Peter Leopold's son Ferdinand III, a few reactivated religious companies asked and received back their own works of art or other works that were available, but the restoration of property was in general limited (Jacona 1988, 470; Bisogni 2000, 583-584). For the art historian, it is important to keep in mind these changes in the location of works of art especially for provenance studies.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Pinelli 1978-79, 43-62.

<sup>77</sup> Brandi 1933, 5; Bisogni 2000, 599. The new suppressions involved the 82 convents that remained after the suppressions by Peter Leopold. With only a few exceptions, all confraternities and oratories were suppressed; their goods were given to the respective parishes in the area; their books to the *biblioteca pubblica*, founded that year, in 1810 (Sisi and Spalletti ed. 1994, 20).

<sup>78</sup> Bisogni 2000, 600-603.

to present a complete series of artists of all times, including the early periods,<sup>79</sup> and the research for primitives started seriously in 1810, facilitated by the recent suppressions and personally executed by the general director of the Museum, Dominique-Vivant Denon (who purchased some Italian primitives for his own private collection as well), the Florentine school was already amply represented in a special exhibition of early painting 1814, in contrast to the Sieneese.<sup>80</sup>

The major sources of reference for the confiscation of works were the writings of the Florence-centred Giorgio Vasari as well as Luigi Lanzi's description of the Uffizi gallery and his recent *Storia pittorica della Italia*.<sup>81</sup> General taste for Italian painting was determined by the principal 18<sup>th</sup>-century French guides to Italy,<sup>82</sup> thus in this case – contrary to what happened as a result of the religious suppressions – ignorance about Sieneese art came to its rescue.

With the end of the Napoleonic period in 1814, some convents reopened and some of their possessions returned, but the damage due to the loss of the original context for many works of art was immense. Neither was this the last wave of secularization that affected religious institutions in Tuscany: another, minor suppression occurred in the 1860s, in the time of the unification of modern-day Italy.<sup>83</sup>

### **4.3 The Revival of Interest in Quattrocento Sieneese Painting: Collecting and Early Research**

#### *Early collections of primitives in Siena and the rise of interest in the art of the Middle Ages*

Several noble and non-noble Sieneese families possessed early Sieneese works already in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, but the most important collection was formed, with a

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<sup>79</sup> For a recent summary, also regarding the motivations and organizations of the Paris museum, see Sgarbozza 2002, esp. 35-37, with further bibl.

<sup>80</sup> There is not a single early Italian master among the many praised painters of the Cinque- and Seicento whose works were exposed in the Galerie Napoléon in Paris (Cf. *Notice...1810*). In the catalogue of an exhibition specifically introducing the “*école primitives de l’Italie*” and other nations in 1814 (where early Florentines were amply represented), the only Sieneese painters who appeared were Simone Martini and Taddeo di Bartolo (*Notice... 1814*, listing a Coronation of the Virgin by Simone “Memmi” from the suppressed church of the Annunziata of Florence, and a triptych from 1390 by Taddeo di Bartolo, taken from the suppressed church of San Paolo all’Orto in Pisa). Talking of the Sieneese school and guessing at its value in the Napoleonic years, Berenson (1918, 82) remarked: “What a Sieneese painter would have fetched we do not know, for the reason, apparently, that the question never came up. Little over a hundred years ago, the pre-historic frescoes in the cave of Altamira were scarcely less present in the minds of people than the master-pieces of the Sieneese fifteenth century.”

<sup>81</sup> Lanzi 1782; Lanzi 1795-96.

<sup>82</sup> Esp. Cochin 1758; La Lande 1769.

<sup>83</sup> Brandi 1933, 7; Tammaro 1986, 19.

conscious, systematic, and wide-ranging collecting effort, by the Abbot Giuseppe Ciaccheri (1723-1804). The librarian Ciaccheri's role for the study of early Sieneese art was manifold; his literary and collecting activities were equally important. He donated his large painting collection to the university, and it now forms the core of the Sieneese Pinacoteca.<sup>84</sup> In the formation of the local painting gallery, the Abbot Luigi De Angelis (ca. 1758-1832), librarian of Public Library, likewise had a great role, as he saved many works of art from dispersion during the second great wave of secularization under Napoleon and organized its installation opened to the public in 1816 (Galleria dell'Istituto delle Belle Arti). Especially noteworthy was De Angelis' intention to present a continuous, uninterrupted line of Sieneese painting from the very beginning, including the earliest works, even if this desire entailed a series of forced attributions and even the dismembering of polyptychs in order to create a larger number of pieces to which then different names of authors were appended. To De Angelis we owe also an important list of the holdings of the gallery published in 1816.<sup>85</sup>

To the late 18<sup>th</sup> century date the first glimmers of renewed interest in late medieval Sieneese art and architecture, both from the part of locals and foreign travellers.<sup>86</sup> In Siena, the Saracini family had the façade of their palace remodelled in Neo-Gothic style that emphasized the medieval character of the building. Sigismondo Chigi ordered copies of the frescos in the Palazzo Pubblico (of the *Guidoriccio* and of some figures in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Buon Governo*). In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, measures were taken to preserve the ornate mosaic floor of the Cathedral, and some restorations were executed, notable for their intention, even if unsatisfactory in their results. Laws for the protection of artistic heritage, based on earlier Medici legislation, were renewed in 1754 and subsequently reinforced several times.<sup>87</sup> This

<sup>84</sup> On Ciaccheri, his relations, correspondence, and art collection, see esp. Bruschetti 1979 and Dei 2002. The most important early collections in Siena were those of the Archbishop Zondadari, Francesco Gori Pannilini, the Spanocchi and Sozzini families (cf. Sisi and Spalletti ed. 1994, 77, referring to Previtali 1964, 239), Galgano Saracini, the Pecci, Pazzini, Livi, and Sani families, among others (Bruschetti 1979, 160 n. 95). Ciaccheri possessed 120 paintings already before he acquired many works from the religious institutions suppressed by Peter Leopold or from the Sieneese families who came into their possessions. Ciaccheri also collected drawings, prints, books, manuscripts which he then donated to the University Library (today BCS).

<sup>85</sup> De Angelis 1816. On De Angelis, see above all Risani 1999. On the history of the Sieneese picture gallery, cf. Micheli 1872; Bacci 1932; Torriti 1986; Anna Maria Guiducci, "La Pinacoteca", in Barzanti, Catoni, and De Gregorio ed. 1995-1997, II (1996), 401-12, with bibl.

<sup>86</sup> For the rising appreciation of the Middle Ages among visitors to Siena, cf. Sisi and Spalletti ed. 1994, 77; Loseries 1998, esp. 135-140.

<sup>87</sup> Bisogni 2000, 568. Legislation for the preservation of cultural heritage prohibited the exportation of old pictures and many other types of objects of cultural value (manuscripts, medals, statues, carved architectural decoration) from the territory of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany without permission. Permission, however, was granted quite liberally for early Sieneese paintings even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see the history of the Ramboux collection in Chapter II.1.1 below). Illegal exportations also occurred: Bisogni (2000, 605) referred to an unpublished lawsuit in which two priests, two Sieneese dealers of antiquities, and a German painter-collector [in

was also the time when the modern theoretical foundations for the preservation of historical artistic heritage were laid down.<sup>88</sup> In European art history writing, the *Histoire de l'Art* published by the art historian and collector Séroux d'Agincourt (1730-1814) gave an important impetus for the recognition of the Italian primitives. Even though the author did not have a special appreciation for this period, enthusiastic readers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century relied on it for a better understanding of the art of Middle Ages.<sup>89</sup>

The appreciation of the early schools of Sieneese painting depended in great measure on how the Sieneese viewed and protected their own artistic heritage. In this, the local Istituto delle Belle Arti di Siena, founded in 1816, had an important role.<sup>90</sup> In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, artistic education followed Neo-Classical ideals under the professors of painting Giuseppe Colignon and, from 1827, Francesco Nenci. In the time of the latter, attitude toward the late medieval heritage began to change as the ideas of Romanticism reached Siena. Training in handicrafts received more emphasis at the Institute. In this process, attention turned towards late medieval artifacts; for the production of wood intarsia, for example, 15<sup>th</sup>- and 16<sup>th</sup>-century models were imitated.<sup>91</sup> By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the spirit of Academism and Neo-Classicism waned, and Siena was deeply affected by the changes in artistic taste in all of Europe, by Romanticism, the French and English Gothic revival and the general rise of interest in the medieval past (represented in Italy above all by the German-founded Nazarene brotherhood and the *purismo* movement in Rome). Luigi Mussini, director of the Istituto delle Belle Arti from 1851, promoted the study of Trecento and Quattrocento artists.<sup>92</sup> In the

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fact, Johann Anton Ramboux, according to a communication from Bisogni] were involved for illegal selling and buying of pictures.

<sup>88</sup> Rossi Pinnelli 1978-79.

<sup>89</sup> The *Histoire de l'Art* was written between 1779-1789 with the intention to expand Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* to the time of the High Renaissance. It was not published in its entirety until 1823, but then soon also in Italian in 1826-29 (Séroux d'Agincourt 1823; 1826-29). It focused mainly on the art of the Middle Ages, and thus went contrary to the mainstream of contemporary art appreciation. While collecting material on Sieneese works, Séroux d'Agincourt came into contact with Padre Della Valle, who dedicated to him a letter in his *Lettere Sanesi*. On Séroux d'Agincourt, cf. Loyrette 1980; Loseries 1998, 141; Miarelli Mariani 2001, Miarelli Mariani 2002; Miarelli Mariani 2005.

<sup>90</sup> For the history of the Istituto, see esp. Tammaro 1986; Torriti, 1986, 63. For 19<sup>th</sup>-century artistic culture in Siena in general, Sisi and Spalletti ed. 1994.

<sup>91</sup> Tammaro 1986, 15-16. After the mid-century, the applied arts received even more emphasis and numerous artisans' workshops were opened throughout the city.

<sup>92</sup> Sisi and Spalletti ed. 1994, 271: "*Alla morte del Nenci, avvenuta nel 1850, lo stato delle arti locali oscillava dunque fra persistenze classicistiche, Purismo alla nazarena e naturalismo romantico*"; Tammaro 1986, 18: "*il problema che il nuovo Direttore [Luigi Mussini] deve affrontare è estetico e al tempo stesso pedagogico. Egli propone quindi lo studio rigoroso dei Quadri del Trecento e del Quattrocento, secondo un ideale espressivo nel quale egli stesso in quanto 'purista' si era formato e crede perciò, con ardente convinzione, allo stile neogotico, quale unico pensiero razionale riferito ai secoli grandiosi del Medioevo.*" On Mussini, see recently Sisi and Spalletti ed. 2007.

second half of the century, many Sieneſe painters and ſculptors turned to Gothic and eſpecially to early Renaissance models for inſpiration.<sup>93</sup>

In the ſecond half of the century, awareness grew about the danger of loſſes to early cultural heritage and a ſtrong reſtoration ſchool developed within the Academy under Muſſini. An emblematic public monument, the Fonte Gaia in the Campo, was diſmantled for protection and replaced with a copy executed by Tito Sarocchi between 1858 and 1868. A change of concept for the ongoing reſtoration of the Cathedral occurred already in the ſecond half of the 1840s: the new plans advanced by Alessandro Saracini reſpected the original ſtate of the building, valuing its Gothic architecture, and the main purpoſe of the reſtoration became to preſerve the *ſtato primitivo* of the building.<sup>94</sup> Other buildings ſymbolic of the city’s history and cultural identity were reſtored in puriſt ſtyle in the ſecond half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (San Francesco, S. Maria dei Servi, the Baptiſtry, historical *palazzi* like thoſe of the Salimbeni and Marsili families). In 1860s the *Provincia* commissioned Francesco Brogi, a painter-artist to draw up an inventory of the art works in the religious buildings in Siena and its province: this precise and very detailed work is now a baſic ſource for Sieneſe ſtudies.<sup>95</sup> The local painting gallery ſtill received little attention, but better prepared ſcholars drew up more reliable catalogues<sup>96</sup>; the acquisition of early works continued, and the collection found a new location in the Palazzo Buonsignori and in the adjacent Palazzo Brigidi.<sup>97</sup> The increasing awareness and appreciation of the city’s rich artistic medieval heritage was in part due to the growing amount of reliable knowledge about early Sieneſe artists, thanks to archival reſearch eſpecially by Gaetano Milaneſi (1854-1856)<sup>98</sup> and, later, by Scipione Borghesi and Luciano Banchi (1898). In the 1860s, the fundamental *A New History of Painting in Italy* appeared by Joſeph A. Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaſelle, which provided, on the baſis of Cavalcaſelle’s reſearch, the firſt detailed diſcuſſion of the Sieneſe ſchool by modern art historical methods.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>93</sup> A fundamental publication for this period is Sani ed. 1988, in which ſee eſp. Bernardina Sani, “Artisti, reſtauratori, mercanti a Siena dallo ſtoricismo al decadentismo”, 15-24.

<sup>94</sup> Wolfgang Loseries, in Riedl and Seidel ed., 3.1.1.2 (2006), 637-640.

<sup>95</sup> Only the inventory of the province was published ſeveral decades later (Brogi 1897). The inventory of the city of Siena can be conſulted in the form of a typewritten manuſcript (Francesco Brogi, “Inventario degli oggetti d’arte della Chiesa Metropolitana”).

<sup>96</sup> Pini 1842; Milaneſi 1852.

<sup>97</sup> On the history of Pinacoteca, ſee note 85 above.

<sup>98</sup> On Milaneſi, ſee Lisini 1895, with Milaneſi’s bibliography.

<sup>99</sup> Crowe and Cavalcaſelle 1864-66.

### *The collection, falsification, and scholarly re-evaluation of early Sieneese paintings*

By the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, the dispersal of early Sieneese paintings was well on its way and no serious precautions were yet taken against it. Art dealers' shops operated in Siena at least since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> many early Sieneese paintings seem to have been sold at very modest prices to dealers and collectors. Best documented are the interests and purchases of a new type of traveller in this period: the foreign connoisseur, art collector, and art dealer, like Johann David Passavant (acquisition of 40 paintings in 1819), Carl Friedrich von Rumohr (exportation of 9 paintings recorded in 1828), or Johann Anton Ramboux (acquisition of over 300 paintings between 1832-42), who not only purchased but systematically researched and documented the works of art.<sup>100</sup> The vastness of Johann Anton Ramboux's collection, of which a large part is now preserved in Hungary and will be discussed in detail below, must have been exceptional, but by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, many Sieneese primitives seem to have been present on the art market and in private collections in Rome (Campana collection, collection of the Cardinal Fesch, Bertinelli collection).<sup>101</sup>

The massive emigration of Sieneese paintings, however, began only later, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup>. Foreigners, especially Anglo-Saxons, developed a vivid interest in the study and purchase of Sieneese primitives on a large scale before the Sieneese became fully aware of the value and importance of their artistic heritage. Despite the contributions of the Sieneese and foreign intellectual elite for the re-evaluation of the early schools, local public appreciation of these panels was slow to change. In 1890, for example, only 65 persons were interested in visiting the local picture gallery,<sup>102</sup> and accounts of how medieval paintings were cut up to small pieces for the most trivial of reasons circulated in oral tradition as recently as a few decades ago.<sup>103</sup>

At the same time, the enthusiastic essays from the pens of Anglo-Saxons art critics ranging from John Ruskin to Bernard Berenson influenced collectors' taste abroad, and a great number of early Sieneese works were sold abroad, to museums and private collectors alike, especially in England and the United States, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at the

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<sup>100</sup> See Merzenich 1995 and esp. Loseries 1998 (including descriptions and documents of the purchases).

<sup>101</sup> [Campana] 1858; Thiébaud 1987; for the Bertinelli collection, see Chapter II.1.3 below.

<sup>102</sup> Tammaro 1986, 20: "*La cittadinanza non avverti ancora l'importanza della galleria d'arte dell'Istituto. Sono registrate visite in un intero anno: soltanto di 65 persone.*"

<sup>103</sup> A former *soprintendente di beni culturali* of Siena, Piero Torriti described what he heard as an adolescent from the parishioner of Petroio in the Sieneese countryside: the cleric recounted how in his childhood the parish priest of that time gave him and his companions pieces of wood cut from an altarpiece by Taddeo di Bartolo to play with until only the Madonna in the centre remained (Torriti 1986, 61; Torriti 1990, 7).

beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>104</sup> Many collectors were connoisseurs and historians of art and culture (the painter and connoisseur Charles Fairfax Murray; Bernard Berenson, Robert Langton Douglas, Frederick Mason Perkins, the scholar of literature and culture Piero Misciattelli), most of whom also engaged in art dealing (Murray, Berenson, Douglas, for some time also Perkins and his wife Lucy Olcott). Sienese painting of the first half of Trecento gained great admiration; the appreciation of the Quattrocento came somewhat in retard. For the latter, Berenson's apologetic note – written with regard to one of his earlier, erroneous attributions – is of interest:

“For, indeed, one of the curiosities in the history of taste is the immense time it has taken for Quattrocento Sienese painting to come to its own. Doubtless the circumstance that so little of its product got abroad had something to do with it, since an art that is too home-keeping seldom becomes that precipitate of foreign appreciation, a *patrimonio artistico*. A certain number of us, it is true, frequented Siena itself, but we were blinded by the once vital teaching of Winckelmann, Goethe and Burckhardt, who allow no place to any fifteenth century painter except Ghirlandaio, and by the taste that found exotic satisfaction in the costumed inanities of a Pintoricchio or the meretricious loveliness of a Sodoma. These two favourites barred the way, but there also was a physical barrier, the squalid gloom and the marrow-chilling cold of the gallery in which so many of the Neroccios and Cecco di Gregorios and Matteos were jailed – and for that matter, still are.”<sup>105</sup>

Berenson was, of course, arguably the most important figure whose art historical research, extensive correspondence and photographic exchanges, collecting and dealing activities contributed most to the rise of demand for Sienese Quattrocento paintings among collectors.

Nothing indicates better this rise than the appearance of Sienese workshops specialized in forgeries, headed by Icilio Federico Joni (1866-1946). This talented forger was active from about the 1890s but created his most sophisticated imitations between about 1910 and 1930. He founded a proper school for forging – or, in his view, recreating – early Sienese art; his students and followers included Umberto Giunti (1886-1970), known before his identification as the “falsario in calcinaccio”, Bruno Marzi (1908-1981), and others. Joni's works found their way especially to the American art market and deceived experts like the young Berenson. Public feeling was ambivalent for this activity: the forgers were praised for their ability to paint in the antique manner; there was civic pride in reviving the old Sienese

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<sup>104</sup> On the image of Siena in Anglo-Saxon culture of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, see Civai, Colagrande, and Petrioli ed. 1996; esp. Pier Giacomo Petrioli, “Da Lord Lindsay a Bernard Berenson: la pittura senese nella storia dell'arte anglosassone,” 39-51.

<sup>105</sup> Berenson 1918, 62-63.

painting tradition; antipathy was palpable against foreigners who were ridiculed especially for believing that they could purchase early Sieneese works for disproportionately low prices; yet also scandalized opinions about the dishonesty of the activity were voiced.<sup>106</sup>

Changing public attitude towards early paintings in Siena is clearly perceptible in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Count Fabio Bargagli Petrucci (1875-1939), a lawyer, *soprintendente* from 1905, and professor of art history at the Scuola Superiore di Architettura (a newly established part of Istituto), wrote in one of his letters: “*da qualche tempo pervengono a questo Istituto offerte di quadri e di dipinti in tavole e a fresco in un numero notevole perché privati proprietari o i mercanti di oggetti d’arte si sono persuasi a offrire dipinti alla nostra Galleria, prima di venderli fuori Siena o a stranieri amatori.*”<sup>107</sup> Under Bargagli Petrucci, the “Società degli Amici dei Monumenti” was founded in 1903, and the *soprintendente* took vital steps for the protection of artistic heritage.<sup>108</sup>

What undoubtedly did most to raise local public awareness about the values of old Sieneese art was an exhibition of enormous success held in 1904 in the Palazzo Pubblico, organized – together with prominent Sieneese intellectuals – by Corrado Ricci, the director of the Florentine galleries.<sup>109</sup> The display of an unprecedented number of Sieneese paintings, sculpture, furniture, armour, architectural fragments, works of the decorative arts from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, accompanied by plaster casts and photographs, had an enormous impact. As Enzo Carli noted, however, the increased appreciation of early Sieneese art paradoxically contributed to their further dispersal.<sup>110</sup> In same year, the English public could already view an exhibition organized by the art historian Robert Langton Douglas at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in London, entitled “Pictures of the school of Siena.”<sup>111</sup>

<sup>106</sup> For essential literature on modern forgeries of early Sieneese panel paintings, see Mazzoni 1988, Mazzoni 1994, Mazzoni 1995, and esp. Mazzoni 2001 and Mazzoni ed. 2004, all with previous bibl. Joni was proud of his art and did not see himself as a forger. He published his memoirs while he was still active, in 1934. At the same time, public protest followed his election as President of the Istituto d’Arte after 1920, as the public accused him of selling works of art “*e altri episodi poco più chiari*” and wanted to keep the school free from “unworthy men.” (Tammaro 1986, 29). The forgeries were sometimes not *ex novo* but created by completely repainting old panels in a bad state of conservation.

<sup>107</sup> Quoted by Tammaro 1986, 24.

<sup>108</sup> Fagnoli 1988.

<sup>109</sup> Ricci 1904. On the exhibition, see Carli 1989-1990, 6-8; Camporeale 2004, Camporeale 2008. Photographs of the exhibition were taken by the firms Brogi and Alinari. Special numbers of the *Bulletino Senese di Storia Patria* entitled *Arte antica senese* accompanied the exhibition (nos. 1-3 of the year 1904), including articles on Simone Martini, Sano di Pietro, Domenico di Bartolo, and Matteo di Giovanni.

<sup>110</sup> Carli 1989-90, 7-8, with a list of examples. “*Purtroppo la mostra del ’04, se contribuì a far conoscere e come suol dirsi, a valorizzare il patrimonio artistico senese in accordo col gusto dei cosiddetti “primitivi” diffuso in quel periodo da numerosi studi, ne favorì l’esodo suscitando le brame dei mercanti e dei collezionisti e inducendo molti proprietari ad alienare le opere di destinazione domestica ereditate dai loro forse lontano padri.*” (p. 8).

<sup>111</sup> Douglas ed. 1904. Robert Langton Douglas wrote books on Sieneese history (1902) and art history (1933), and was a dealer. Later he became the director of the National Gallery of Ireland. Cf. Camporeale 2008.

In the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, systematic scholarly research on early Sieneese paintings began in earnest. In Siena, Vittorio Lusini, Alessandro Lisini, and Pèleo Bacci continued the strong local tradition of archival research.<sup>112</sup> F. Mason Perkins, Raimond Van Marle, Giacomo De Nicola and others published endless series of articles about rediscovered early panel paintings in Siena and its territory on the pages of the local journals *Rassegna d'Arte Senese* (1905-1926) and *La Diana* (1926-1934). Historical studies appeared in the *Miscellanea Storica Senese* (1893-98) and the *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria* (1894 to the present). Emil Jacobsen published three essential studies on the holdings of the Sieneese painting gallery (1907, 1908, 1910); Luigi Dami prepared a complete and updated new catalogue of its nearly one thousand works (1924),<sup>113</sup> which was followed by Cesare Brandi's scholarly catalogue of 1933 on occasion of the opening of the Pinacoteca in its new locations. A large, expatriate Anglo-Saxon community living in Siena and Florence, including Robert Langton Douglas, Robert Hobart Cust, Edward Hutton, Lucy Olcott, Bernard Berenson, F. Mason Perkins, and the historian William Heywood contributed in a fundamental degree to the knowledge of many aspects of early Sieneese history and culture, and to the rediscovery and rehabilitation of many early Sieneese artists. Bernard Berenson's writings alone – especially his oeuvre lists published in 1897 and, in subsequent, amplified editions in 1932, 1936, 1968 – played an essential role in the establishment of the works of early Sieneese masters among the highly valued Italian schools.

Accordingly, the appreciation – and price – of the Sieneese primitives grew in a dazzling manner and continue to grow ever since. In 1931, Piero Misciattelli noted: “*Le tavole dei trecentisti e quattrocentisti senesi che fino a venti anni fa si potevano acquistare in Siena nelle botteghe dei rigattieri per poche centinaia di lire, oggi si scambiano tra i collezionisti stranieri a prezzi fantastici.*”<sup>114</sup> The realization of the value of the Sieneese primitives unfortunately came too late to preserve the major part of the city's rich heritage in this field. At the time of Misciattelli's statement almost a century had passed since the majority of the pictures now found in Hungary – those collected by Johann Anton Ramboux – left Italy.

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<sup>112</sup> See the obituaries by Antonio Lombardi, “Vittorio Lusini,” *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*, 30, 1925, 108-114; R. Langton Douglas, “Alessandro Lisini,” *The Burlington magazine*, 91, 1949, 143; G. C. “Pèleo Bacci,” *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*, S. III, 9, 1950, 222-228.

<sup>113</sup> Dami 1924; Torriti 1986, 65.

<sup>114</sup> Misciattelli 1931, 237.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY SIENESE PAINTINGS IN HUNGARY: A HISTORY OF COLLECTING

#### **1. *The Origins – Introduction***

The early Sieneze works now preserved in the Museum of Fine Art in Budapest and the Christian Museum in Esztergom were acquired from various sources, but the largest single contribution came from Arnold Ipolyi (1823-1886), canon of Eger, then bishop of Besztercebánya (present-day Banská Bystrica, Slovakia), and later of (Nagy)Várad (present-day Oradea, Rumania), who bought about two thirds of his Italian – and nearly all his Sieneze – paintings in 1867 in Cologne, at the auction of the extraordinarily rich collection of the painter and restorer Johann Anton Ramboux.

These were the years of formation of both museums that now house the paintings. The roots of the Museum of Fine Arts (Szépművészeti Múzeum) lead back to princely collection of the Esterházy family, which was exhibited at the Academy in Pest from 1865 on and bought by the Hungarian state in 1870-71. With the purchase of the Esterházy Collection, the National Picture Gallery (Országos Képtár) was established.

Its formation coincided with Arnold Ipolyi's nomination as bishop of Besztercebánya in 1871. The collector, one of the most progressively thinking prelates and scholars of his day equally dedicated to the Church and his homeland, decided not to take his entire collection with him to his new seat. He donated the best sixty works of his collection to the National Picture Gallery in 1872, which included about twenty Sieneze paintings dating before 1420 and eleven of the works discussed here. He kept the rest of his rich art collection with himself until his death in 1886. After various vicissitudes, it was acquired by the Christian Museum (Keresztény Múzeum) in Esztergom in 1920. Among the paintings, sculptures, works of the decorative arts and other precious objects, there were thirty-eight Sieneze paintings, twelve of which date from the period discussed here, 1420-1520.

János Simor (1813-1891), the founder of the Christian Museum, began collecting on a large scale in the same year when Ipolyi enriched his collection with Ramboux's paintings: in 1867, when he became Archbishop of Esztergom. In 1875, he opened his collection to the public. He enlarged it significantly in 1878 through the purchase of the entire collection of a Roman canon, Raffaele Bertinelli, which counted over sixty early Italian paintings, including one Trecento Sieneze work and four later ones included here. Simor seems to have acquired

one single Sieneese work that does not come from the Bertinelli collection: Giovanni di Paolo's monumental *Nativity* (Cat. 11). Simor legally bequeathed his collection to the Cathedral of Esztergom in 1887 and named it Christian Museum.

After the works acquired by János Simor (including Raffaele Bertinelli's pictures) and by Arnold Ipolyi (mostly pieces previously owned by Johann Anton Ramboux), there were no further acquisitions of Quattrocento Sieneese paintings in Esztergom. The Budapest museum acquired four further paintings: in 1895, Károly Pulszky, Director of the National Picture Gallery, bought a Matteo di Giovanni (Cat. 21) and a Madonna by Sano di Pietro and his workshop (Cat. 5). The following year, in 1896, the foundation of the Museum of Fine Arts was decreed. The new institution incorporated the National Picture Gallery and was opened in 1906. After this time, only two Quattrocento Sieneese works were added to the collection, both by Bernardino Fungai (Cat. 27, 28).

The overwhelming majority of the Sieneese works in Hungary thus came to their present place of conservation not individually but as parts of larger collections put together by private collectors in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Each of these collections reflects their owner's attitude toward, interest in, and appreciation of early Italian painting. In some cases, a special appreciation of early Sieneese paintings is evident; in others, their inclusion seems casual. An examination of the differences and similarities in the collecting habits of these early collectors, most of them ecclesiastic intellectuals, reveals a great deal about the way these works were perceived in the time when they found their way into private collections.

The differences contribute mostly to our understanding of the individual views of the early owners. Equally interesting but far more important for the general understanding of the reception of early Italian – including Sieneese – painting are the common points perceptible in the guiding principles of their collecting. These are primarily based on the collectors' religious and aesthetic views, in some cases combined with an admirable historical and scholarly interest. The collectors I will discuss – Johann Anton Ramboux, Arnold Ipolyi, Raffaele Bertinelli, and János Simor – shared a precocious interest in early Italian sacred painting, and, as we shall see, most of them were profoundly influenced by contemporary Nazarene painting which they saw as the heir to, and the direct continuation of, the pure Christian spirit of early Italian art. Importantly, in many cases the collectors' predilection for early Italian religious paintings went hand in hand with a desire to commission and possess works by the Nazarene painters. The latter, furthermore, often had an active role as advisors, intermediates, and experts in the formation of the early Italian art galleries under examination.

## 1.1 The Ramboux Collection

Johann Anton Ramboux (Trier, 1790 – Cologne, 1866) is well-known to art historical studies as an artist, restorer, and especially as a collector and an indefatigable documenter of early Italian art.<sup>115</sup> Ramboux studied painting with Jacques Louis David in Paris (1807/9-12) and at the Academy in Munich (1815-16), before he went on his first Italian trip between 1818 and 1822. During this time he stayed mainly in Rome and became closely associated with the *Deutschrömer*, the German Nazarene artists living as a Christian community in S. Isidoro in Rome. Ramboux soon abandoned his Classicist training and exhibited together with the Nazarenes, not only his own paintings but, remarkably, also copies he made of early Italian masters. Before returning to Germany, he visited some parts of Italy, including Siena.

He spent the decade 1822-32 in his hometown, Trier, and then undertook another, long trip to Italy, which lasted from 1832 to 1842. He dedicated this time entirely to the study of old Italian art (panel paintings, frescos, mosaics) and travelled widely all over the Italian peninsula, especially in Tuscany (Siena, Volterra, San Gimignano, Florence, Arezzo), Umbria (Assisi, Orvieto, Montefalco, Spoleto, Spello, Perugia, Castel Fiorentino), Marche (Gubbio, Urbino), Rome and its surroundings (Subiaco, Orvieto). He studied, copied, and purchased paintings, almost exclusively the works of early Italian masters, called “alt-christliche Kunst”. He executed over 2000 drawings, among them many *Durchzeichnungen* or tracings<sup>116</sup> (now mostly in the Städel Museum in Frankfurt) and water colour copies (now Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf) of old masters,<sup>117</sup> and amassed an enormous collection of early Italian paintings dating mostly from between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. He was especially fond of Sieneese art, and became one of the best *conoscitori* of this school. The great majority of his collection of old Italian masters, counting about 400 pieces, was Sieneese paintings.<sup>118</sup> Of outstanding interest were 32 painted book covers of the registers of the Sieneese financial offices (so-called *biccherna* panels), acquired, as Ramboux himself reported, mostly from old attics and at the street corners of Siena<sup>119</sup> (five of these are now in Budapest), a series of

<sup>115</sup> For essential literature on Johann Anton Ramboux and his collection, see Coor 1954, 1956, and 1959; Ziemke 1963; *Johann Anton Ramboux* 1966; Gage 1968; Ziemke, 1969; Cséfalvay 1989, 103-104; Kier and Zehnder ed. 1995, esp. 578-89 and Merzenich 1995; Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 536-605 (a virtual reconstruction of Ramboux’s collection, with previous bibl.).

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Ramboux 1852-58. For his copies of Sieneese miniatures (Sano di Pietro), cf. Ciampolini ed. ca. 1989, 97.

<sup>117</sup> On these, see esp. Ziemke 1969.

<sup>118</sup> Provenance indications in the catalogue that Ramboux compiled in 1862 (Ramboux 1862), where provided, record about a hundred works from Siena (and its environs: San Gimignano, Sinalunga), while only a few have a provenance from other places (Florence, Rome, Assisi, Gubbio, Castel Bernazone). Ramboux even acquired some Sieneese works in Florence (Benedetto di Bindo’s *Crucifixion*, Ramboux coll., no. 61 and now MFA, inv. 18; Circle of Vecchietta: *Conferral of the Flag of Siena*, cf. Cat. 8.).

<sup>119</sup> Ramboux’s letter to Passavant (Ziemke 1969, 288, n. 8); Ramboux 1862, 58; respectively.

figures by Simone Martini, and many parts of the first extensive hagiographical cycle about St. Catherine of Siena, painted by Giovanni di Paolo.<sup>120</sup> Ramboux's collection also included some post-Byzantine icons (some of them acquired in Siena), Florentine High Renaissance works, and Sieneese Seicento paintings. Despite existing bans on the exportation of artistic heritage, he succeeded in transporting his collection, in several parts, to Germany before the end of his stay in Italy (hitherto discovered exportation permissions date from 1838-42).<sup>121</sup>

From 1843 Ramboux lived in Cologne, curating the municipal Wallraf museum. In 1854 he undertook a journey of pilgrimage to Jerusalem, recording his impressions of landscapes, architecture and statues in sketches. By the time of his death in 1866, he owned also early German – especially Cologne – and Netherlandish paintings, and *Kunstgegenstände*: antiquities, archaeological finds, coins and decorative arts (glass, statues, embroidery, ivory). He also continued collecting early Italian paintings after his return to Cologne.<sup>122</sup>

Ramboux cared for his collection in ways exceptional for his time. His training as a painter and his profound knowledge of the stylistic, technical, and structural properties of early Italian paintings allowed him to restore his paintings with such historical accuracy that it often takes quite a bit of effort to distinguish his interventions from the original parts of the works. He studied his paintings from an art historical point of view with remarkable results. His qualifications as a painter and restorer differentiated him from many other religious collectors of early Italian art, who often viewed and collected contemporary Christian art with the same interest as they looked upon late Gothic and early Renaissance art. Ramboux shared this view to a considerable degree, and, as a deeply Christian artist, he worked in the Nazarene style all his life, but collected, restored, and catalogued exclusively old masters, with the interest of a scholar. While other collectors of his time were commissioning copies of Raphael, he acquired old copies of works of the great artist (nos. 255, 256, 258, 375-76,

<sup>120</sup> On his Sieneese collection, see Ramboux's letter written to Passavant in 1838 (Frankfurter Stadtbibliothek, Fasc. V, no. 181, published by Ziemke, 1969, 287-288 n. 8.). The collector remarks: "*Diese Bilder sind aber ohne Ansehen, und alle mehr oder weniger einer restauration bedürfen.*"

<sup>121</sup> Merzenich 1995. It should be added that apparently Ramboux did not wish to keep all his paintings but use some of them for regaining some money spent on his Italian stay. He wrote to Passavant: "*da sie [the paintings] doch einmal die Reise nach Deutschland zu machen haben, und vielleicht sich auch dort einige Liebhaber treffen wo ich selbe oder auch theilweise absetzen kann um einstweilig wieder zu meinen Auslagen zu gelangen*" (Ziemke 1969, 288 n. 8). Ramboux also writes here that he knows his money will be spent for the (art historical) project on which he is working.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. [Ramboux] 1867, 68-73; Coor 1959, 76 n. 2; Kier and Zehnder 1998, 595-598. The auction catalogue of Ramboux's collection from 1867 includes several Italian paintings that are not listed in the catalogue of old Italian masters compiled in 1862 by Ramboux himself. Some of these are documented to have been acquired in or after 1862 (Kier and Zehnder 1998, 596, no. 436, 597, no. 448; 598, no. 456); many others may have been acquired after 1862 or just missing from the 1862 list.

whereabouts unknown) and copied Raphael personally.<sup>123</sup> The very idea of the copy must have had a different meaning to him: a historical document that aided the study of art. On the other hand, most of his contemporaries acquired copies of great masters primarily for their aesthetic qualities and often valued them more than the original works of little-known masters.

It has rightly been pointed out what an important role the artists of the Romantic movement had in the development in art history as a discipline.<sup>124</sup> In search of a closer understanding of the art of the “Italian primitives”, Ramboux undertook serious art historical studies, reading from Giorgio Vasari to contemporary German scholarship on late medieval and early Renaissance art history, especially Carl Friedrich von Rumohr (1785-1843) and Johann David Passavant (1787-1861), with both of whom he had close personal contact. It was Rumohr, a connoisseur and archivist of medieval and Renaissance Italian art and a pioneer of documentary-based art history writing, who introduced Ramboux to early Italian painting; Ramboux in fact carried out illustrations for Rumohr’s researches.<sup>125</sup> Like Ramboux, both Rumohr and Passavant had close relations with the Roman Nazarenes and purchased early Italian paintings. Passavant’s career shows further parallel features to Ramboux’s: early in his life he too was a painter and later engaged in art history studies, becoming the inspector of the Städel in Frankfurt.<sup>126</sup> Regarding Sieneese art, Ramboux was closely familiar with the best available printed study on Sieneese art of the time, Guglielmo Della Valle’s *Lettere Sanesi*.<sup>127</sup>

Ramboux sought to make his knowledge known to the public. He undertook the publication of a series of lithographs based on his own drawings made in Italy and on the works in his own collection.<sup>128</sup> Among the series of published lithographs were those of thirty Madonna-paintings from his own collection (*Trostspiegel in den Widerwärtigkeiten des Lebens. Dreißig Marienbilder zur lauretanischen Litanei nach Gemälden italienischer Meister des XIV.-XVI. Jahrhunderts...*, 1865), which sometimes constitute the first visual

<sup>123</sup> Ramboux 1967, V. In all likelihood, the (now untraceable) old copies owned by Ramboux are not “copies” at all but works by the school and followers of Raphael.

<sup>124</sup> Gage 1968, 637; Ziemke 1969, esp. 255.

<sup>125</sup> Gage 1968, 638. Hans-Joachim Ziemke, “Ramboux und die frühe italienische Kunst, in Johann Anton Ramboux 1966, 17-26, esp. 17.

<sup>126</sup> For Passavant, cf. Hans-Joachim Ziemke, “Lebensläufe nazarenischer [sic] Künstler”, in Gallwitz ed. 1977, 389-399, esp. 395; on Rumohr and Passavant, see Waetzoldt, I (1921), 292-318; II (1924), 14-29, respectively, and Loseries 1998, 142-43.

<sup>127</sup> Della Valle 1782-86.

<sup>128</sup> See Ramboux 1852-58; 1860 and 1865; and *Johann Anton Ramboux* 1966-67, 61-62, cat. 119-122, with further bibl.

documentation of the works in Hungary (Figs. 3/3; 6/3; 15/3).<sup>129</sup> The publication of the series was interrupted by his death; among his bequest, further lithographs prepared for publication were found and auctioned together with his artistic heritage.<sup>130</sup>

In 1862, he exhibited his old Italian paintings in the recently renewed building of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum and published a catalogue of his entire collection, which by that time numbered 391 works.<sup>131</sup> In the foreword of this “*systematisch geordnetes Verzeichniss*”, he stated the years of his collecting (1818-22, 1832-42), called attention to his attempt at distinguishing certain attributions from uncertain ones by the use of asterisks, and gave the sources for his explanatory notes that follow the individual works: he either copied information personally on site or he took them over from Giorgio Vasari and other art historians. The catalogue is organized along several principles. It is primarily chronological, and within the chronological divisions, different schools are sometimes grouped together. Paintings of specific function – portable altarpieces and their fragments, Siense book covers – are listed separately at the end, followed by two groups which Ramboux apparently considered of minor importance. A *Nachtrag* lists works with a Christian subject from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries; that is, postdating the early periods preferred by the collector, and an *Abhang* to which works with a profane subject were relegated. The individual entries include an attribution, a detailed description of the subject matter, the dimensions, technical notes and often provenance information which is usually restricted to the name of the town from where the work was acquired.

After Ramboux’s death in October 1866, his collection was prepared for auction. It took place in May 1867 at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz) in Cologne, and was accompanied by a sale catalogue based on Ramboux’s own catalogue of 1862. The auction catalogue grouped separately the 391 old masters included in the 1862 catalogue as Part I; the rest of the old masters not listed in 1862 as well as Ramboux’s library, his own works, drawings, tracings, watercolours, miniatures, prints, and else appear in Part II. The art journal *Kunstchronik*, founded a year earlier, announced the prospective, extraordinary occasion in a short, and then in a more substantial announcement.<sup>132</sup> The unparalleled collection was broken up: Arnold Ipolyi acquired by far the largest part of it; other parts were purchased by the Rev. G. W. van

<sup>129</sup> Ramboux 1865. The author of the captions to the prints may not have been Ramboux since these sometimes do not match Ramboux’s attributions and datings.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. *Johann Anton Ramboux* 1966-67, 92, cat. 122.

<sup>131</sup> Ramboux 1862. This catalogue, together with the sale catalogue of his collection ([Ramboux] 1867), remains the base for the reconstruction of the Ramboux collection. The measures used in these catalogues are Rhenish (Prussian) units of length: foot: ’ = 31.385 cm, inch (1/12 of the foot): ” = 2.615 cm, and line (1/12 of the inch) ''' = 2.179 mm (cf. Ramboux 1987, p. II, no. 11; Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 606).

<sup>132</sup> *Kunstchronik* 1867, no. 11, April 12, 95; *Kunstchronik* 1867, no. 12, April 26, 97-98.

Heukelum for Utrecht and by the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum (many of the latter were later deaccessioned). Many works went to private collectors and dealers. Some of these have found their way to public collections, while a large number of them remain in private collections and are mostly untraceable.

Johann Anton Ramboux's collection was one of the most outstanding private collections of early Italian art ever assembled. It rightly deserved the attention of scholars, including attempts of its virtual reconstruction, to which I shall return in the chapter on the history of scholarship (Chapter III).

## 1.2 The Ipolyi Collection

The erudite prelate Arnold Ipolyi, born Stummer (Disznós, Hont county, 1823 – Várad, 1886), contributed more than anyone else in Hungary to the acquisition of Siense paintings.<sup>133</sup> Ipolyi was a versatile scholar, a member of the Academy (correspondent from 1858, regular member from 1867), member of the literary circle Kisfaludy Society (from 1867), vice-president of the Szent István Társulat publishing house (1869-72), president of the Hungarian Historical Society (1878-86); chair of the National Hungarian Association of Fine Arts (1880-85), a historian, and one of the founders of ethnography, medieval archaeology, and art history in Hungary. He left an enormous scholarly heritage that has been the object of many specialized studies. Among his major scholarly works are the *Magyar mythologia* (Hungarian Mythology) about the folklore and pagan religion of the Hungarians (1854), many pioneering studies on the art and architecture of medieval Hungary, various historical and literary contributions on the Hungarian Middle Ages and on the Counter-Reformation period, and publications of sources.

Ipolyi was a seminarist in the *Emericanum* in Pozsony (present-day Bratislava, Slovakia), and then studied philosophy (the humanities) in the Archiepiscopal College in Nagyszombat (present-day Trnava, Slovakia) and theology at the *Pazmaneum* in Vienna (1836-44). In Vienna he also attended lectures in history and palaeography at the university, and it was in this period he began writing and changed his surname to Ipolyi. The major influences on his intellectual and art-historical development were the personal contacts he had in Vienna in the 1840s with the botanist and philologist István László Endlicher, with the historian Aurél Ignác Fessler,<sup>134</sup> and, in the 1850s, with Rudolph Eitelberger and Gustav Heider (especially as regards the concern for historic art and monument preservation and the survey of medieval monuments),<sup>135</sup> as well as his readings, among which Viollet-le-Duc (relating to the appreciation of the Gothic and the restoration of historical monuments), Franz Theodor Kugler (for the idea of the primacy of medieval art over the High Renaissance which was considered as the beginning of a degeneration period), Karl Schnaase (on the history of Italian art and Hegel's philosophy), Wilhelm Lübke (on medieval architecture), Jacob and

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<sup>133</sup> For essential bibl. on Arnold Ipolyi, see Gerevich 1923; Lepold 1930; Cséfalvay and Ugrin ed. 1989 (with previous bibl.); Verő 1997; Végh 2004; Katalin Sinkó, "Arnold Ipolyi" in Markója and Bardoly ed. 2006, 51-72 (with extensive previous bibl.).

<sup>134</sup> On Ipolyi's relations with Endlicher and Fessler, see Katalin Sinkó, "Ipolyi Arnold" in Markója and Bardoly ed. 2006, 51-72, esp. 56-58.

<sup>135</sup> In 1855, Ipolyi was nominated a conservator of historical monuments by the Viennese Central-Commission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der Baudenkmale and systematically studied monuments in several parts of Hungary.

Wilhelm Grimm (for their methodology and interest in folklore) were determining. To Ipolyi's intellectual development – especially to the development of his interest in history – contributed his experience as house tutor with the families of Baron Alajos Mednyánszky (1844-47) and later of Count Lipót Pálffy-Daun in Stomfa (today Stupava, Slovakia) (from 1849 to the first half of the 1850s).<sup>136</sup>

Ipolyi was ordained priest in 1847 and soon afterwards he became the parish priest of Zohor (today Zohor, Slovakia) near Stomfa (1849-60), in which time he already began collecting. Between 1860 and 1863, he was a parishioner in Törökszentmiklós in Central-East Hungary. Between 1863 and 1871 he was elevated to the position of Canon of Eger, which provided him with a much higher income. In this period, especially after 1869, he could already afford long trips abroad, “visiting museums and church monuments from Naples to London”,<sup>137</sup> and collecting a large variety of paintings and works of the decorative arts, with special attention to liturgical objects. The collection had almost exclusively a late medieval focus, and included Italian, German, Austrian, and Netherlandish works of art acquired from a variety of sources.<sup>138</sup> Ipolyi had a keen interest in local art as well. He travelled especially in west and north Hungary to collect surviving specimens of the medieval art of the Hungarian Kingdom. He owned paintings and reliefs (altarpiece wings) from the surroundings of Kassa and the area of Szepes and Sáros counties, but acquired works from Vas county (West-Hungary) as well.<sup>139</sup>

On 23 May, 1867, Ipolyi acquired the largest part of the Ramboux collection at the auction in Cologne. It has not yet been examined on what basis Ipolyi chose the more than one hundred pieces. A systematic overview of his acquisitions suggests that he primarily sought to obtain a large number and, especially, a large variety of works, both as far as artists and iconography are concerned. Although he acquired about the third of Ramboux's Italian collection and a few German paintings, his financial means were not unlimited,<sup>140</sup> and Ipolyi

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<sup>136</sup> The aristocrat Alajos Mednyánszky (1784-1844) had a strong interest in history and is best known for his travelogue in the valley of the Vág in north-west Hungary (*Festői utazások*), which has a historical-topographical-ethnographical focus. Ipolyi profited much from organizing the rich library and archives of the baron who died shortly after Ipolyi's arrival to the family.

<sup>137</sup> Lepold 1930, 7.

<sup>138</sup> Ipolyi acquired Austrian paintings from the Lemann collection in Vienna and was in connection with auction houses: Heberle in Cologne, Van Huetten brothers in Amsterdam, Helbing in Nürnberg, Drey, Spengel, Heilbronner and Rosenthal in Munich, Haring and Pollak in Salzburg, Fürst and Egger in Vienna. He was helped in the formation of his collection by the Canons Bock and Schnütgen in Cologne (Lepold 1930, 7-8).

<sup>139</sup> [Fraknói] 1871, 373.

<sup>140</sup> It is interesting to note that Ramboux's heirs wished to respect the collector's desire to keep, if possible, his entire old Italian masters collection together, as communicated by the auction house ([Ramboux] 1867, p. VIII.). Thus it could have been acquired in its entirety before the auction if someone with sufficient means had signalled their wish to do so.

also seems to have passed on the highest quality, thus presumably the most expensive, pieces. He bought many works with narrative subjects interesting for religious iconography, a few icons (one with a provenance from the southern areas of historical Hungary, which must have been the reason for its acquisition<sup>141</sup>) and five biccherna panels. There are no paintings with a profane subject matter (except a Sienese historical scene then attributed to Masolino, which he certainly chose, as a later description of the collection suggests,<sup>142</sup> because of Masolino's historical relation to Hungary, Cat. 8) and no Italian work dating after ca. 1500 (whereas there is German epitaph dating from 1515, Ramboux coll. no. 522, bought perhaps because this art genre was unknown in Italy). Among his most notable acquisitions were a fresco fragment of a female head often attributed to Giotto (MFA, inv. 30), two prophets by Bartolomeo Bulgarini (CM, invv. 55.142-43), a Madonna by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (MFA, inv. 22), and lateral from Spinello Aretino's Olivetan altarpiece (MFA, inv. 36), Sassetta's *St. Thomas Aquinas* (CM, Cat. 1), Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio's *Virgin* (CM, Cat. 3), Fra Angelico(?)'s *Scenes from the Life of the Early Hermits* (MFA, inv. 7), the *Two Angels* attributed to Matteo di Giovanni (MFA, Cat. 25).

A clear pattern that emerges regarding his choices is that, with very few exceptions (Cat. 16), he bought only one of the many series of companion pieces offered (cf. Segna di Bonaventura's *St. Lucy* (MFA, inv. 14), Spinello's already mentioned work, a *St. Lawrence* by the Master of the Magdalene (MFA, inv. 15), Paolo Schiavo's *Death of the Virgin* (CM, inv. 55.162); a predella fragment attributed to Davide Ghirlandaio (MFA, inv. 41),<sup>143</sup> and the works discussed here in Cat. 4, 12, 13, 16, 18, 32, which gives the impression that he wanted to secure the largest possible variety of artists and subjects, as opposed to possessing complete series (as Ramboux had preferred). This approach resulted in the breaking up of many series of fragments originally belonging to the same complex, so that many early Italian paintings now in Budapest and Esztergom have companion pieces scattered all over the world.

<sup>141</sup> This is no. 15 showing *Sts. Cosmas and Damian*, now preserved in the Christian Museum (inv. 56.582), with an Italian inscription on its reverse: "*Questa Pittura / Viene d'Hungaria bassa é della guerra / Turcica & e una preda d'una chiesa / dei Grecy vicino à Belgrad, apportato del Sig. Colonello Volkamá. / Leggesi nell'itinerario della Persia & Moscovia descritta p. Oleario Lib. 3, Cap. 26.*" (cf. Ramboux 1862, 3).

<sup>142</sup> [Fraknói] 1871, 370.

<sup>143</sup> See, respectively, Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 545, nos. 38-41; 553-55, nos. 83-87; 556, nos. 94-95; 593-94, nos. 372-74; 571, nos. 184-186. An outstanding pinnacle piece by Duccio or his circle representing the *Prophet Jeremiah* in Esztergom (inv. 55.134) was wrongly included in this reconstruction of Ramboux's collection (cf. Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 550). It is a work that was purchased for the Esztergom gallery with the Bertinelli collection in 1878.

Most of Ramboux's pictures were not very large, for practical reasons of transportability, which pre-defined Ipolyi's possibilities at this auction.<sup>144</sup> Except for the monumental panels by Spinello and by Guidoccio Cozzarelli (which Ramboux shipped from Italy already conveniently broken into four fragments, cf. Cat. 26), the works Ipolyi bought are rather small. What is remarkable is that Ipolyi, a worthy intellectual heir as an owner to Ramboux, did not object to their nature as former parts of larger complexes and did not seek to mask the frequently irregular forms of the pieces with rectangular frames, as many of his contemporaries did who thought of their works in terms of "gallery pictures" (Raffaele Bertinelli's paintings being a case in point)<sup>145</sup>.

Between 1869 and 1871, Ipolyi was the Rector of the Central Seminary of Pest. In this new position, he introduced the teaching of art history and archaeology<sup>146</sup> and exhibited his paintings in the hallway of the Seminary, making them accessible not only for the seminarists but also for the general public.<sup>147</sup> An important document from this time is a description of his exhibition, unsigned but written by the cleric and historian Vilmos Fraknói, and published in 1871 in the newspaper *Pesti Napló* and the journal *Új Magyar Sion*.<sup>148</sup> Fraknói states that his report is based on a personal guided tour by Ipolyi, and that his purpose is to give a preliminary introduction to the collection until the "fully numbered and carefully documented inventory, the complete *catalogus raisonné*" is prepared by the owner himself. (Unfortunately, this promised catalogue does not survive. It was either never completed, or destroyed, or – hopefully – still lies hidden in some archive.) Fraknói emphasizes the special value of the collection, "a sort of *Museum Christianum*", for containing works from the earliest periods of Italian painting, rare elsewhere in European collections.

The installation of the more than 150 medieval paintings was housed in a wide corridor and began on the right side with some historical-didactic copies of the earliest periods of paintings (wall paintings in Pompei and Herculaneum, mosaics from the Byzantine empire and Ravenna, early-Christian catacomb paintings), then proceeded in a more-or-less chronological order. Post-Byzantine icons (called "Byzantine-Russian") were followed by Due- and Trecento Italian works, first the Florentines (including the famous Giottoesque fresco

<sup>144</sup> The factor of transportability was already noted by Gertrude Coor (1959, 75), who pointed out that fragments from subsidiary parts of altarpieces (pinnacles, pilasters fragments, predellas) were especially dominant in Ramboux's collection of Quattrocento paintings.

<sup>145</sup> Most of Bertinelli's pictures retain their 19<sup>th</sup>-century frame. A typical example of "rectangulating" a work by its frame is Pesellino's *Crucifixion* (CM, inv. 55.184), originally a complex-shaped altarpiece pinnacle.

<sup>146</sup> Gerevich 1923, 15-16.

<sup>147</sup> Lepold 1930, 8; Pogány and Bacher ed. 1956, 21.

<sup>148</sup> [Fraknói] 1871. Both Wlassics and Kammerer (1897, 139) and Lepold (1930, 10) expressly name Fraknói as the author of this article.

fragment from the lower church of San Francesco in Assisi), then the Sieneſe. Sassetta’s *St. Thomas* (attributed on the baſis of Ramboux’s opinion to Traini or Gentile da Fabriano, cf. Cat. 1), Sano di Pietro’s *Salome* (Cat. 4), and the *Conferral of the Balzana* from Vecchietta’s circle but attributed to Masolino (Cat. 8) were included among the latter, in apparent unawareneſs of their actual date. The fifteenth century-section is recorded by the reporter in no particular order, mentioning works grouped together that are now catalogued as by Guidoccio Cozzarelli (Cat. 26), Giovanni di Paolo (Cat. 9, 12), workshop of Sano di Pietro (Cat. 7); Matteo di Giovanni (Cat. 20, 25), Pietro di Giovanni (Cat. 3), circle of Benvenuto di Giovanni (Cat. 19), and “ſome ſmall works by Neroccio” (probably referring to Cat. 16). The next ſection is dedicated to Italian works from the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century (here we find Benvenuto di Giovanni’s *St. Angelus*, Cat. 18), and at the end ſome “transitional works” in which already Baroque features can be obſerved. The oppoſite wall ſhowed old German, Netherlandiſh, and Hungarian paintings, the earlier ones ſimilarly organized by ſchool, the later ones all mixed together. 20 mediæval ſculptures completed the exhibition of the original works. Near the windows there were colour copies or photographs of the moſt notable examples of Hungarian mediæval wall paintings, “which [could] moſt practically inform [the viſitor] about the art hiſtorical character of our local painting.”<sup>149</sup> Clearly, Ipolyi’s idea was to provide as complete a picture of the development of the early arts as poſſible, and his idea of the copy as a hiſtorical document echoed that of Ramboux. The few “artistic” copies he owned after Giovanni Bellini, Palma Vecchio, Veroneſe and others were hung not in the exhibition but in Ipolyi’s private rooms, along with ſome paintings relating to Hungarian hiſtory,<sup>150</sup> which the biſhop apparently thought valuable but irrelevant for the purpoſe of his exhibition: illuſtrating the hiſtory of Chriſtian art. Finally, Fraknói goes into remarkable lengths deriding the general ignorance of owners of Italian Renaiſſance art (“in our days, not only the ſalons of the grand ſeigneurs but even moſt reception room ſwarm with Raphaels and Titians”) and takes great efforts to demonſtrate that Ipolyi’s attributions are reliable and confirmed by the greateſt authorities of the time, including Crowe and Cavalcaſelle.

In October 1871, Ipolyi was nominated biſhop of Beſztercebánya, a ſmall, provincial town in the northern parts of the Kingdom of Hungary. Not wiſhing to riſk the transfer of the entire collection to his new ſeat, on 12 March, 1872, he offered his beſt paintings to the National Picture Gallery. He preſented his collection in a letter entitled “Patriotic Offer” and

<sup>149</sup> [Fraknói] 1871, 375.

<sup>150</sup> Ipolyi purchaſed ſeveral of theſe abroad (Gerevich ed. 1948, 50), a fact that reflects his dedication to recover and collect art with Hungarian references.

written to the minister of education Ágoston Trefort as follows: “*In the course of my national and religious art historical studies I have succeeded in bringing together a smaller collection of paintings of art historical value, acquired with diligent search and rather significant expenses from the bequests and stocks of famous collectors and art dealers worldwide. Until now my collection was exhibited at the central seminary of Pest that stood under my direction. Now that because of a different calling in my profession I am about to leave the capital city, I do not wish to expose the more precious pieces of this collection to the uncertainties of change and I have decided to act upon that desire and intention of mine, nurtured for a long time, that I offer them to the National Picture Gallery to which this collection can be complementary. As is known, in this gallery the older schools of painting and art development dating before the 16<sup>th</sup> century are hardly represented, or actually not at all, thus my collection that begins with the painting development of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and ends where the national collections begin very suitably supplements these lacks. (...)*”<sup>151</sup>

The selection was made – at Ipolyi’s own request – by a distinguished group of experts: Ferenc Pulszky, Director of the National Museum, the painter Antal Ligeti, keeper of the National Museum, Gusztáv Kratzmann, keeper of the National Picture Gallery (to which the collection was being offered) György Ráth and Imre Henszlmann, members of the Országos Műtanács (National Council of Cultural Goods), who selected and duly received sixty works on the day the offer was written.<sup>152</sup> Here too Ipolyi made the promise to accompany the offer with a critical catalogue as soon as the works were exhibited in a separate room dedicated to the “oldest schools of painting.”

With this act, Ipolyi was faithful to one of his guiding principles, “*Patriam illustrare*”.<sup>153</sup> He moved with the rest of his collection to his new episcopal seat in Besztercebánya, and took up residence nearby, in a chateau in Barsszentkereszt (present-day Žiar nad Hronom, Slovakia) where he housed his private library and most of his pictures until

<sup>151</sup> A draft of the letter is preserved at the Primatial Archives in Esztergom. On the donation, see the report of Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 139-143, with a list of paintings.

<sup>152</sup> The number of paintings is cited variously in literature as ranging from 60 to 64. Ipolyi himself stated in the letter in question (see note 151 above) that he handed over 60 pieces, and, in reality, there is no doubt as to exactly which works were donated. The discrepancy is due to the fact that some sources count the three panels of a triptych; the two parts of a diptych, and Spinello’s altarpiece lateral and its predella as separate items, while others consider all these as single works. Some early, foreign sources are, at the same time, indeed imprecise: Lützow mentions 56 works only (Lützow 1876, col. 6).

<sup>153</sup> Cited by Antal Pór in his memorial speech of Ipolyi in 1887 (Pór 1887, 16, cited by József Török, “Ipolyi Arnold és az egyház története (Arnold Ipolyi and the history of the church),” in Cséfalvay and Ugrin ed. 1989, 24, 30 n. 1).

1886.<sup>154</sup> While in Besztercebánya, he had historical monuments restored (the most important of which was the medieval St. Barbara chapel of the parish church) and wrote a cultural history of his episcopal seat. His financial resources significantly decreased in this time, Besztercebánya being the poorest of the episcopates of Hungary. He continued collecting but less from abroad than locally, and his new acquisitions included many handcrafted objects and works of the applied arts. He had a special interest in goldsmithwork and textiles, including oriental prayer rugs and tapestries from Europe.<sup>155</sup> The public could view parts of his collection at a charitable exhibition organized for the victims of flood (1876) and at an exhibition dedicated to the history of metalworking in Hungary (1884).<sup>156</sup>

Ipolyi's strong scholarly interest in Late-Gothic and Renaissance European and Hungarian painting, unmatched in Hungary in his time, is due to his extensive studies on the medieval art and architecture of Hungary, to which his attention turned in the mid-1850s. He studied medieval architectural monuments, participated in an expedition to Istanbul to track down, with success, Renaissance manuscripts looted by the Turks (1862), he wrote much about medieval Hungarian architecture, sculpture (1863), an unique medieval fresco in Szepeshely (1864), the Hungarian royal insignia (1886), among other things.

As a result of his scholarly approach and his general preference for original and national works of art, both old and modern, Ipolyi was least influenced in his aesthetic judgment by the Nazarene movement among the collectors discussed here. Although he did own a large and not very accomplished work by the only Hungarian Nazarene painter Ferenc Szoldatits,<sup>157</sup> this work is blatantly out of place in his collection. The circumstances of its acquisition are unknown. Ipolyi believed it was not the style but the attitude of the Middle Ages that needed to be revived in religious art.<sup>158</sup> He in fact actively promoted the revival of manual crafts with a religious focus, founding a school of ecclesiastical handicrafts in Besztercebánya.<sup>159</sup>

In his position as chair of the National Hungarian Association of Fine Arts (1880-85), Ipolyi was able to exert a considerable influence on contemporary Hungarian art and its

<sup>154</sup> On the villa in Barsszentkereszt, Ferenc Pulszky's memoirs survive (Pulszky 1878, 190, cited by Katalin Sinkó, "Arnold Ipolyi", in Markója and Bardoly ed. 2006, 68, n. 84). It is probable but not certain that between 1872 and 1886 Arnold Ipolyi kept all of his paintings in his residence of Barsszentkereszt and not in Besztercebánya. For this reason, this period is marked as "Barsszentkereszt / Besztercebánya" in the provenance information about the individual works (Chapter IV).

<sup>155</sup> Lepold 1930, 8.

<sup>156</sup> Lepold 1930, 8; Cséfalvay 1989, 102 n. 4.

<sup>157</sup> This is the *Betrayal of St. Peter* (CM, inv. 56.657), signed "Szoldatits, inv. et pinx. Romae", cf. Gerevich 1930, 94; Gerevich ed. 1948, 59. On Szoldatits, see text in Chapters II.1.3 and II.2.2 below.

<sup>158</sup> Gerevich 1923, 17.

<sup>159</sup> Gerevich 1923, 16.

public appreciation. He greatly enlarged the membership of the association, stabilized its financial situation, and found sponsors and commissions for artists whom he encouraged to create works with religious and, especially, national subjects.<sup>160</sup> In his memorable speeches, he stressed the importance of an original national style in contrast to following stylistic models from abroad, and the preference of “Hungarian mythology” over classical mythology for subject matter. Ipolyi’s little appreciation for the Nazarenes is certainly due to the fact that Nazarene art is essentially derivative and not national in nature. In Ipolyi’s collection, we find only a few works with romantic (Shepherds) or Hungarian historical subject matter by contemporary Hungarians artists (Károly Lotz, Mór Than, and others) representing the classical-romantic movement of the arts.<sup>161</sup> He greatly admired, for example, the modern-realist style of Mihály Munkácsy but in his own collection he mostly restricted himself to the possession of medieval art works and artifacts.

The “collezionismo sacro” taken in a wider sense was a diffuse phenomenon among ecclesiastic intellectuals in the nineteenth-century; archbishops, bishops, canons, and priests were forming, or striving to form, collections of religious art for pious, educational, and evangelical purposes. These intentions of founding a “museo sacro”, a *Museum Christianum*, were influenced by the concept of the papal sacred collections under formation in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in Rome.<sup>162</sup> For Arnold Ipolyi, too, one of his frequently expressed wishes was that every Hungarian diocese should found a museum of Christian art for the artistic-religious education of the believers and the general public.<sup>163</sup> This idea was shared by other prelates of his time, especially János Simor, the only one who in fact succeeded in realizing such an institution, the museum now in Esztergom, where eventually also Ipolyi’s collection found a final place.

In 1885, Ipolyi made a last will, to which he attached an inventory of his collection, which does not survive.<sup>164</sup> The will postulated that the art collection was to form part of a Christian Museum to be founded at Ipolyi’s episcopal seat, and should the foundation of such a museum not take place, the collection is to be bequeathed to a Christian Museum founded in Budapest or to the one founded by Simor in Esztergom.

<sup>160</sup> Gerevich 1923, 18; Lepold 1930, 5-6.

<sup>161</sup> Gerevich ed. 1948, 158-159.

<sup>162</sup> A description of Simor’s gallery from 1885 (Z[ádori?] 1885, 518-19) expressly mentions the papal collections as the model for the archbishop’s collecting.

<sup>163</sup> Cséfalvay 1989, 96.

<sup>164</sup> The will – without the attached inventory – is preserved in the Primatial Archives in Esztergom (Cséfalvay 1989, 98). The former existence of the inventory is attested by Antal Lepold (1930, 8).

On 18 February, 1886, on, Ipolyi became Bishop of (Nagy)Várad (present-day Oradea, Romania) and moved there in July, taking his collection with him. There was no time to unpack the boxes containing his treasures before he died on 2 December, 1886.<sup>165</sup>

The further fate of the collection was for a long time unworthy of its founder's intentions. It remained in deposit at the Episcopate of Várad until 1919, during which time many valuable goldsmithworks disappeared from it.<sup>166</sup> It was stored, still packed, in various places, for an entire decade.<sup>167</sup> In 1896, it was exhibited at the new building of the Museum of the Archeological and Historical Society of County Bihar and Nagyvárad (Biharvármegyei és nagyváradai régészeti és történelmi egyesület Muzeuma) when a very general, but still helpful, list was compiled of it.<sup>168</sup> In 1919-20, as shall be discussed below, the remaining parts of the collection were moved to the Christian Museum on the basis of Ipolyi's last will.

Ipolyi's predilection for early Sieneese art is unquestionable in view of the very large number of works he decided to buy from the Ramboux's collection. In addition, he acquired Sieneese works elsewhere. These include one of the most important works now in Hungary, Matteo di Giovanni's lunette fragment from Sant'Agostino in Siena (Cat. 23), which perhaps came to his collection after 1871, since it is not mentioned, as it would deserve, among the finest works of the collection in Fraknói's description of that year; besides, it would most likely have been picked by the committee of 1872 for the National Picture Gallery had it been already in the collection. Another work probably from Ipolyi's collection but not from the Ramboux collection is Pellegrino di Mariano's Madonna (Cat. 14).<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Cséfalvay 1989, 97.

<sup>166</sup> Lepold 1930, 9.

<sup>167</sup> What precisely happened to collection between 1886 and 1896 is not clear. Initially it remained in the Episcopal Palace. Later it seems to have been partly stored in the attic of the cathedral of Várad and on the corridors of a local high school (Gerevich 1930, 86; Cséfalvay 1898, 98).

<sup>168</sup> Némethy ed. 1896.

<sup>169</sup> In 1930, a further work from Ipolyi's collection was believed to be Sieneese (the Florentine Paolo Schiavo's *Death of the Virgin*, cf. Lepold 1930, 13, cat. 64); it is not known to what school Ipolyi himself ascribed this work.

### 1.3 The Bertinelli Collection

Another large group of early Italian paintings, including Sieneese works like Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio's *Assumption* (Cat. 2), Neroccio dei Landi's *Virgin and Child with Sts. Sebastian and Catherine of Alexandria* (Cat. 17), Matteo di Giovanni's late *Virgin and Child with Two Angels* (Cat. 24), and Girolamo di Benvenuto's *Virgin and Child with the Young St. John the Baptist* (Cat. 32), arrived in Hungary with a collection that János Simor purchased in its entirety in 1878 from the heirs of a Roman private collector.

The former owner of this collection, Canon Raffaele Bertinelli, and the history of his collection are virtually unknown to art historical studies and are the subject of ongoing research by the present author.<sup>170</sup> Archival research has already revealed many particulars of his biography, and many more documents are expected to come to light.

Raffaele Bertinelli (1802-1878) was born in Fossombrone, into a noble family on the mother's side. He moved to Rome around 1820 to pursue legal studies *in utroque iure*, which he completed in 1824. In the following years, he seems to have been active as a diplomat in ecclesiastic service, after which he permanently settled in Rome. He taught at the Università della Sapienza, of which he was nominated vice-rector in 1833. Close to the age of 40, he became a priest (ordained 1840-41) and titular canon of the church of St. Eustachio in Rome, while keeping his position at the Sapienza. He resigned from the Sapienza before 1856 and became regular canon of St. Eustachio in 1870. He died on 24 or 25 March, 1878, in Rome. From contemporary descriptions, Raffaele Bertinelli emerges as a deeply religious, warm-hearted, and zealous man, who, among other things, actively helped the final papal approbation of the newly found order of the Figlie del Sacro Cuore di Gesù in the years 1845-47.

Bertinelli was a man of letters, and an interesting aspect of his life is his close connection with prestigious literary circles of his youth: he was an intimate friend of

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<sup>170</sup> I am preparing a separate study on Raffaele Bertinelli and his collection, which will include a biography of the collector, information on the origins and vicissitudes of his collection, and an analysis of the intellectual and religious influences on his concept of collecting. The contribution will include a documentary appendix and an unpublished inventory of the collection (dating from 1878 and drawn up after the collector's death on 24 on 25 March), which clarifies the provenance for some disputed works in Esztergom. The reader will find extensive bibliographical and archival references there. I have anticipated some of my results in Sallay 2002, 104, and in a lecture entitled "Nineteenth-Century Ecclesiastical Intellectuals and Early Italian Religious Art: Patterns of Collecting in Italy and Hungary" and presented at the conference *Sacred Possessions? Italy and Collecting Religious Art, 1500-1990*, Rome, American Academy in Rome, 19-21 June, 2007 (in course of publication). For a published mention of the Bertinelli collection, cf. Gardner 1998, 108, who based her information on the diary of Otto Müндler (published by Togneri Dowd 1985, 69-254, esp. 163).

Giuseppe Gioacchino Belli, an acquaintance of Giacomo Leopardi and of many literary scholars. At the same time, very little is known of his artistic interests and of the formation of his gallery. In this regard it seems significant that he knew Friedrich Overbeck (1789-1869),<sup>171</sup> the leading Nazarene painter of Rome, through his own religious adviser, professor (later cardinal) Pietro Ostini, who was the spiritual leader of the “Deutschrömer” in Rome. It would be important to know more about Bertinelli’s relationship to Overbeck – “*il pittore cristiano, anzi cattolico per eccellenza*”, as a contemporary source calls him<sup>172</sup> – and the Nazarene painters, and how this relationship may have influenced his collecting.<sup>173</sup>

That an influence existed is more than likely. After Bertinelli’s collection was formed, it was Overbeck and another renowned Nazarene-affiliated painter, Tommaso Minardi (1787-1871),<sup>174</sup> professor of the Accademia di San Luca in Rome and leader of the *purismo* movement in Rome, whom Bertinelli asked to appraise it. The expertise was probably drawn up in the late 1850s or the 1860s, and contained 55 paintings. We also know that, similarly to other ecclesiastic collectors of the time, Bertinelli had a high appreciation for the *pittura sacra* painted by Overbeck and that he sought to commission or acquire a work by Overbeck in 1855 for a church in Camaldoli. Moreover, Bertinelli’s “*galleria di classici sacri*” consisted exclusively of works with a religious subject matter, many of them early Renaissance paintings that reflected the religious and aesthetic ideals of the Nazarene artists.

All this points towards the defining influence of nineteenth-century religious art on Bertinelli’s collecting preferences as far as choice of subject matter, period, and style are concerned. Undoubtedly, the religious content of the pictures was for this collector the primary motivation for acquiring sacred images. At the same time, Bertinelli seems to have been impressed by the aesthetic culture of the living environs of the aristocratic salons of his

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<sup>171</sup> About Overbeck, I cite only Howitt 1886; Gallwitz ed. 1976; Blühm and Gerhard ed. 1989; Feuß 1995; Thimann 2005; Thimann 2006. Friedrich Overbeck was born in Lübeck into a Protestant family. He studied music, foreign languages, and art. In 1806 he went to the Academy of Vienna and made friends with Franz Pforr, with whom they rejected the “sterile” Academic style. In 1809, Overbeck founded the *Lukasbund* that considered Dürer, the early Raphael and Perugino as prime models in art. In 1810 the artist moved to Rome with four *Lukasbrüder* and settled in the deconsecrated cloister Sant’Isidoro on the Pincio. The group was later enlarged by the Veit brothers, Peter von Cornelius, Wilhelm von Schadow, the Olivier brothers, Ludwig Schnorr von Carosfeld and others; they lived in a brotherhood and followed a monastic lifestyle. The name “Nazarene” was first used for them derisively but then they took it on officially. In 1813 Overbeck converted to Catholicism under the guidance of Pietro Ostini. The Nazarene group dissolved later but Overbeck remained true to its ideals and stayed in Rome all his life.

<sup>172</sup> *Sulla vita e sulle opere di Federico Overbeck. Notizie raccolte dal Conte Camillo Laderchi*, Rome: Menicanti, 1848, 3.

<sup>173</sup> It would be very interesting to know if Bertinelli met Ramboux in Rome in the early 1820s. Since Ramboux was in Rome and affiliated with the Nazarene painters, it would not at all be surprising if they had known each other.

<sup>174</sup> Tommaso Minardi was from Faenza and completed his artistic studies in Rome. He was strongly influenced by the Nazarenes. On Minardi recently see Thimann 2005 and Ricci 2006, esp. 98 n. 3 with further bibl.

time. Unfortunately no information has yet come to light on how, or even where, this private gallery was displayed (it does not seem to have been in his private residence), but an overview of the collection as a whole allows for some observations in this regard. We can hardly find any small, trecento pieces in his collection (as we do, instead, in Arnold Ipolyi's collection) and there are very few works dating before the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century in general. Bertinelli purchased almost exclusively intact, well-presentable pictures dating from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> to the mid-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, many of which he had restored and enclosed in imposing square gilt frames.<sup>175</sup> The entirety of his collection betrays a conscious scheme of collecting, in which Renaissance devotional Madonnas dominate, of the standard height of ca. 50-80 centimetres. Many can be easily arranged into pendants, between which the small size differences were made up for by large, ornate frames. In some cases the pendant-relationship between pairs of paintings is so clear that they are still observed at the permanent exhibition of the Christian Museum. As a contemporary source tells us, the collection included only two large-scale works, which are identifiable in two 16<sup>th</sup>-century altarpieces, one from Emilia; the other, from Marche-region.

An important question is whether it was surely Raffaele Bertinelli's own artistic taste reflected in this collection. Hungarian archival sources written at the time of the acquisition of Bertinelli's collection provide important information about its formation. We learn that the canon inherited a smaller part of his collection, and the rest of it he gradually put together himself. Beyond this precious, short testimony, we have very little information on how paintings entered Bertinelli's collection. He may have acquired some Marchigian paintings in his homeland, and there is a conspicuous group of Forlivese origin, including three Marco Palmezzanos, which might suggest a contact in that town or that he purchased these paintings as a group.<sup>176</sup> Presumably, Bertinelli acquired many of his paintings from the Roman art market – at least this is what some passages in his private correspondence reveal.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Many of these survive in the CM and are identifiable on the basis of their provenance information, physical characteristics, and restoration treatment.

<sup>176</sup> An oddity is that Bertinelli had two versions of a Madonna-composition by Marco Palmezzano (CM, invv. 55.222 and 55.223), which may speak against the hypothesis of the acquisition of these paintings as a group but it is difficult to explain in itself.

<sup>177</sup> Only in one case we know the original provenance of a painting: it is a monumental altarpiece painted by Giovanni and Vincenzo Pagani between 1517 and 1520 for the church of the Maddalena in Ripatransone. Left behind by Napoleon's commissioners and chosen for the Museo Gregoriano of Pope Gregory XVI in 1844, it was taken to Rome but was eventually judged to be inadequate and restituted to a representative of Ripatransone. The latter sold it in Rome in order to avoid the transportation of the enormous and fragile panel back to the Marche. Bertinelli came into its possession before 1852, when he sent his first letters to the Marchigian town inquiring about the origins of the altarpiece. His letters do not survive but what we know about them is important for documenting the collector's interest in his collection. I am indebted to Walter Scotucci for this information.

Bertinelli's gallery appears to have been substantially formed by the 1850s. The first known mention of it is from 1857, when Otto Mündler (1811-1870), the Bavarian dealer, *connoisseur*, and travelling agent in Italy for the National Gallery of London between 1855-58, laconically recorded a visit to the collection: "*Canonico Bertinelli has a collection of pictures, containing some tolerably good early Florentine and other works, but nothing excellent.*"<sup>178</sup> Apart from this mention, Bertinelli's collection seems to have been little known to the public.

One wonders why Bertinelli allowed Mündler to view his pictures at all. Would he have been willing to part with some or all of them? Hungarian sources from the mid-1870s tell us that the canon had been trying to sell his collection for quite some time in order to raise funds for a pious foundation (at one time, we are informed, he wanted to construct a church in the Sabine mountains). Attempts to sell the collection seem to date back at least to 1862, when Friedrich Overbeck wrote a long letter of praise on the gallery to the Countess Terray (born Adèle De Maistre, 1806-1863) in Rome (although it existed in several copies, this important letter unfortunately has not yet been found; only Bertinelli's exuberantly grateful reply to Overbeck is known). It is interesting to note that in this appraisal, another painter of the purist movement, Luigi Cochetti was involved.

Countess Terray died the following year, and Overbeck appeared again in 1866 as the intermediate between Bertinelli and another potential buyer, the important ecclesiastic collector, the Slavonian Josip Juraj Strossmayer (1815-1905), Bishop of Djakovo, and the later founder of the gallery in Zagreb. The connection must have come through Overbeck's involvement in these years on the fresco decoration of the Djakovo cathedral.<sup>179</sup> Strossmayer's declaration about his motivation for purchasing Bertinelli's gallery is worthy of attention, as it reflects a typical attitude of ecclesiastic intellectual collectors of sacred art at the time. His architect Carl Roesner, who wrote to Overbeck on the bishop's behalf stated: "*His Excellence is very keen to buy excellent old and new pictures with a Biblical subject, not so much to decorate his residence but to dedicate in the future all his acquired treasures of art to the South-Slavic Academy of Art which is about to be established in Agram [Zagreb], with the purpose that this South-Slavic Art Academy should inspire the artistically gifted youth of these regions, and offer that spiritual nourishment already in their homeland, which is necessary before they travel abroad.*" His main question to Overbeck is whether Bertinelli's collection "*is suitable to awaken the spiritual striving for Christian art in the*

<sup>178</sup> Togneri Dowd 1985, 163.

<sup>179</sup> Feuß 1995.

*artistically gifted youth and to lead them on the right track?”* Importantly, Strossmayer wished to receive for the same purpose any painting with a Biblical subject matter by Overbeck’s *Meisterhand*: it, too, should serve as a model for the preliminary studies of young Christian artists to ennoble their taste. Overbeck did paint a work for Strossmayer but his answer on the Bertinelli collection was not entirely positive. He could imagine Bertinelli’s collection “more as an interesting part of a larger collection than sufficient for the requested purpose in itself” – a fair judgment, in fact, which precisely predicted the final role of the collection now in the Christian Museum in Esztergom. Strossmayer eventually gave up on the purchase (perhaps because of Overbeck’s opinion, or, as unconfirmed Hungarian sources say, because of lack of funds) but his letters remain an important testimony of a characteristic attitude of 19<sup>th</sup>-century collecting prelates, in which several motivations are intertwined: a personal spiritual benefit from the presence of the paintings while they are with their owner, a wish to profit their homeland by bequeathing their private collection, and to ensure a spiritually correct artistic education of young artists (in other cases, as with János Simor and Arnold Ipoly, of young priests and the general public).

Overbeck died in 1869, Tommaso Minardi in 1871, and Bertinelli himself reached old age by the 1870s. Further attempts to sell his collection are documented before 1875, when the interested client was no less than Gabriel García Moreno (1821-1875), President of Ecuador, well-known for his strict Catholic regime. Moreno’s assassination in 1875 cut Bertinelli’s hopes short again and it was at this point that through Gyula Bartalos, a young Hungarian priest staying in Rome, he offered his pictures to “one of the rich prelates” in Hungary. Among his conditions was that the buyer should be a spiritually generous, not petty-minded, ecclesiastic person. As shall be discussed below, Bertinelli’s collection was finally purchased by Archbishop János Simor but old canon did not live to see his wish realized.

Raffaele Bertinelli was a highly noteworthy collector, whose collection and its later history reflects well the reception and interpretation of early Italian religious painting among clerics in the Ottocento. However, unlike with Johann Anton Ramboux and Arnold Ipolyi, it is difficult to say whether Canon Bertinelli had a special appreciation for Sienese painting. With the exception of Matteo di Giovanni’s *Madonna* (Cat. 24), Overbeck and Minardi catalogued his Sienese paintings as Florentine works: Pietro di Giovanni d’Ambrogio’s *Assumption* as Gherardo Starnina, Neroccio’s *Madonna* as Fra Angelico, and Girolamo di Benvenuto’s *Madonna* as Verrocchio. Inversely, some non-Sienese works were credited as such: a Florentine *Thebaid*-fragment (CM, inv. 55.168) featured in the collection as a work by “Pietro Laureati”, Pesellino’s *Crucifixion* (CM, inv. 55.184) as by Taddeo Bartoli, a

Florentine tondo (CM, inv. 55.192) was attributed to Sienese school in general; and a Lombard madonna (CM, inv. 55.231) was catalogued as by Beccafumi. Thus it is more likely that the enthusiastic but essentially *dilettante* collector appreciated above all the religious content and the overall aesthetic qualities of his paintings but neither he nor the experts to whom he entrusted the cataloguing of his collection rose above the general standards of scholarship of their time to provide an in-depth scholarly appraisal of its contents that would have correctly distinguished between the different schools of early Italian painting.

## 2. The Museums

### Introduction

The thirty-three works discussed in this thesis are now divided in an equal part between the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest (16 pieces) and the Christian Museum in Esztergom (17 pieces, including a pair of companion pieces). Of these, twenty-three come from the collection of Arnold Ipolyi; the others are nearly all occasional acquisitions not based on a concept of systematically enlarging the Sieneese collections in Hungary (these criteria hold true to Raffaele Bertinelli's four paintings as well) but which nevertheless fortunately fill some lacks in Arnold Ipolyi's works (Master of the Story of Griselda, Bernardino Fungai).

### 2.1 Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts

#### *The Esterházy collection and the Foundation of the National Picture Gallery*

The Museum of Fine Arts has its origins in the National Picture Gallery, founded in 1871 after the state purchase (1870-71) of the highly important collection of the Esterházy family, which formed the core of its collection.

The aristocratic gallery was formed mostly between 1794 and 1828 by Prince Miklós [Nicholas] Esterházy (1765-1833), and comprised a picture gallery of 637 paintings and a rich collection of prints and drawings.<sup>180</sup> After 1814, the collection was housed in the Mariahilf (Kaunitz) palace in Vienna and was regularly open to the public. Decades-long expressions of desire by the Hungarians to have the collection in Pest led to its exhibition in 1865 in the shortly earlier completed building of the Academy and then to its eventual purchase by the Hungarian government. The collection was accompanied by its keeper Gusztav Kratzmann, who remained the director of the National Picture Gallery until 1880.

The Esterházy painting collection consisted mostly of works dating between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, but included a masterpiece of Quattrocento Sieneese art, then catalogued as Pintoricchio and now attributed to the Master of the Story of Griselda (Cat. 30). An inventory of the collection drawn up in 1820 refers to the work,<sup>181</sup> making it the earliest documented Sieneese painting in a Hungarian collection. Before its sale, the Esterházy gallery was

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<sup>180</sup> On the Esterházy collection, see *Catalog der Gemälde-Galerie...* 1869; Peregriny 1909-1915, I (1909), 1-418; Meller 1915; Mraz and Galavics 1999; Garas 1999; Szvoboda Dománszky 1999<sup>1</sup>; Szvoboda Dománszky 1999<sup>2</sup>; *Nicolas II Esterházy...* 2007 (with bibl.)

<sup>181</sup> Joseph Fischer and Anton Rothmüller, *Inventarium No. 10 der fürstlich Esterhazyschen Gemählde*. 15 February, 1820 (publ. in Meller 1915, 199-237, esp. 219, no. 523).

appraised in 1869 by Otto Mündler, who valued this painting at an average price of 8000 Francs and judged it “*ganz ächt und interessant, wenn auch etwas derb*”.<sup>182</sup>

### ***The Arnold Ipolyi Bequest***

Soon after its foundation, the National Picture Gallery incorporated many previous donations to the state (until then housed in the oldest – and for a long time, only – public museum of the country, the Hungarian National Museum) and by Arnold Ipolyi’s generous donation in 1872. In accordance with the donor’s stipulation, Ipolyi’s paintings were exhibited by 5 June, 1872, in a separate room (“Ipolyi room”).<sup>183</sup> The minister of religion and education urged for the compilation of a detailed inventory as soon as possible, but Ferenc Pulszky was still waiting for the catalogue promised by Ipolyi.<sup>184</sup> Many of the works were listed in the catalogues of 1873, 1876, 1878, 1879, but a complete list was first published in Károly Pulszky’s catalogue of 1881, compiled just after he had taken over the curatorship of the National Picture Gallery from the retiring keeper Gusztáv Kratzmann in 1880.<sup>185</sup>

### ***Purchases by Károly Pulszky***

From 1881, the National Picture Gallery came under the supervision of Károly Pulszky (1853-1899), who became its director in 1884 and held this position until 1896.<sup>186</sup> The son of Ferenc Pulszky (1814-1897), academician, writer, politician, and director of the National Museum, Károly Pulszky was a well-prepared, progressively thinking art historian with a sound sense of quality, who set out to enlarge the collection systematically. He had large state funds at his disposal for new acquisitions. He travelled extensively in Italy and purchased outstanding panel paintings in Brescia, Florence, Venice, and Milan. He also put together a rare collection of detached, mostly Umbrian frescos. On 4 July, 1895 he bought 33 paintings and other works of art from Emilio Constantini in Florence, including two Quattrocento Sieneese paintings: the *Virgin and Child with Saints* by Sano di Pietro and his workshop (Cat.

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<sup>182</sup> Peregriny 1909-1915, I (1909), 27, no. 60. Cf. Pogány and Bacher ed. 1956, 20.

<sup>183</sup> As reported by Ferenc Pulszky on this day, cited in Peregriny 1909-1915, I (1909), 421.

<sup>184</sup> Peregriny 1909-1915, I (1909), 421.

<sup>185</sup> Cf. *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie... 1873; Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie... 1876; Az Országos Képtár... 1878; Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie... 1879; Az Országos Képtár... 1879*, and Pulszky 1881 (which contains the Italian paintings only). On the donations of Ipolyi in 1880: Peregriny 1909-1915, I (1909), 421. In 1880, Ipolyi donated two further works to the Gallery: Michele Pannonio’s renowned *Thalia* and Mihály Kovács’s portrait of Béla Tárkányi (the canon of Eger who organized the purchase of the Bertinelli collection for Esztergom, see pp. 73-74 below).

<sup>186</sup> The primary literature on the museological activity of Károly Pulszky is Mravik ed. 1988, with previous bibl. On Pulszky’s activity and eventual dismissal, see also Tóth 2007.

5) and Matteo di Giovanni's extraordinary *St. Bartholomew* (Cat. 21).<sup>187</sup> The latter was acquired and catalogued in the museum until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as a work by Antonio Pollaiuolo (whose influence it in fact reflects). Pulszky's intention to add a "Pollaiuolo" is fully understandable; it is more difficult to answer why he was interested in a Sano di Pietro, recognized as such from the very beginning, since the collection by this time included a large number of early Sieneese paintings, also Sano's *Banquet of Herod* (Cat. 4), thanks to Arnold Ipolyi.

### ***The Museum of Fine Arts***

Károly Pulszky also had the leading role in developing the concept of an independent museological institution, which materialized between 1896 and 1906 in the creation of the Museum of Fine Arts, into which the National Picture Gallery was merged. In 1896, on occasion of the sumptuous state celebrations of the 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin, the so-called Millenary Law decreed the foundation of a Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest<sup>188</sup> and a purpose-built building for its holdings. The stately building in the City Park was completed and opened in 1906.<sup>189</sup>

### ***The Pálffy Bequest***

In 1907, Count János Pálffy (1829-1908) bequeathed part of his collection including masterpieces by Boltraffio, Titian, and Veronese to the Museum of Fine Arts. The 178 old masters' paintings were transferred to Budapest from the Pálffy family residence in Pozsony (today Bratislava, Slovakia) in 1912. Among them was a small *Virgin and Child* by Bernardino Fungai, one of the best works by this master (Cat. 27) and considered at the time as an Umbrian painting. János Pálffy travelled much in his youth and collected art himself.<sup>190</sup> Unfortunately, his private archives are mostly destroyed; thus information about the earlier provenance of his paintings is unavailable.

### ***Later acquisitions***

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<sup>187</sup> On Pulszky's purchases see esp. László Mravik and Ágnes Szigethy, "Festményvásárlások az Országos Képtár és a Szépművészeti Múzeum részére" (Purchase of paintings for the National Picture Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts), in Mravik ed. 1988, 82-112, with a list of paintings purchased by Pulszky.

<sup>188</sup> For the sake of clarity it is noted that Budapest as an urban entity was created with the unification of the cities Pest, Buda and Óbuda in 1873.

<sup>189</sup> On the history of the Museum of Fine Arts: Pogány and Bacher ed. 1956; Kardos et al. 2002; Radványi 2006.

<sup>190</sup> On Count János Pálffy, his life, collections, and the bequest of his paintings to Budapest, see *Néhai nagyméltóságú...* 1909; Colasanti and Gerevich 1912, Térey 1913<sup>2</sup>; Ciulisová 2006<sup>1</sup>, 181-195, 386-387 (with previous bibl.); Ciulisová 2006<sup>2</sup>; Radványi 2006, 80-82; Horváth 2007.

The collection of Quattrocento Sieneese art in Budapest was enriched by one single work after the purchases and bequests before World War I. In 1976, the museum bought from Mrs. Szilárd Markovics a middle-sized altarpiece by Bernadino Fungai, the *Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints and Angels* (Cat. 28). It is not known when and under what circumstances this work was brought to Hungary.

## 2.2 Esztergom, Christian Museum

### *The Origins: The Simor Collection*

Esztergom, the ancient seat of the Primate of Hungary since the foundation of the Hungarian state, was deprived of a glorious past in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. During the occupation of the Ottoman Turkish troops (1543-1685), the formerly flourishing town was ruined and disinhabited. The archbishop and his court was forced to flee to Nagyszombat (present-day Trnava, Slovakia) taking with them the archives, the treasury, and the library, but not any painting collection that we know of. The archbishops did not return to Esztergom until 1820, and much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was taken up by efforts to reconstruct the ancient seat. A new cathedral was built in Neo-Classical style, consecrated in 1856 but not completed until 1886, in the time of Archbishop, Prince Primate and Cardinal János Simor (Székesfehérvár, 1813 – Esztergom, 1891). Primate Simor sought to revive the former grandeur of his seat and to him we owe the present Primate's Palace and the foundation of the Christian Museum.

János Simor had humble origins: he came from a family of artisans in Székesfehérvár. He studied in his hometown and Buda, then became a seminarist in the *Americanum* in Pozsony (present-day Bratislava, Slovakia).<sup>191</sup> He studied philosophy (the humanities) in Nagyszombat (present-day Trnava, Slovakia) in 1831-32 and then theology in the *Pazmaneum* in Vienna. He was ordained in 1836. He first served as a chaplain of Terézváros and was a pulpit orator (preacher) at the University in Pest. In the summer of 1840 he returned to Vienna and in 1841 received his doctoral degree at the university of Vienna. From 1842 to 1846 he was a parishioner in Bajna near Esztergom, then he taught at the seminary of Esztergom. He became the secretary of the primate of Esztergom. In 1851 he returned to Vienna again as a counsellor of the Viennese Government for matters of church government at the Ministry of Culture. He left Vienna in 1857, when he was nominated Bishop of Győr. In this new position, besides attending to matters of Catholic education, schools, and hospitals, he began his art patronage and collecting, as well as the restoration of historical monuments, including the early 15<sup>th</sup>-century chapel of St. Ladislav.

Simor's area of study was ecclesiastical history and canon law, and he cannot be considered a *connoisseur* or an expert collector. He had no aesthetic education, and his artistic

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<sup>191</sup> On János Simor, see especially Köhalmi-Klimstein 1886; Walter 1891; Prokoppné Stengl 1960; Mojzer 1964<sup>2</sup>; Prokoppné Stengl 1978; Cséfalvay 2001.

taste was formed in Vienna where he was impressed by the grand aristocratic galleries, pleased by the prevailing Biedermeier style, and became familiar with the works of Nazarene painters. These impressions long-lastingly defined his later purchases and commissions.

Regarding religious art, his preference undoubtedly went for the Nazarene style. Vienna was the birthplace of the movement that later came to be known as the Nazarene brotherhood. Its roots are found in the *Lukasbund* which Friedrich Overbeck and Franz Pforr founded in 1809. Discontent with what they considered as a sterile, Classicist style then prevailing at the Viennese Academy, Overbeck and his companions left Vienna for Rome in 1810 where they founded the Nazarene school.<sup>192</sup> By the middle of the decade however, when Simor stayed in Vienna, the Nazarene artistic movement gained ground at the Viennese Academy; leading Nazarene painters like Joseph von Führich and Leopold Kupelwieser were giving masterclasses there.<sup>193</sup> Simor was deeply influenced by their art in Vienna, as his later acquisitions for the Christian Museum demonstrate.<sup>194</sup> As Bishop of Győr, he invited the Viennese Nazarene Franz Josef Dobyaschofsky, who formerly taught at the Academy in Vienna, to decorate his Cathedral.<sup>195</sup>

Simor went on several Italian trips from 1854 on, during which too he maintained relations with Nazarene painters, such as the Hungarian Ferenc Szoldatits (1820-1916), who had been trained in Vienna and then settled in Rome. Simor visited Szoldatits several times, commissioned and bought many works from him.<sup>196</sup> Simor would have become familiar with early Italian art during his travels and some works, like an International Gothic *Madonna of Humility* by an unknown painter from Romagna (CM, inv. 55.196), Andrea di Bartolo's *Joachim leaves the town* (CM, inv. 55.148), or Giovanni di Paolo's late *Nativity* (Cat. 11), were perhaps acquired during his trips. At the same time, his acquisitions imply that he did not have a major interest in early Italian art: one cannot help feeling that he had a higher appreciation for Nazarene art than for the Quattrocento works by which it was inspired. It has

<sup>192</sup> See note 171 above.

<sup>193</sup> Bachleitner 1976, 182.

<sup>194</sup> Simor's commissions to, and acquisitions from, contemporary artists have been the object of an exhibition at the Christian Museum in 2001, cf. Cséfalvay 2001. Among these are works by Führich (*Virgin and Child*, CM, inv. 55.414; *Christ Gives the Keys to St. Peter*, CM, inv. 55.413) and Kupelwieser (*Virgin Immaculate*, CM, inv. 59.935, *Assumption of the Virgin*, CM, inv. 4414).

<sup>195</sup> Franz Josef Dobyaschofsky (1818-1867) was a Nazarene painter of religious themes, genre and historical paintings. Between 1850 and 1851 he taught at the Academy in Vienna; between 1854 and 1856 he was in Rome. He worked under the direction of Joseph von Führich on the frescoes in the Altlerchenfeld Church in Vienna. For his works in Esztergom, cf. Gerevich ed. 1948, 114-115 and Cséfalvay 2001, 31-34.

<sup>196</sup> Szoldatits' works in the CM are the following: *Portrait of Simor as Bishop of Győr*, inv. 59.961; *Adoration of Magi*, 1868, inv. 56.653, commissioned by Simor; *Madonna and Child*, inv. 56.655, purchased by Simor; *Pietà*, inv. 56.654; *St. Thomas Aquinas in front of the Crucified Christ*, inv. 56.656. Simor's private house altar, a closing triptych with the Enthroned Virgin and Child in the centre, was also commissioned from Szoldatits (CM, inv. 56.658).

only recently emerged from archival research that he acquired his only major purchase of early Italian works – the entire Bertinelli collection – after much hesitation only. Importantly, however, at this acquisition, he relied, among others, on Szoldatits’ advice and judgement.

When Simor became Archbishop of Esztergom in 1867, his financial means allowed for more significant purchases.<sup>197</sup> He collected on a grand scale and a large variety of objects, mostly with religious subjects or from religious context: paintings, sculpture, applied arts, ecclesiastical vestments and liturgical vessels, archeological finds, books, codices, prints and drawings, and medals. In this context finds a place his effort, probably influenced by Ipolyi’s ideas and the religious romanticism of his time aimed at the rediscovery of the Middle Ages, to collect and preserve for the purpose of a *Museum Christianum* the surviving but dismantled and unused late Gothic altarpiece-fragments and other liturgical objects from the area of his archdiocese. He had these fragments transported to Esztergom and some of them restored in Vienna.<sup>198</sup> Simor also possessed a few early works from other schools (an icon, early German works, etc). These late medieval works formed a well-separable, but smaller group in his collection. The larger part of his collection – about 200 works – reflected Simor’s personal taste, and included contemporary Hungarian, Austrian and German paintings, drawings and prints with a large variety of subjects (religious, mythological, and historical scenes, ideal landscapes, townscapes, genre paintings, still lifes, exotic genre portraits, portraits, 17-19<sup>th</sup>-century portraits of the popes), as well as 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>-century, mostly Austrian, German, Italian, and Netherlandish works, both religious and profane.<sup>199</sup> During his stays in Vienna and Rome, Simor certainly became aware of the great appreciation for the great masters of the High and Late Renaissance, and, according to a wide-spread practice of the time, he commissioned to his protégé, the moderately talented, Hungarian Ferenc Paczka, copies of Raphael, Titian, Domenichino, and Veronese.<sup>200</sup> There is a large number of further “art” copies in Simor’s collection after Fra Angelico, Raphael, Dürer, Titian, Murillo and others.<sup>201</sup> For Simor, the Austrian paintress Maria Schoeffmann (1859-1941) executed many

<sup>197</sup> For János Simor as a collector and the history of the Christian Museum, see: Maszlaghy 1876, Rényi 1879; Gerevich ed. 1948, 9-12; Prokoppné Stengl 1960; Mojzer 1964<sup>2</sup>, Prokoppné Stengl 1977 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978; Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 9-12; Cséfalvay 2001; Sallay 2002; Sallay 2008.

<sup>198</sup> Especially the pieces from the medieval furnishings of the Abbey of Garamszentbenedek, among which the *Passion altarpiece* by Thomas of Coloswar from 1427 and the *Lord’s Coffin* from ca. 1480 are the most significant.

<sup>199</sup> Many of these are of very mediocre quality and quite a few were believed to be significantly earlier (15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries) at the time of their first cataloguing.

<sup>200</sup> Ferenc Paczka made copies of Raphael’s *Transfiguration*, Titian’s *St. Sebastian*, Domenichino’s *St. Jerome* (Gerevich ed. 1948, 145). Paczka also made a portrait of Simor in 1881 (CM, inv. 56.787), whose inscription says “Joannes Cardinalis Simor Pinacothecae Primatialis Strigon. Fundator”.

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Gerevich ed. 1948, 144-145.

copies after the paintings by Rogier van der Weyden, Martin Schongauer, Perugino, Raphael, Titian, Guido Reni, Carlo Maratta, Calro Dolci and even after Nazarenes such as Joseph von Führich.<sup>202</sup> Simor's idea of the copy was clearly differed from those of Ramboux and Ipolyi; for him, copies had aesthetic, spiritual, and inspirative, and not primarily documentary or educational, values.<sup>203</sup>

Simor's collection can be considered as an average collection of the time, reflecting a typical bourgeois, Biedermeier taste with one special feature: the preponderance of Nazarene painters, whose pious style the prelate considered most suitable for contemporary religious works of art. His art patronage extended to Gebhard Flatz (1800-1881), another Nazarene of Viennese origin, who spent much time in Rome with Overbeck, Carl von Blaas (1815-1894), and many others<sup>204</sup>, including the Düsseldorf Nazarenes, like the old Franz Ittenbach (1813-1879), who too was earlier in Rome.<sup>205</sup>

On 12 October, 1875, Primate Simor opened his private collection to the public "in the greatest silence and without any ceremoniousness", as the keeper of the collection, Ferenc Maszlaghy (1839-1917)<sup>206</sup> notes in his very detailed description of the exhibition that appeared in 1876.<sup>207</sup> The "Simor Gallery" was temporarily installed on the upper-floor large hall of the building of the Primate's and the Cathedral Chapter's Library. The installation contained 206 paintings in one, very long hall that was divided by windows into 11 large sections, and there were 10 cabinet rooms as well. The left side of the first three halls contained early works from Hungary, on the right, there were "several old Byzantine style paintings". The only Sieneese work discussed in this thesis that may have been already in Simor's possession, Giovanni di Paolo's *Nativity* (Cat. 11) cannot be identified.

<sup>202</sup> Cf. Gerevich ed. 1948, 145-146. Schoeffmann mostly copied works in the museums of Vienna.

<sup>203</sup> Despite the variety of objects Simor collected, he considered his collection primarily a *pinacotheca* (cf. note 200 above). He had very little interest in early sculpture.

<sup>204</sup> Eduard Steinle (1810-1886), Michael Rieser (1828-1905).

<sup>205</sup> Ittenbach travelled to Italy 1839 with Carl Müller and Wilhelm von Schadow, and joined Overbeck's circle in Rome together with Ernst Deger and Andreas Müller. In 1841, he visited Siena, Florence, and Venice. He received many commissions from aristocrats and ecclesiastics. Simor commissioned from him a *St. John Baptist* in 1878 (CM, inv. 55.418) and purchased a Madonna from him in 1875 (CM, inv. 55.417).

<sup>206</sup> Ferenc Maszlaghy was a theologian and ecclesiastical writer who studied in Budapest and Nagyszombat, and was ordained priest in 1864. He was a chaplain in Muzsla and a tutor in the family of Móricz Pálffy in Pozsony before he became a professor of theology and preacher at the Academy of Law in the same city. He lived in Esztergom from 1871. He first taught at Esztergom, then became Simor's archivist and notary of the *sacra sedes* (ecclesiastic tribunal). He accompanied Simor to Rome in 1878 on occasion of the election of Pope Leo XIII. In 1889 he became a canon in Esztergom; in 1913, a bishop of Almissa (now Omiš, Croatia). See his necrologue by Béla Tárkányi, in *Katholikus Szemle*, I, 1-4, 1887, 24-35.

<sup>207</sup> Maszlaghy 1876. The report mentions Simor's book and print collection but describes in detail the gallery only.

### *Acquisition the Bertinelli Collection*

The purchase of the entire Bertinelli gallery in 1878 was without doubt Simor's most important acquisition. However, neither Bertinelli's person, nor the circumstances of the purchase were previously known, and in the light of recent findings Simor's role in the story must be somewhat reconsidered, although this does not in the least decrease the importance of the new acquisition. It recently emerged from archival research that Simor was in fact not the first one to whom the Bertinelli collection was offered in Hungary, and the collection ended up in Esztergom after complicated negotiations lasting three years.

After previous failures to sell his collection, Raffaele Bertinelli contacted Gyula Bartalos (1839-1923)<sup>208</sup>, a young priest from Eger and then living in Rome, in 1875 to offer his collection to a rich prelate in Hungary. Remarkably enough, the young Bartalos fully realized the exceptional occasion in the offer and remained the real moving force behind the purchase until its completion. Moved by patriotic considerations, Bartalos first did everything in his power to convince his own archdiocese in Eger to buy the gallery. His letters from this time reveal a precocious modernity of thought. Bartalos deplores the fact that Eger has oleographs instead of original paintings, and he points out that Bertinelli's pictures "are extremely important from an art historical point of view, especially for a country like ours" [probably meaning where the Turkish occupation in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries destroyed the medieval heritage of the important centres]. He insists that for Eger, where the foundation of a university was planned in this time, this is a unique occasion and that the invested price will be amply returned by the tourists attracted by the gallery. His letters from this time were addressed to Béla Tárkányi, canon of Eger, himself a collector, who however was not nearly as enthusiastic as Bartalos, and the canons of Eger refused the offer because of the costs (which were actually not high).

Still at Bartalos' insistence, who wanted to see the gallery at least in Hungary, if not in Eger, the pictures were eventually bought with Tárkányi's intermediation for Primate Simor, but only after Raffaele Bertinelli's death in March 1878, when Bertinelli's heirs lowered the price even further. Contrary to what has been claimed in previous literature,<sup>209</sup> Simor never saw these paintings before they were shipped to Esztergom, although he had been to Rome while they were on sale and Bartalos desperately begged him to go and see them for himself. Before the purchase, Simor asked for the Ferenc Szoldatits' opinion and sent the learned

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<sup>208</sup> Gyula Bartalos was a friend of Ferenc Szoldatits, and later distinguished himself as a historian, poet, writer, archivist and museologist in Eger. He also wrote about Italian literature and art (*Az Olasz Irodalom es Művészet Aranykorszaka* [The golden age of Italian literature and art], 1913).

<sup>209</sup> Prokoppné Stengl 1960, 96; Prokoppné Stengl 1977 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978), 8.

canon of Esztergom József Dankó to view the collection and report on it. Simor eventually yielded to the repeated appeals by Bartalos and Tárkányi, but he also clearly expressed his approval and contentment after the arrival of the collection in Esztergom. The idea that emerges from these course of events that Simor was not displeased by this acquisition but neither particularly enthusiastic about it, and his appreciation for early Italian art was not parallel to his admiration of Nazarene art but rather, he came to appreciate early Italian paintings through and because of his taste for Nazarene painting.

The collection was thus acquired for Esztergom in its entirety and now forms a core part of the Italian painting collection, covering especially the periods between the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century and the first third of the 16<sup>th</sup>. The works were catalogued by Ferenc Maszlaghy after their arrival on the basis of the expertise written by Overbeck and Minardi (with some pieces were added afterwards), which survives in the Primatial Archives of Esztergom.

By the end of 1878 the Simor collection contained 333 works (mostly paintings) and, in a separate collection, some wax statuettes.<sup>210</sup>

### ***Foundation of the Christian Museum and its early history***

In the 1880s, Simor began to make final arrangements for his collection. In 1881-82, he transferred the exhibition to its final place, to the second floor of the new Primate's Palace.<sup>211</sup> Perhaps shaken by the death of Ipolyi in 1886 and in knowledge of his last will, on 5 May, 1887, Simor called the cathedral chapter together and bequeathed his large collection and his extraordinary library to the Cathedral of Esztergom, to be cared for by the Cathedral chapter. In his speech, he summed up his motivations for collecting, emphasizing how Esztergom was famous for its culture and art before the Turkish destruction and how he himself wished to do what he could afford, ever since he became Bishop of Győr, to contribute to the "Church's mission to diffuse knowledge and cultivate the arts".<sup>212</sup>

At the beginning of 1891, on 23 January, Simor died of pneumonia. With the death of its founder, the cause of the museum became marginal for the new head of the Hungarian Catholic Church: Kolos Vaszary (primate between 1891 and 1912) cared little about the treasures gathered by his predecessor. There is no more trace of the activity of Ferenc Maszlaghy and there is generally very little information from this period.

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<sup>210</sup> Maszlaghy 1878.

<sup>211</sup> The Primate's Palace was built by József Lippert with the incorporation of the buildings of a former Jesuit convent at the site. The ground plan of this first permanent exhibition is published in Kóhalmi-Klimstein 1886, 90, illustrating a detailed description of the installation of the museum (pp. 90-93).

<sup>212</sup> The full text of his speech delivered on this occasion was published by Walter 1891, 90-91.

Under the archiepiscopate of Sándor Csernoch (1913-1927), the previous secretary of Simor, the museum gradually revived. In 1916, one of the most outstanding art historians of the time, Tibor Gerevich (1882 – 1954), was asked to revise the collection, and in 1917, he became the supervisor of the Christian Museum.<sup>213</sup> Under his leadership, restoration and scholarly research began and photographic campaigns were carried out. Most importantly, the museum was enriched by several large collections, among which the rest of the Ipolyi collection had the greatest significance.

### ***Acquisition of the Ipolyi Collection***

Arnold Ipolyi's last will stipulated that his art collection cannot be alienated but must form part of a "christian museum" to be set up at his episcopal seat. If such a museum is not created, it must become part of a Christian Museum in Budapest or Esztergom. Since Ipolyi failed to obtain the royal permission for his last will, its validity was debated after Ipolyi's death.

After World War I, when parts of Hungary were occupied by Rumanian, Serbian and Czech troops in 1918 and Várád was being threatened by Rumanian forces, Primate Csernoch and Tibor Gerevich remembered Ipolyi's last will. Since no Christian Museum was set up in Várád or Budapest, they secured the permission of the minister of culture to transfer the collection to Hungary. In the first days of 1919, Gerevich personally packed up the Ipolyi collection and brought it by train to Hungary. With Esztergom being endangered by the Czech troops, the collection stayed in Budapest, deposited in the Hungarian National Museum until it could be safely transferred to Esztergom in 1920. Its legal status was not finalized until 1926, after an international law case initiated by a citizen of Várád, questioning the legality of the transfer, was won in Paris by Tibor Gerevich and the lawyer Aurél Egri.<sup>214</sup>

Just as in the case of the National Picture Gallery, Ipolyi's works proved complementary to the Italian paintings acquired earlier: the earliest work dates from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century and nearly all the works until the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century in the Museum come from Ipolyi. After the acquisition of Ipolyi's paintings, no more Sieneese paintings from the period considered entered the collection of the Christian Museum.

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<sup>213</sup> Béla Zsolt Szakács, "Gerevich Tibor (1882-1954)" in Markója and Bardoly ed. 2006, 178-204, with previous bibl. The art historian Gerevich was a university professor, member of the Hungarian Academy, director of the Accademia d'Ungheria in Roma, and president of the Műemlékek Országos Bizottsága (National Committee of Historical Monuments). Although Gerevich is often considered to be the director of the museum, he was in fact its scholarly leader. The museum had no such position as a director and the Catholic Church entrusted the Canon Antal Lepold with the ecclesiastical supervision of the collection.

<sup>214</sup> For the details and archival sources of these events, see Cséfalvay 1989, 99-100.

## CHAPTER III

### EARLY SIENESE PAINTINGS IN HUNGARY, 1420-1520: A SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND NOTES ON MUSEOLOGY AND CONSERVATION HISTORY

#### *Introduction*

In 1867, when Arnold Ipolyi returned from the auction of Johann Anton Ramboux in Cologne with over a hundred early Italian paintings, Sieneese paintings suddenly made their appearance in Hungary in large numbers. As has been mentioned, early art historical research about these works was carried out by their owners, Ramboux and Ipolyi themselves, who both had a deep scholarly interest in their collections. Because of its precise descriptions and fairly reliable attributions, Ramboux's catalogue of 1862 must have been an important model and source for Ipolyi's research, although how exactly Ipolyi made use of it is difficult to say since Ipolyi's promised catalogue, or even an inventory compiled by him, has not come down to us.

When Ipolyi's sixty paintings entered the National Picture Gallery in 1872, they were exhibited and regularly listed in unillustrated, brief catalogues published in Hungarian and German in the 1870s.<sup>215</sup> Ipolyi's acquisition of the major part of the Ramboux collection in 1867 did not remain without echo in international circles. In 1875-76, Carl von Lützwow published a report in the *Kunstchronik* on his stay in Budapest, which included an informative description of the National Picture Gallery (Landes-Gemäldegalerie), including a conscientiously compiled list of Ipolyi's paintings.<sup>216</sup> Among the latter, Lützwow noted first of all the preponderance of the early Sieneese school.

The rest of the Ipolyi collection remained in complete oblivion for half a century after Fraknói's report written in 1871.<sup>217</sup> The pictures were regularly remembered only in the various editions of Crowe's and Cavalcaselle's survey of Italian painting,<sup>218</sup> but the editors were not aware of the location of the works. The brief list compiled of Ipolyi's collection in 1896 on occasion of its exhibition in Várad contains the subject matter ("Madonna"; "Death

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<sup>215</sup> *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie...*1873; *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie...* 1876; *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie...* 1879; *Az Országos Képtár...*1878; *Az Országos Képtár...*1879.

<sup>216</sup> Lützwow 1875-1876.

<sup>217</sup> [Fraknói] 1871.

<sup>218</sup> For the history of scholarship it is worth mentioning that Crowe's and Cavalcaselle's comments in the first edition in 1866 imply that they knew at least some of Ramboux's pictures directly since they doubt the correctness of Ramboux's attribution (cf. Cat. 13, Pellegrino di Mariano's *St. Catherine* and *St. Nicholas*) or transcribe an inscription differently (cf. Cat. 26: differently from Ramboux, Crowe and Cavalcaselle transcribed the full text of the – reconstructed – inscription on the bottom frame).

of the Virgin”; Holy woman”; “Two holy Bishops” etc.), general and rather unreliable information at the beginning of each division about century, school, and the typical medium and support of works (the early Italians are listed under “Byzantine works on wood”; “Italian paintings on wood from the 14<sup>th</sup> c.”; “Italian paintings on wood from the 15<sup>th</sup> c.”; “oil paintings from the 15<sup>th</sup> c.” etc.).<sup>219</sup> Artists and other specific information are rarely provided and then clearly on the basis of information written on the reverses or the frames of the works. It seems certain that Gyula Némethy, the author of this inventory, had neither Ramboux’s catalogue nor any list compiled by Ipolyi at his disposition. The paintings from the Ipolyi collections were rediscovered for scholarship only after their arrival in Esztergom in 1920.

### **1. Budapest**

In contrast, Ipolyi’s paintings donated to the National Picture Gallery of Pest in 1872 remained relatively well known ever since, together with the Griselda Master’s *Tiberius Gracchus*, that had already been in the gallery (Cat. 30).<sup>220</sup> After the early lists, the first catalogues were written by director Károly Pulszky, who was a good connoisseur of Italian art, comparable at that time in Hungary to Arnold Ipolyi only. In essence, his methodology comes up to the standards of modern scholarship. Rejecting the earlier, naïve and high-sounding attributions, he declared “Each master must be dealt with individually: one must get familiar with his major works abroad, study scholarly literature and published documents related to him, read authors from his time, and only then can an independent opinion be formed of him and his art.”<sup>221</sup>

His list compiled in 1881 accompanied the opening of a reorganized exhibition, installed by himself. In this work, Pulszky’s attributions are rather uncertain yet and far from those of Ramboux (with whose catalogue he was perhaps unfamiliar at that time?), while in his catalogue of 1888 he seems to have relied on Ramboux’s attributions to a great extent.<sup>222</sup> The catalogue of 1888 is more than a mere list: it contains short descriptions of the works and a ground plan of gallery. It was also in 1888 that the works received their present inventory

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<sup>219</sup> Némethy ed. 1896.

<sup>220</sup> The Esterházy gallery, of which this work formed part of, was regularly cared for by painter-restorers from the late 18<sup>th</sup> c. on. In the 1820s the painters Ferdinand Waldmüller and Erasmus Engerth conserved, and sometimes cleaned, the works. After 1850, the painter and restorer Gustav Kratzmann took care of works. He moved to Pest together with the collection and curated it until 1880 (Móré 1977, 15).

<sup>221</sup> Cited by Pogány and Bacher 1956, 23.

<sup>222</sup> Pulszky 1881; Pulszky 1888.

numbers. Many paintings were treated and cleaned in this period by a restorer from Dresden, Alois Hauser. Reports say he restored several hundred paintings between 1880 and 1884.<sup>223</sup>

Pulszky continued to work on a detailed catalogue until he was suspended from his position in 1896 because of his allegedly insufficient settlement of the accounts of money he spent on new purchases. A catalogue published in 1897 with the strange title “A descriptive list of the art works in the National Picture Gallery, with reference to the earlier catalogues”<sup>224</sup> is very likely his work, as – among other things – some corresponding attributions and descriptions with his previous catalogues suggest (cf. for example, Cat. 4). Since by that time he became a *persona non grata*, the publishers apparently preferred to credit him only with the term “with reference to the earlier catalogues”.<sup>225</sup> This catalogue, the first serious scholarly work of this kind in Hungary, provides technique, measurements, descriptions, earlier literature, earlier attributions (including citations from the descriptions of Ramboux’s catalogue), and is complete.<sup>226</sup> As it separates the exhibited works from those in deposit and elsewhere, it also gives a good idea of what was on show at the time: among the 69 paintings shown in the first room, every work studied in this thesis was on display, except the two works purchased by Pulszky in 1895, which were probably still being assessed (Cat. 5 and 21).

At this time, the Gallery already had extensive international relations. From Budapest, numerous pieces are mentioned in Berenson’s first list from 1897 (Cat. 1, 4, 7, 12, 15, 19, 29), to which further pieces were added in the second edition in 1909 (Cat. 25). In 1900, Adolfo Venturi published a long article in *L’Arte* on the Italian paintings in the Picture Gallery of Budapest, organized by schools. He did not find any Sieneese works worth of interest, but made the first, fundamental steps towards the study of the Griselda Master by connecting the *Tiberius Gracchus* with other works by the master whom he believed to be Umbrian (cf. Cat. 30).<sup>227</sup> A report by Wilhelm Suida on the “quadri italiani primitivi” followed in the same

<sup>223</sup> Pogány and Bacher 1956, 23; Móré 1977, 15.

<sup>224</sup> *Az Országos Képtár...1897*. This catalogue has a shorter Hungarian version, also from 1897 (2<sup>nd</sup> revised ed.: *Az Országos Képtár... 1901*), which omits from its title “with reference to the earlier catalogues”, does not provide earlier bibliography, and includes only the exhibited works. Even shorter versions that omit the description of the works were published in other languages (German, cf. *Verzeichniss...1897*; French ed.: *Catalogue des Peintures de la Gallerie Nationale de Budapest*, Budapest: Athenaeum, 1898).

<sup>225</sup> This was noted by Pogány and Bacher 1956, 26-27, in an evaluation of Pulszky’s career, for which see *ibid.* 22-27.

<sup>226</sup> Based on this thorough census of paintings is the monumental four-volume corpus of the holdings of the MFA, compiled by the secretary János Peregriny (1909-1915).

<sup>227</sup> Venturi 1990.

journal in 1907 which lists a large number of Sienese paintings, albeit exclusively those of the Trecento.<sup>228</sup>

The next curator of the institution, Gábor Térey (1864-1927) was a highly qualified, professional art historian with an even broader network of international relationships.<sup>229</sup> He had studied and taught at several prestigious universities abroad (Basel, Strassbourg, Freiburg) before he was invited to work for the collection in 1896. His expertise was wide-ranging in many areas of the fine arts and he had a major role in the set-up of the new Museum of Fine Arts. In the planning stage of the Museum, Térey visited many large museums in Europe and thus acquired a familiarity with the museological world of this time. Despite his unquestionable merits, he never became the director of the museum but he had the leading scholarly role and managed many aspects of museum life at a professional level unparalleled at the time. In Térey's time, the museum already had a permanent restorer in the person of József Konstantin Beer (1862-1933, employed from 1893)<sup>230</sup> and photo campaigns were executed by professional European photo studios.<sup>231</sup>

For the opening of the new Museum of Fine Arts, Térey installed the permanent exhibition. The paintings were arranged according to periods and schools and hung in several tiers above one another, according to the common practice of the time.<sup>232</sup> He withdrew many works from the exhibition and placed them in deposit; including Sano's *Banquet of Herod* (Cat. 4), the *St. Bernardino* by Sano's follower (Cat. 7), Benvenuto's *St. Angelus* (Cat. 18), Cozzarelli's altarpiece (Cat. 26), Girolamo's *Vision of St. Bernardino* (Cat. 32), and the *Christ Child and the Young St. John the Baptist* after Pinturicchio (Cat. 29). Térey wrote a voluminous catalogue for this permanent exhibition, which appeared in Hungarian and French in 1906. It presents the works in the order of the installation, from room to room.<sup>233</sup> The

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<sup>228</sup> Suida 1907.

<sup>229</sup> For an excellent and richly documented contribution on Gábor Térey's career, see Radványi 2006.

<sup>230</sup> On Beer, see Móré 1977, 15-17. According to Móré 1977, Beer was trained in Munich and Milan, and was invited to work for the Gallery in 1893 and worked for 36 years. He recorded his interventions which included conservation of the support, fixing loose paint, careful and moderate cleaning, removal of overpaintings, and inpainting. Móré justly points out that in the plans of the new building of the Museum of Fine Arts, no restorer studio was included, which subsequently created enormous difficulties. Móré mentions (p. 17) that from 1930 László Vári and Domokos Varjú worked as restorers but no documentation of their work survives.

<sup>231</sup> Radványi 2006, 94. Térey employed the Braun studio in Paris, the publishers Hanfstaengl in Munich and Julius Bard in Berlin (the latter photographed the works for the 1916 German edition of Térey's catalogue), and the Weinwurm studio in Vienna.

<sup>232</sup> Térey 1906<sup>1</sup>; 1096<sup>2</sup>. On the first permanent exhibition and its later modifications: Pogány and Bacher 1956, 88; Radványi 2006, 42-44, 91; A ground plan of the 1906 exhibition is included in Térey's accompanying catalogues (1916<sup>1</sup>; 1916<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>233</sup> Térey 1906<sup>1</sup>, Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>. Only the Hungarian version contains the list of the works in deposit (Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>, 387-410).

catalogue appeared in several subsequent, revised editions and in many different languages.<sup>234</sup> Térey's catalogues brought a new standard of scholarship; they are notable for their ample documentation, which included the transcriptions of signatures and inscriptions (in line-drawing) and the reproduction of important works. His bibliographies often report the opinions of colleagues whom he consulted. For the Quattrocento Sieneese works, these included Robert Langton Douglas, Adolfo Venturi, Bernard Berenson, Cornelius von Fabriczy (Karl Frey), Wilhelm Suida, and Georg Gronau.<sup>235</sup> Thanks to Térey's research and connections, many of the Quattrocento Sieneese paintings became known to specialists worldwide, and were mentioned in encyclopedias (Thieme and Becker ed. 1907-50), surveys (the editions of Crowe and Cavalcaselle; Venturi 1901-40; Van Marle 1923-38), oeuvre lists (Berenson, Gengaro), and monographs on Sassetta, Sano di Pietro, Giovanni di Paolo, and Fungai.

The acquisition – in reality, a permanent deposit from the Hungarian National Museum – of a large part of the Pálffy collection in 1912 was a sensation to the art world, since it contained previously completely unknown paintings. To the international public, the friends Arduino Colasanti and Tibor Gerevich introduced the most important pieces on the pages of the *Rassegna d'Arte*.<sup>236</sup> No mention is made of the more modest pieces, such as Fungai's Madonna (Cat. 27). Térey completed the entire catalogue of the newly acquired works in a remarkably short time (1913<sup>2</sup>).

For the research of the Sieneese works, Térey's friendly relations with Mary and Bernard Berenson should be mentioned, which culminated in a visit of the Berensons to Budapest 1925, reciprocated by Térey at the Villa I Tatti in Florence in 1926.<sup>237</sup>

From 1922, Andor Pigler (1899-1992) worked as a Museum Custodian, and, when Térey went into pension in 1925, Pigler became his intellectual heir.<sup>238</sup> With the assistance of

<sup>234</sup> Térey 1910, 1913<sup>1</sup>, 1916 (contains exhibited works only, all of which are reproduced), 1918, 1924 (with a ground plan of the exhibition, contains exhibited works only, which at this time included Sassetta's *St. Thomas Aquinas*, Sano's *Madonna* (but not the *Banquet of Herod*); Giovanni di Paolo's *St. Matthew*, Fungai's *Madonna*, the Griselda Master's *Tiberius Gracchus*, the *Nativity* from Benvenuto's circle.). For an evaluation of Térey's catalogues and working methods, Radványi 2006, 129-30 and *passim*.

<sup>235</sup> Térey 1906<sup>1</sup>; 1096<sup>2</sup>; Térey 1924.

<sup>236</sup> Colasanti and Gerevich 1912. The article is not very informative about the origins and the general nature of the collection, and is mostly limited to a brief description of the most important pieces, not only the ones that were given to Budapest but also others that remained in the various residences of the Pálffy family. This article is identical with the one misleadingly entitled Arduino Colasanti, "Quadri italiani nelle gallerie minori nell'Ungheria", in *L'Italia e l'arte straniera. Atti del X congresso internazionale di storia dell'arte in Roma*. Rome, 1912 [published in 1922], 336, where actually only a two-line reference is found to Colasanti and Gerevich 1912.

<sup>237</sup> Radványi 2006, 144, 363-37.

<sup>238</sup> For a personal recollection, a biography, and bibliography of and about Andor Pigler: Miklós Mojzer, "Pigler Andor (1899-1992)", in Markója and Bardoly ed. 2006, II, 407-421.

Pigler, director Elek Petrovics reorganized the permanent collection in 1934-35. He greatly reduced the number of pictures and hung them in a single row.<sup>239</sup> Related to this new exhibition, Pigler published his first catalogue in 1937, which contained the exhibited works only. To judge from this catalogue, more than half of the works studied here were on show (Sassetta's predella piece, Cat. 1; Sano's *Banquet of Herod* and *Madonna*, Cat. 4, 5; Giovanni di Paolo's *St. Matthew*, Cat. 12; the *Madonna* by Francesco di Giorgio's follower, Cat. 15; the *Nativity* from the circle of Benvenuto di Giovanni, Cat. 19; Cozzarelli's altarpiece, Cat. 26; Fungai's *Virgin and Child*, Cat. 27, the *Tiberius Gracchus* by the Griselda Master, Cat. 30).

Pigler initially worked with the help of Jolán Balogh and relied on Térey's research but did not cite any of Térey's fundamental catalogues until the last, third edition of his own catalogue in 1967, which appeared in German.<sup>240</sup> It is a revised and complete catalogue of the collection, and constitutes to this day a basic source for the holdings of the Museum. For the Sieneese paintings, Pigler cited extensively international literature, and usually followed Berenson's attributions, but also considered the opinions of Crowe and Cavalsaselle, Venturi, and Van Marle.

In the meantime, an important event for the museum world was Mauro Pelliccioli's stay in Hungary after the discovery of Italian frescos in the castle of Esztergom in 1934, which Pelliccioli came to treat. The renowned Italian restorer propagated the preservation of the original aspect of work of art as the most important goal of restoration. The internationally trained restorer of the Museum of Fine Arts of the time, György Kákay Szabó (1903-1964, employed from 1933), his former student, embraced his views.<sup>241</sup>

In World War II both the museum and the collection suffered damages, but fortunately no immense losses occurred. The permanent collection reopened in 1949-50 and important structural changes followed: in 1949 a Restoration Department was created, first headed by Kákay-Szabó.<sup>242</sup> In 1957, the Hungarian works were separated to form an independent

<sup>239</sup> On the new exhibition, see Petrovics 1935, esp. 3-4, Pigler 1937, 9, and Pogány and Bacher 1956, 91, figs. on pp. 100-101.

<sup>240</sup> Pigler went into pension in 1964, and the manuscript for this catalogue was closed already in 1963. A revised and complete catalogue of the collection appeared already in 1954 in Hungarian (Pigler 1954).

<sup>241</sup> Móré 1977, 17-19. Kákay-Szabó studied restoration in the Brera in Milan with Pelliccioli; in Berlin with Helmut Ruhemann, and in Vienna at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, where he became familiar with scientific methods such as X-ray.

<sup>242</sup> Móré 1977, 19-20. The department was later lead by Sándor Devich (1894-1976, head of department: 1955-62) and Miklós Móré (head of department: 1962-78). From 1990, Miklós Szentkirályi is the head of the conservation department. Also in 1949 the first school of conservation training opened at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest under the pressure of World War II damages. As far as the conservation history of the Quattrocento Sieneese works in Budapest is concerned, they regularly underwent minor conservation interventions but few of them were fully restored unless this was inevitable for their condition. Some works were

museum (the present-day Hungarian National Gallery) and a new permanent exhibition was set up at the Museum of Fine Arts by Pigler in 1958, who directed the museum between 1956 and 1964. His exhibition concept remained substantially unchanged until 1998, during the directorships of Klára Garas (1964-1984), Ferenc Merényi (1984-89) and partly that of Miklós Mojzer (1989-2004). This included only a few of the Sieneese paintings studied here: the works by Sassetta, Sano di Pietro, Giovanni di Paolo, the Griselda Master, Girolamo di Benvenuto, and Fungai's Madonna. With minor changes, the same works feature in the new permanent exhibition inaugurated in 2006.<sup>243</sup>

In the rich and excellent Old Masters' Gallery of the museum, the Quattrocento Sieneese paintings always played a minor role. They were little studied until the 1960s, when two scholars, Miklós Mojzer and Miklós Boskovits – who both had close ties with the Christian Museum in Esztergom as well<sup>244</sup> – took interest in them. Of special importance was Miklós Boskovits' book on the *Tuscan Paintings of the Early Renaissance*,<sup>245</sup> part of a series published in Hungarian, English and German that presented jointly select works from the museums in Budapest and Esztergom. Arguably, this publication contributed most to international awareness about many Sieneese paintings in Hungary, and it remains fundamental for their research. For several works studied here (Cat. 4, 8, 21, 27, 32), Boskovits' brief but very insightful comments constituted the first serious discussion, and all of his attributions remain valid to this day.

In the past decades, Vilmos Tátrai studied the Sieneese paintings in Budapest systematically, contributing especially to our knowledge about the Griselda Master's panels (Cat. 30)<sup>246</sup> and about Fungai's altarpiece, which he first published (Cat. 28).<sup>247</sup> It is also his merit to have written the first complete illustrated summary catalogue of the Italian collection in 1991, which is the most recent source of information for the Sieneese works in Budapest.<sup>248</sup>

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restored by graduating students of the Conservation Department of the Academy of Fine Arts under close professional supervision (Cat. 15; Cat. 29).

<sup>243</sup> In the meantime, the museum building was undergoing a general reconstruction that entailed frequent changes in the installation. In the new exhibition of 2006, Matteo di Giovanni's *St. Bartholomew* received a place (Cat. 22) whereas Girolamo di Benvenuto's *The Virgin appears to St. Bernardino* (Cat. 32) was transferred to the deposits. On the new permanent exhibition of 2006, cf. Tátrai 2006<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>244</sup> For Mojzer's contribution, see Mojzer 1964<sup>1</sup>. Mojzer worked in the Christian Museum between 1955-57 and together with Boskovits he wrote the Italian section of the catalogue of the Esztergom collection (Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964), for which see below.

<sup>245</sup> Boskovits 1968 and revised ed. 1978.

<sup>246</sup> Tátrai 1979<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>247</sup> Tátrai 1979<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>248</sup> In Tátrai ed. 1991.

## 2. Esztergom

The first Sieneese paintings in Esztergom were acquired by the founder of the Christian Museum, Primate János Simor. With the arrival of the Bertinelli collection in 1878, five important Sieneese works entered the collection (four of which are discussed here: Cat. 2, 17, 24, 32) though they were hardly recognized as such at the time. In a letter, Canon Béla Tárkányi, who arranged the purchase of the Bertinelli collection, solicited Arnold Ipolyi, then residing in his nearby seat in Besztercebánya, to come to Esztergom and express his opinion about the paintings. Ipolyi was unfortunately not able to satisfy this request for quite some time. When Bertinelli's paintings arrived, the keeper of the collection, Canon Ferenc Maszlaghy recorded the attributions of Overbeck and Minardi on the back of the paintings in Hungarian, then gave new inventory numbers to the entire collection and recorded them on labels carrying Archbishop Simor's arms (Fig. 2/4). After completing this work, Maszlaghy published the first inventory of the collection at the end of 1878. In this, he conscientiously kept the previous attributions for the Bertinelli pictures, but in the case of Giovanni di Paolo's *Nativity* (Cat. 11), the only Quattrocento Sieneese work not acquired from Bertinelli and thus lacking Overbeck's and Minardi's expertise, he must have been at a loss and published it with an attribution to "Giovanni Cimabue". Maszlaghy maintained the same attributions in the second, enlarged edition of his catalogue in 1891, which, importantly, included for the first time provenance information as well.

The collection must have lain dormant for more than two decades after Simor's death in 1891. Photographs or publications are not known from this period. The generally well-informed Bernard Berenson mentioned no Sieneese works from Esztergom in his first lists from 1897 and 1909.

It was the remarkable international, and especially Italian, relations of Tibor Gerevich (1882-1954) that set off the international fame of the Christian Museum. Gerevich had studied art history in Bologna and made friends with Arduino Colasanti<sup>249</sup>, the later editor of the *Bolletino d'Arte*. Colasanti visited Esztergom in the company of Gerevich and Simon Meller and published afterwards an illustrated report of his discovery in *La Tribuna* of 8 November, 1910, and an unillustrated two-page excerpt of it published both in the *Rassegna d'arte* and the *Bolletino d'Arte* entitled, respectively, "Visioni sconosciute d'arte italiana" and "Quadri ignorati in una collezione ungherese".<sup>250</sup> Of the hidden treasures there, about which there was

<sup>249</sup> Béla Zsolt Szakács, "Gerevich Tibor (1882-1954)," in Markója and Bardoly ed. 2006, 178-204, with previous bibl., esp. 182-86.

<sup>250</sup> Colasanti 1910<sup>2</sup>, Colasanti 1910<sup>1</sup>. Colasanti became the editor of the *Bollettino* in 1919.

“neppure una riga finora che segnalasse l'importanza della numerosa collezione di quadri che occupa un intero piano del palazzo capitolare di Esztergom”, he gave a report, mentioning almost exclusively Bertinelli's paintings. Among them, he noted Matteo di Giovanni's *Madonna and Child with Two Angels* (Cat. 24). Colasanti still cited the works under Maszlaghy's inventory numbers.

Tibor Gerevich, who after his return from Italy worked as Assistant Keeper at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest (from 1911), became the first expert art historian of the Christian Museum (1916) and under his direction the institution entered into a new museological phase. Gerevich reorganized the collection according to schools and chronological order, established a new (but by now lost) numbering of the works – an inventory system or exhibition numbers –,<sup>251</sup> and undertook serious scholarly research.<sup>252</sup> Throughout the many decades of his activity, Gerevich worked with the erudite canon Antal Lepold (1880-1971), secretary to Primate Csernoch and the Cathedral chapter's supervisor of the primate's collections, which were at that time not yet separated into institutionally separate collections and included the gallery, the treasury, the archives, and the library as well.<sup>253</sup> The museum was open to the public on certain days of the week; all visits and guided tours were handled by the single custodian for many decades, József Pócs.<sup>254</sup>

The first regular restorer of the museum, Sebestyén Endrődi (1862-1927) had been working in the museum from 1915 at the request of Archbishop Csernoch. Endrődi used paraffin-wax to impregnate disintegrating wood supports. His surface cleaning methods, for which he used acidic materials, were disastrous and caused irreversible damages. He treated several of Bertinelli's paintings, which had been completely overpainted and are now

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<sup>251</sup> This inventory system or exhibition numbering is unrecorded systematically in the Christian Museum but has been in part reconstructed by the present writer on the basis of various, dispersed references (reported here in notes to the works). The numbers are not recorded on the works themselves nor do they appear in the catalogue edited by Gerevich (1948), thus they may not be proper inventory numbers but rather display numbers. The numbers are in fact recorded on labels written in red ink that served as captions to the exhibition during Gerevich's time and are now tacked to the back of many works (Fig. 9/2) as well as in handwritten notes in a copy of Maszlaghy's 1891 catalogue in the CM; in citations of contemporary literature (many in Van Marle 1923-38) and in other archives sources in the CM. The full reconstruction of this numbering would be of considerable importance, since restoration documentations from the period between the two world wars often refer to the works by these numbers only.

<sup>252</sup> Gerevich published a series of articles already in 1916. These deal with the history and works of the museum, mostly concentrating on old Hungarian masters (cf. Béla Zsolt Szakács, in Markója and Bardoly ed. 2006, 186 n. 54, with a list of Gerevich's publications).

<sup>253</sup> Consequently, the name Christian Museum was used not only for the gallery of fine arts but for all of the primatial collections (which were sometimes cited in foreign literature as Archiepiscopal Museum, Museo Diocesano, etc.). The gallery itself was often referred to as the Galleria Arcivescovile or Galleria della Principe Primate d'Ungheria and so on.

<sup>254</sup> Mojzer 1964<sup>2</sup>, 226 n. 33.

seriously abraded (Cat. 17, 31; Figs. 17/3, 31/3).<sup>255</sup> At the same time, it is impossible to tell now in what condition the paintings were before their overpainting and how much of the damage now perceptible was caused by earlier, 19<sup>th</sup>-century interventions.

The first known photographic campaign also dates from Gerevich's time, and was carried out by the renowned photojournalist Rudolf Balogh (1879-1944). It survives in a series of postcards whose date remains to be established but which provide invaluable information as to the repainted condition of the works from the Bertinelli collection. Some of the photographs in the series show works from the Ipolyi collection, and thus cannot date from before 1920.<sup>256</sup>

Photographs record also the installation set up by Gerevich.<sup>257</sup> The works were displayed in several tiers, grouped by school and period. In one room, Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio's *Assumption* and *Bust of the Virgin* (Cat. 2-3), Pellegrino di Mariano's *St. Catherine of Siena* (Cat. 13) Neroccio's *St. John the Evangelist*, *St. Francis of Assisi*, *Virgin and Child with Sts. Sebastian and Catherine* (Cat. 16-17), and the *Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome and Bernardino* by Sano di Pietro's workshop (Cat. 6) can be made out on a screen.

Among Gerevich's great merits was the acquisition of several large collections, among them the rest of the Ipolyi collection in 1920, by which the Sieneese paintings in the museum suddenly became numerous. In 1928, Gerevich published a fundamental survey of the gallery, which can be deservedly considered as its first serious scholarly discussion.<sup>258</sup> Although the essay was published in Hungarian in a volume dedicated to the new Primate of Esztergom, Jusztinián Serédi (1927-1945), it reached an international audience. Four works reproduced in it were almost immediately requested for the *Exhibition of Italian Art 1200-1900* held in 1930 in London at the Royal Academy of Arts (including Cat. 2, 9, 23).<sup>259</sup>

Later the same year (18 October – 16 November), the Országos Magyar Képzőművészeti Társulat (Hungarian National Association of Fine Arts) organized a large memorial exhibition in the Műcsarnok (Exhibition Hall) in Budapest, entitled simply *Őszi*

<sup>255</sup> Endrődi usually marked the paintings that he treated on their reverse with the date and his signature, written in a thick blue pencil.

<sup>256</sup> Rudolf Balogh was active in Budapest from 1902 and opened his first studio in 1912. Neroccio's *Madonna* (Cat. 17) was photographed in the same series in a repainted condition (Fig. 17/3). The catalogue from 1948 (Gerevich ed., 1948, 81) claims that this painting was restored by Sebestyén Endrődi in 1917 (when the overpainting was presumably removed). This would mean a *terminus ante quem* of 1917 at least for this photograph but it is possible that the date of the restoration is given incorrectly in the catalogue of 1948 as Endrődi's name is not written, as usual, on the reverse of this work.

<sup>257</sup> The ground plan of the exhibition in Gerevich's time is illustrated in Lepold and Lippay [1938], XIII. The Italian paintings were in the second room divided into three parts by screens.

<sup>258</sup> Gerevich 1928.

<sup>259</sup> *Exhibition of Italian Art...* 1930; Balniel and Clark ed. 1931.

Kiállítás (Fall exhibition), which featured a selection of the outstanding works from the Ipolyi collection in Esztergom (including Cat. 3, 6, 9, 22, 23). Ipolyi's works conserved in the Museum of Fine Arts were not shown. A brief catalogue of the exhibition was written by Antal Lepold.<sup>260</sup>

It was around this time that international scholarship began to rediscover the paintings in Esztergom systematically, both through photographs circulating among scholars and through published literature. Many works are included in Raimond Van Marle's monumental *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting* (1923-38), and, within a few years, three informative surveys appeared from the pens of Otto Benesch (1929)<sup>261</sup>, Elena Berti Toesca (1932), and Giuseppe Delogu (1936).<sup>262</sup>

Berti Toesca's report remained for a long time the most substantial, richly illustrated foreign-language publication on the Italian paintings of the Christian Museum. In the company of Gerevich and Lepold, she visited Esztergom ("*dove non è facile arrivare*") and was especially struck by the richness of Sieneese paintings, followed by the Umbrian, Florentine, Venetian, and Lombard schools. Her contribution goes much beyond a simple enumeration of the works; she was one of the few scholars who called attention to the strongly restored condition of Pietro di Giovanni's *Assumption* (Cat. 2) and she took the occasion to correct attributions like that of the *Crucifixion of St. Peter*, which she attributed to Matteo di Giovanni for the first time (Cat. 22).<sup>263</sup>

Visits of other scholars to Hungary and Esztergom helped to spread international familiarity with the collection. It is not known if Bernard and Mary Berenson went to

<sup>260</sup> The exhibition was organized under the patronage of Primate Jusztinián Serédi on occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ipolyi's occupation of the chair of the Társulat in 1880 (Lepold 1930, 5-10). The paintings shown at this exhibition are marked by the label of the exhibition and labels with large black printed numbers which too relate to this exhibition although it is uncertain what exactly they refer to (Figs. 6/2; 9/2; 22/2; 23/2). Their importance lies in proving the provenance of a work from the Ipolyi collection in some uncertain cases (but for none of the works discussed here).

<sup>261</sup> Benesch wrote about the entire picture gallery. In his list, he highlighted several Quattrocento Sieneese paintings: Madonnas by Matteo di Giovanni (Cat. 23 or 24) and Neroccio (Cat. 17), two works by Giovanni di Paolo (Cat. 9, 11), and the *Crucifixion of St. Peter* by Matteo di Giovanni as "Andreasmarter" (Cat. 22). He was unaware of the provenance history of the early Italian paintings and believed that the rich Italian collection in Esztergom came from the royal Hungarian collection of the Renaissance period.

<sup>262</sup> In April 1936, the Bergamo monthly journal on arts and culture *Emporium* dedicated an entire number to Hungary (recording the "accordo culturale Italo-Ungherese" of Rome in the spring of 1935), with contributions on Italian and Hungarian relationships, Hungarian modern art, literature, Hungarian music, and, from Giuseppe Delogu's pen, an overview of "Arte italiana in Ungheria". Despite its title, this is mostly a historical survey. For art in Esztergom, the author referred to the study of Berti Tosca from 1932, and limited himself to mentioning a few painters, but significantly found the Trecento and Quattrocento Sieneese artists (Sassetta, Giovanni di Paolo, Matteo di Giovanni) most worthy of note. In his very short account of the vast Italian collection in Budapest, he noted works by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and Taddeo di Bartolo, but none from the Sieneese Quattrocento.

<sup>263</sup> Berti Toesca (1932, 946) mentions a mysterious work by Giovanni di Paolo and his workshop, the "Madonna che allatta il Bambino" which has defied identification so far. It cannot be identical with the triptych (Cat. 10), whose central field does not show a nursing Madonna and which the Berti Toesca mentions separately.

Esztergom during their stay in Hungary in 1925,<sup>264</sup> but they probably gathered information about the collection on this occasion, if they had not had done so already earlier. There are several early photographs archived in the Berenson collection, and the works in Esztergom began to appear, for the first time, in Berenson's lists of 1932 and 1936.<sup>265</sup> In the 1930s, visiting scholars included Kenneth Clark (5 April, 1937) and the young John Pope-Hennessy, who was gathering material for his first monograph on Giovanni di Paolo, which appeared in 1937. The scholar later gave an amusing account of his visit to Primate Serédi, which "taught [him] what life in the sixteenth century must have been like".<sup>266</sup>

Visits to Esztergom may have been difficult for foreigners in the 1930s but local scholarly life must have been bustling. Between 1934 and 1938 the ruins of the medieval royal palace on the castle hill were rediscovered and excavated (in which Lepold and Gerevich both had an important role), and in the same years the first – and to this day, only – complete catalogue of the museum was under preparation. It was edited by Gerevich and compiled by his assistant István Genthon (later director of the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest, 1945-1949). The manuscript was ready by 1941 but published only in 1948 because of the war. The still fundamental catalogue appeared in Hungarian only; it contains no inventory numbers, and most of the works are not reproduced. Yet, all the art works are clearly identifiable on the basis of their subject matter, material, measurements, provenance information, and detailed earlier bibliography. The attributions for the Quattrocento Siense painting were mostly based on Gerevich's essay from 1928.<sup>267</sup>

Gerevich was interested in a documentary and scientific approach to museological research, including photographic documentation and X-ray examinations.<sup>268</sup> For restorations between 1933 and 1941, the museum contracted Lajos Nikássy (1897-1959), whose methods were far more advanced than those of Endródi. He made diary-like, detailed written and photographic records of his interventions, carefully pondered what types of materials he should use, meticulously examined works before the interventions, and, in case of doubt,

<sup>264</sup> Radványi 2006, 144, 363-37.

<sup>265</sup> Among the pieces studied here, works by Giovanni di Paolo, Matteo di Giovanni, Neroccio, Sano di Pietro, and "Sassetta" [Pietro di Giovanni] are listed; but the list is not complete. For example, in the 1932 and 1936 editions, Matteo di Giovanni's *St. Jerome* (Cat. 20) or his late *Madonna* (Cat. 24) do not appear.

<sup>266</sup> Pope-Hennessy 1991, 49-50.

<sup>267</sup> Gerevich ed. 1948, see esp. the editor's introduction on pp. 1-3. The volume contains not only the holdings of the Christian Museum (now clearly differentiated from the other collections by this name) but also those of an Archaeological museum (today part of the Balassa Museum in Esztergom), of the Cathedral Treasury (Főszékesegyházi Kincstár), and the codices kept in the Library of the Cathedral (Főszékesegyházi Könyvtár).

<sup>268</sup> Gerevich 1931 (republ. 1999, 229), cited by Béla Zsolt Szakács, in Markója and Bardoly ed. 2006, 199.

preferred not to intervene. He had great respect for the original works and made only minor retouching where necessary.

World War II caused very minor damages in the museum's holdings but brought many political changes. In 1945, Lepold had to flee abroad and lived in Vienna until his death in 1971. Gerevich's role was marginalized in all areas of scholarship in 1949, after the Communist take-over of power, and he died soon afterwards. In the 1950s the general administration of the museum was placed under the newly-formed Balassi Bálint Museum (1953/54), headed by László Zolnay from 1953.<sup>269</sup> The Christian Museum itself had an ecclesiastical supervisor in the very able and active person of Attila Farkas between 1957-70, later also deputy director of the Museum (1974-76).<sup>270</sup> The Central Directorate of Museums delegated art historians from the Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of Applied arts from Budapest to the Christian Museum – above all Ágnes Czobor, András Mucsi, Éva Eszláry and Miklós Mojzer – to reorganize the collection. All works were newly catalogued from 1954, receiving their present inventory numbers. A new permanent exhibition was installed in 1954 under the direction of Ágnes Czobor, based on more modern museological concepts, according to which works were more spaciouly arranged in one row and at eye level. Probably around this time, several ornate old frames<sup>271</sup> were removed and replaced by thin strips of wood screwed to the sides of the panels.

A conservation studio was created, and in 1955 the museum received a professional painting restorer, Dezső Varga, who cares for the collection to this day. New museum guides appeared<sup>272</sup> and the number of visitors grew to unprecedented numbers. Importantly, the museum established regular photography service, which enormously contributed to the diffusion of knowledge of its works. From that time on, the paintings of the Christian Museum appeared regularly in international and Hungarian publications. The museum began organizing temporary exhibitions and created a deposit room in the form a study-collection (later modernized and moved to the uppermost floor of the palace).

The most important scholarly publication regarding the Siense works from this decade was a series of articles that Gertrude Coor published between 1954 and 1959 on the Duecento,

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<sup>269</sup> From this period, much information in the form of personal recollections is found in Zolnay 1986; for Esztergom and the Christian Museum, see esp. 587-681.

<sup>270</sup> Cf. "Portré" (Portrait)," *Műemlékvédelem*, I, 3, 2006, 158-160.

<sup>271</sup> These frames have been destroyed since then by lack of maintenance. This is unfortunate since many could have carried important provenance information (documentation, physical properties of the frames).

<sup>272</sup> Czobor 1955; Mojzer 1958.

Trecento and Quattrocento paintings in the Ramboux collection, thus discussing many works that were preserved in Budapest and Esztergom.<sup>273</sup>

A milestone in the scholarly research of the collection was the catalogue written by Miklós Boskovits, Miklós Mojzer, and András Mucsi (1964). Although it is not complete (works of lower quality were omitted), it was a critical catalogue prepared according to the highest standards of its time; and was fundamental for all subsequent research on the works discussed in it. Unfortunately, the scholarly catalogue equipped with notes on condition and with a complete and annotated bibliography appeared in Hungarian only. Versions with short texts were published in several languages over the following years (1965-67): these were the first catalogues of the Christian Museum published in a language other than Hungarian.<sup>274</sup> The entries are unsigned, but the introduction informs the reader that the paintings of the Trecento and some early Quattrocento Italian paintings were catalogued by Miklós Boskovits, whereas most of the entries between the Quattrocento and the Settecento are the work of Miklós Mojzer.

In the same year, Mojzer dedicated a separate article to some Quattrocento Sieneese paintings in the collection.<sup>275</sup> Boskovits himself published texts, full with acute observations, on many of these paintings in 1968 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978) in the series mentioned above discussing the Italian paintings in Budapest and Esztergom.<sup>276</sup> A third article dedicated to the Sieneese paintings of the museum appeared in 1983, by Vilmos Tátrai.<sup>277</sup>

In 1969, the museum closed for four years for a long over-due, major renovation of its exhibition rooms. During this time, some paintings were visible to the public for a short time only, in 1971, in the parish church adjacent to the Primate's Palace. The new exhibition, based on the concept of András Mucsi, opened in 1973, and, with some changes, is still standing. The more than one hundred Italian works fill the largest room of the museum, arranged chronologically and according to size. A grouping of works by the same school or of the same painter was not always possible. András Mucsi wrote guides to the new exhibition (1973, 1990) and an unillustrated, checklist-type catalogue, which was written with an informative, not critical, intention (1975).

After its reopening in 1973, a fundamental change in the structure of the museum took place: it became an independent institution with its own director and constitutional and

<sup>273</sup> Coor 1954; Coor 1956, Coor 1959.

<sup>274</sup> These catalogues were published in German, English, and Russian. Here only the last of these, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, revised German edition will be cited (Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1967).

<sup>275</sup> Mojzer 1964<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>276</sup> Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. in 1978.

<sup>277</sup> Tátrai 1983<sup>1</sup>. Other findings about a Sieneese work in Esztergom (Cat. 31) are discussed in Tátrai 1983<sup>2</sup>.

functional regulation. The range of restoration interventions broadened: another workshop in Budapest opened with three regular restorers, and several paintings were treated by the graduate students of conservation at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest under the supervision of their professors.

The first serious publications about the history of the museum and about the provenance of its collections date to these decades, and are of great interest also for the works discussed here. After a pioneering study on the first decades of the museum by Marianne Prokoppné Stengl based on many archival documents (1960), a particularly insightful contribution was written by Miklós Mojzer (1964) that dealt not only with historical facts and provenance research but gave an evaluation of the collection as a whole and the principles of taste that formed it. In 1977, Prokoppné Stengl wrote a summary history of the museum. For the Sieneese paintings, Pál Cséfalvay, director of the museum since 1976, published provenance research of particular importance in 1989, in which paintings from the Arnold Ipolyi collection were identified.<sup>278</sup> Since many of these were formerly possessed by Ramboux, Cséfalvay's research contributed in great part to the reconstruction of the vast Ramboux collection, parts of which were exhibited in 1995 in Cologne and of which a full catalogue, illustrated wherever possible, appeared in 1998.<sup>279</sup>

In the exhibition catalogue of 1995, Christoph Merzenich published some of Ramboux's exportation request submitted to the Director of the Real Galleria delle Statue between 1838 and 1842.<sup>280</sup> These documents are of great importance as they constitute in many cases the first documentation of the works and provide the *terminus ante quem* for their acquisition by the collector. The lists have been published without an attempt at the identification of the works, but they are detailed enough (besides a detailed description of the subject matter, they include the type of support and precise measurements) so that the identification of most works is not difficult and have been provided in the Catalogue part of this thesis (Chapter IV).<sup>281</sup>

The most up-to-date general contribution on the paintings of the Christian Museum is an illustrated catalogue published in 1993 in Hungarian, German, and English that contains a

<sup>278</sup> Cséfalvay 1989, esp. 103-115. An important point of departure for the reconstruction of the Ipolyi collection in the Christian Museum was the list compiled by Miklós Mojzer (1964, 224-225).

<sup>279</sup> Kier and Zehnder ed. 1995; Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998.

<sup>280</sup> Merzenich 1995.

<sup>281</sup> As Merzenich points out (1995, 314 n. 34), the measurements in these lists are in the Tuscan (in fact, Florentine) *braccio* (ca. 60 cm), *soldo* (ca. 3 cm) and *denaro* (ca. 0.25 cm). One *braccio fiorentino a panno* equals 20 *soldi* and 240 *denari* (1 *soldo* equals 12 *denari*), and is more precisely equivalent to 58.36 cm, while a *soldo* equals 2.92 cm and a *denaro* 0.24 cm. The greater precision of the measurements is helpful for the certain identification of the works and in determining, for example, whether in Ramboux's time the dimensions were taken with or without the frame.

wide selection of the best pieces.<sup>282</sup> All the entries for the works studied here are by Vilmos Tátrai, written in the form of informative texts for the general public but at the same time communicating original research, critical opinion, and updated bibliography.

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<sup>282</sup> Cséfalvay ed. 1993.

## CHAPTER IV

### EARLY SIENESE PAINTINGS IN HUNGARY, 1420-1520: CATALOGUE

#### ***Notes on methodology***

The number of early Italian panel paintings dispersed all over the world is vaster than anyone first venturing into the study of this field imagines. Since many of these works originally formed part of large and heavy structures, they were removed from their original contexts and reduced to a fragmentary state. The great majority of them are fragments of altarpieces, which until the late fifteenth century, and in many regions well into the sixteenth, were usually large, complex, painted wooden structures held together by elaborate carpentry and assembled according to well-established traditions characteristic of each region of the Apennine peninsula. The same fate of dismemberment and dispersal befell to many other types of larger objects, often with a profane subject matter, especially to pieces of furniture and residential decoration (marriage chests known as *cassoni*, painted panels set in the wall decoration or into the backrest of beds or benches known as *spalliere*, etc.)

The primary reasons for the mutilation of these structures are well-known and have been mentioned above: the low appreciation of, and the consequent ignorance about, the early Italian schools of painting; transformations due to changes of artistic taste in the Baroque period; the loss of function of many altarpieces during the waves of suppression of religious orders and confraternities in the times of Peter Leopold (1770s-'80s), Napoleon (1808-10) and the *risorgimento* (1860s), and the concurrent, albeit slowly growing interest of collectors in the works of these "primitives". These conditions understandably lead to the practical, however vandalistic, treatment of the heavy and cumbersome wooden structures, many of which had already been damaged: they were taken or sawn apart into their numerous component parts, or reduced to even smaller but still meaningful fragments.

These pieces were subsequently often manipulated to meet the demands of the art market: works that appeared as autonomous pictures rather than fragments were better saleable. Hence the frequent modern additions to the works, which range from replacements of damaged or removed parts to newly created parts that make up the irregular fragments into rectangular panels. Reductions with a similar purpose are also found: a frequent practice was, for example, the cutting down of fragments into smaller, and seemingly complete, rectangular, oval, or round pieces.

These factors pose special methodological problems for the study of late medieval and Renaissance Italian altarpieces and other types of structures. The search for companion pieces and for the original setting of the dispersed fragments has been one of the prime interests of specialized art historians for about a century, and a vast number of fragments have been reintroduced to their original contexts this way. Besides written observations on the common provenance of the dispersed fragments, photomontages and drawn reconstructions were often proposed. Although reconstructions without proper grounds can pose the danger of misleading the reader, in the majority of cases visual reconstructions significantly help to better understand the relationship between the fragments. In fact, the very process of visualization usually brings one to a more precise understanding, since possible faults in the supposed relationship of the pieces become evident in the literal sense of the word. For this reason, paradoxically, even erroneous visual reconstructions can promote further research.

Whereas earlier visual reconstructions were usually done through a photomontage, in the past decades new, computerized methods have made virtual visual reconstructions much easier. The computerized method turns out to be also better applicable because of an important methodological difference between it and the traditional photomontage method. Whereas traditional photomontages were usually made with the purpose of *demonstrating* already existing ideas (in which case it was sometimes difficult to avoid mistakes based on preconceptions), digital visual reconstructions can and should be used, before demonstrating anything, for *developing* the idea of the relationship of pieces suspected to belong together. With digital methods, it is much easier to bring the fragments exactly to the same scale, to make internal measurements, to discover the original designing principles of a larger structure, and to experiment with different solutions until wrong ones are excluded and the most plausible one is found.

Needless to say, the examination of the fragments and the execution of digital reconstructions must be accompanied by a systematic study of the works that survive in a fully or partially integral condition, since the original function and position of fragments can only be understood in the light of the typology of the surviving structures that vary widely according to a given period and workshop.

Despite the results reached so far in the reconstruction of dismembered complexes and the new possibilities in studying them, structural issues remain among the least researched aspects of Italian panel paintings. Although there is a growing awareness about the potential results based on technical and structural observations – and the number of exemplary

publications is continuously growing –, visual reconstructions are still often based on photographs rather than on the accurate study of the original works, and the desire to understand the original context of the fragments has not led to a general consciousness about the importance of their detailed description and photographic documentation. Until very recently, few publications – above all, too few museum catalogues, where one would most expect it – provided the necessary information on the physical properties of the pieces.

The lack of information is manifold. It is often unclear what the published measurements refer to.<sup>283</sup> Published photographs are habitually cropped either because they were taken without the removal of modern frames that cover the edges of the panels or simply in the interest of an aesthetic presentation of the work (for which often the editors are responsible rather than the authors<sup>284</sup>). Apart from published restoration reports, rarely ever are the backs or sides of the panels reproduced, though this aspect is indispensable for the correct interpretation of an early Italian panel painting, especially when a fragment. Many other factors, including the scarcity of systematic studies on the structural aspects of altarpieces, inadequate communication between restorers and art historians (perhaps the aspect that has changed most for the better in the past decades), difficulties in accessing many pieces, and the lack of opportunity to physically match related fragments often contribute to the failure of recognizing crucial features that aid the understanding of fragments.

This state of affairs often makes essential information on the physical properties of early Italian panel paintings unavailable, and entails difficulties of interpretation especially in the case of fragments. Specialists will be all too familiar with the typical problems, but it is still worth pointing out a few of them, taking the case of Quattrocento Sienese paintings in Hungary as examples.

### ***Direction of the wood grain***

In dealing with works painted on panel, one of the most important, yet often ignored, traits of the support is the direction of its wood grain. This often throws light on the original context of the fragment, since the elements of altarpieces and other structures were traditionally painted on certain types of planks assembled in a particular way, following age-old workshop conventions based on practicability. Generally, parts of complex wooden structures were painted on planks whose direction best suited their form; the grain direction of the wooden support is thus characteristic of a type of element. Furthermore, the grain

<sup>283</sup> On this aspect and the difficulties it creates, see Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 38; Sallay 2003, 90 n. 28.

<sup>284</sup> For a typical example, despite my repeated protests before the editing was closed, see Sallay 2005.

direction can corroborate, refine, or disprove hypotheses on the relationship of fragments even when their original function is not clear. A case in point among the panels studied here is Giovanni di Paolo's St. Ansanus-scenes (Cat. 9), which were unanimously believed to be predella fragments,<sup>285</sup> and discussion for over half a century centred on the question whether a third fragment belonged to the presumed predella or not. In the course of this debate, it was never verified that the St. Ansanus scenes are indeed predella fragments. They cannot be, since they are painted on vertically grained wood (Fig. 9/4). There are many examples for similarly erroneous proposals to identify a work as the fragment from a predella (cf. Cat. 19).

Even if it is sometimes difficult to be informed about the technical properties of a panel, there are other ways in which the wood grain can be judged. To remain with our example, the painted surfaces of both panels show marked vertical cracks, which clearly excludes the possibility of a horizontal wood grain (Figs. 9/1, 9/3). In other cases – especially when one has to work with panel paintings known from photographs only – it is useful to remember that wood always warps along the grain, and look for curved shadows cast by the modern frames on the edges of the painted surface. These reveal the direction of the wood grain and can corroborate hypotheses of association (Cat. 4, esp. Fig. 4/12; Cat. 18, esp. Fig. 18/8).

Another example among the works studied here where attention to the wood grain proved to be crucial is the case of two fragments from a large-scale representation of the Baptism of Christ (Cat. 25). The association of the two fragments was based on many observations, but decisive among them was the fact that both fragments were originally painted on horizontally grained wood. This was directly verifiable in one of the fragments only (Fig. 25/1), since the other has been transferred to canvas (Fig. 25/3). Yet, a prominent damage in the painted surface of the latter caused before the transfer by the disjunction of two adjacent planks provided the necessary proof for the original wood grain. Looking for such damages in the case of panels transferred to canvas is another possible way of ascertaining the direction of the grain. In the case of these two fragments, the direction of the grain helped not only to associate the fragments but to set up a hypothesis about their original function: a depiction of this sacred subject on this scale and on horizontal panels is most probable in the crowning lunette of an *all'antica* altarpiece (Fig. 25/5).

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<sup>285</sup> The predella is the wide, box-like base of an altarpiece, usually open in the back. The front side of the predella is constructed of a single, horizontally laid-out plank, which is painted with narrative scenes, or, more rarely, with some other type of decoration, such as medallions with saints. To the front side of the ends of this horizontal plank, often two vertically grained panels are glued and nailed, which serve as bases to the pilasters that frame the principal register of the altarpiece (cf. Fig. 20/18).

In some cases when the wood grain of the predella plank was irregular, the observation of its irregularities can lead to proving that a fragment formed part of a predella. This happened with Sano di Pietro's *Crucifixion* in Washington (Fig. 4/13), which was suspected to form the central part of the San Giovanni all'Abbadia altarpiece. This hypothesis is now confirmed by the reconstruction of the predella from the *back*, which shows (through an inversed X-ray taken during a restoration when the cradling of the panel was temporarily removed) how the curving wood grain follows continuously from one panel to the other (Fig. 4/15a).

### ***Thickness and other information of the support***

Further information carried by the plank, again rarely taken into consideration, is its thickness and its intact or thinned down state. The structure and the eventual irregularities of the wood, remnants of paint on the sides and on the reverse, the positions of cracks and of junctures between the planks, or signs of later interventions can be very telling in certain cases. The study of the reverse of a panel is thus crucial for reconstructions, apart from a lot of other information it usually offers on the provenance of the piece.

For reasons of stability, many panels were thinned (and often cradled, cf. Figs. 26/3, 31/2 or backed, cf. Fig. 9/2) during 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century restorations to resolve the problems of warping and of the weakening of the support by woodworm damage. This often helped to prevent further deterioration, which was the most important goal, but resulted in the loss of invaluable information provided by the aspect of the reverse. Much provenance documentation (labels, collector's seals) was lost this way too.

Matteo di Giovanni's *St. Jerome* (Cat. 20) has been thinned but fortunately its companion piece in Altenburg preserves its original thickness. On the reverse of this vertically grained panel, one can note a piece of horizontal wood trapped in glue, proving that the panels were once attached to a horizontally grained plank (Figs. 20/6, 20/8). Damages at mid-height along the vertical edges of both panels are nail holes, proving that the application was reinforced with nails. Further evidence about the sides of the panel, which I will soon mention, lead to the conclusion that these two panels are projecting pilaster bases situated at the ends of a predella (Fig. 20/18).

Among many other examples, when the observation of marks on the reverse can lead to art historical conclusions of considerable importance, one is Giovanni di Paolo's *Adoration of the Christ Child* (Cat. 11). This large work once formed the central part of an altarpiece, and it has been convincingly hypothesized that its laterals are two panels in Avignon, showing male

saints. Matching saw cuts and joining marks on the reverses of these three panels now provided a proof for this hypothesis (Fig. 11/17).

Paint on the reverse is always interesting to observe. Although a very large number of panels were painted on the back for reasons of conservation (to insulate the panel against humidity), in the case of especially ornate backs (Fig. 3/2) or when a painting is a version of a large number of similar works whose reverse is *not* painted (Fig. 14/2), the suspicion always arises that the reverse was meant to be visible, which has an effect on how we interpret the context and original function of the piece.

### ***Sides of the panel***

Whether the sides of a panel are cut or intact can lead to many conclusions, primarily about whether the composition is complete or reduced. Even when the intact state of the sides can be verified, an examination of the sides may furnish important information. In Pietro di Giovanni's *Bust of the Virgin* (Cat. 3), the sides – for many decades hidden under modern strips of wood screwed to the panel – turned out to be ungilt and rather crudely executed (Fig. 3/8-9), in contrast to the very carefully decorated back and front of the panel. This suggests that the sides were originally not visible and the panel, though not a fragment in the sense as it was formerly believed, should be interpreted as part of a larger context, even if only enclosed in a larger, separate frame. Another case where the examination of the sides of the panel proved to be crucial is Matteo di Giovanni's *St. Jerome* and *St. Nicholas of Myra* mentioned above (Cat. 20), which are gilt on their inner sides and covered with a claret-coloured paint on their outer sides (Figs. 20/10-13). This, along with the other physical traits of the panels pointed out above shows without doubt that they are pilaster bases, on the basis of comparison with many other, intact Sienese altarpieces, which show that this type of side decoration is conceivable in this position only (Fig. 20/18).

### ***Removed engaged frames, unpainted edges, and barbes***

Similarly important is the examination of the edges of the panels, since the question whether these are intact or damaged is among the first ones to answer when one seeks to determine the original function of an early Italian panel, especially in the case of fragment but not only. In fifteenth-century Siena, most panels were supplied with a moulded, engaged frame before painting began. The frame was treated together with the panel; that is, it was gessoed and gilt together with it. During the dismemberment and dispersal of the paintings, many engaged frames were removed, either because they were already damaged or because

they impeded the cutting up of the work into smaller fragments. Whenever an engaged frame is removed, bare wood is revealed underneath it, and the edges of the original paint surface are marked by slightly raised gesso called a *barbe*.

The observation of the *barbe* and the unpainted margin surrounding it is crucial. On this basis, it could be excluded that an unusual representation of the *Christ Child and the Young St. John the Baptist* (Cat. 29) could be the fragment of a copy of a tondo by Pinturicchio. The barbes and unpainted margins clearly show that very are dealing with an original *partial copy*, a very rare phenomenon in the time period concerned.

The unpainted margin around the paint area presented a problem once art dealers, collectors, and museums desired to see the fragments as autonomous pictures. It was unaesthetic and called attention to the fragmented state of the work. For this reason, the margins were often trimmed or completely cut off; other times, the original composition was extended over them. This is a very frequent phenomenon (Figs. 1/1, 9/1, 32/4-6), yet in some cases it escapes attention that the modern paint conceals fragments of the original barbes and gold leaf remaining along the original gilt engaged frame, which then provides valuable information about the original dimensions of the paint area (Cat. 9, Fig. 9/1).

Predella scenes are a special case. They are often extended on the unpainted margins at the top and the bottom, where they were bordered by an engaged frame (Fig. 32/4-6). On the vertical sides, however, originally the scenes were usually separated from one another by a decorative strip which was cut in half during the dismemberment. These strips are often difficult to study. They are often covered by modern frames and they are more often than not cropped in publications, which deprives the interested art historian of the possibility to recognize companion pieces. The rediscovery of such fragmented decorative strips hidden under the modern frame of a *Crucifixion* in Manchester has made it possible to definitively connect it to a series of predella scenes by Matteo di Giovanni, as the other halves of the bisected cherub-heads appear in the originally adjacent companion pieces in Glens Falls and Esztergom (Cat. 22, Figs. 22/10, 22/15). Since these decorative strips are never completely identical, a careful observation can lead not only to the association of the fragments but also to establishing their original order (Cat. 4, Fig. 4/15; Cat. 22, Fig. 22/15, Cat. 32, Fig. 32/11). Furthermore, a precise photomontage that takes into account the sections lost during the dismemberment can help in establishing the original width of the predella, which is fundamental in associating it with the main register of an altarpiece (Figs. 4/15, 32/11).

In view of the general morphology of certain types of structures, the *lack* of barbes and unpainted margins can also lead to interesting conclusions, or at least to the questioning of

widely held beliefs. This is the case with four panels by Giovanni di Paolo (Cat. 12, Fig. 12/14), which are generally considered to be independent pinnacle pieces. The panels, however, had original engaged frames only along and immediately adjacent to their gables, whereas their vertical edges seem to have been covered by a framing added after the completion of the painting. This is revealed by incisions in the gold running parallel to the vertical edges, beyond which the gilding was carelessly executed, and by the gesso that runs to the intact edge of at least one of the panels that could be examined, without ending in a barbe. This highly unusual technical solution may suggest that the five panels were framed together after their completion.

Paintings with gessoed but unpainted margins, where the area to be painted is marked with an incision (Cat. 30), have been framed together with their companion pieces in a similar manner after the completion of the individual panels.

### *Measurements*

As the above examples show, it is essential for the interpretation of works of this type that their measures are precisely communicated in catalogues, and that a distinction be made between the dimensions of the painted surface, the panel, the panel with modern additions of wood (cf. Figs. 18/6-8), the panel enclosed in its modern frame, and whatever other special measurement might be necessary for the interpretation of the work.

In summary, the information offered by the physical aspects of panel paintings often provides the key for their functional interpretation. Many further examples could be presented here to show how deeply this type of “archeological” approach affects the interpretation of early Italian panels. Fortunately, there is a general tendency in museums worldwide to recognize, interpret, and publish these data, but much remains to be done both in actually executing the examinations and in raising awareness of their importance. Naturally, the process of judging panel paintings and their fragments is far more complex and must take into consideration a large number of other factors, but it cannot be done without paying attention to the features discussed above.

## **Notes to the Catalogue**

The capitalized abbreviations Cat. and Fig. refer to the catalogue numbers and figures in this thesis. When not abbreviated, the word “note” refers to notes in this thesis, whereas the abbreviation n. refers to notes in the cited literature.

Right and left always refer to that of the viewer unless otherwise noted.

In the dimensions of works of art, height precedes width.

Unless otherwise noted, all dates are in modern style.<sup>286</sup>

The inventory numbers in the Provenance section refer to:

- Ramboux collection: the catalogue written by Johann Anton Ramboux in 1862 and the auction catalogue from 1876 based on it;<sup>287</sup>
- Bertinelli collection: the numbers that are, for the most part, still preserved on the reverse of the works (cf. Fig. 2/4) and correspond to the numbers of an inventory based on the attributions of Friedrich Overbeck and Tommaso Minardi preserved in the Primatial Archives in Esztergom;
- Ipolyi collection, to the earliest surviving list compiled on occasion of the exhibition of the collection in 1896 in Váradi.<sup>288</sup>

An annotated bibliography (References) follows each entry. Authors who are cited in this section are usually referred to in the text by the date of their publication only; the reader will find the cited publication in the References section. The References always include attribution and dating if these were expressed. Other remarks are reported when I found them relevant to the argument or to the history of scholarship. I often but not systematically indicated if the work is reproduced in black-and-white or in colour.

An effort has been made to reproduce the backs of the works in every case, and side views when they provide important information. Collectors’ seals and documentation on provenance have been systematically documented. Scaled punchmarks have been reproduced with the exception of Cat. 4 and described with the terminology introduced by Mojmír Frinta (1998).

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<sup>286</sup> According to the medieval Sieneese style, the new year began on 25 March on the feast of the Annunciation, and ended on 24 March the following year.

<sup>287</sup> Ramboux 1862; [Ramboux] 1867.

<sup>288</sup> Némethy ed. 1896.

## Sassetta

**(Stefano di Giovanni di Consolo di Ciolo)**

(Cortona [?], ca. 1400 – Siena 1450)

Stefano di Giovanni – whose nickname, Sassetta, can be traced back to 18<sup>th</sup>-century sources only – must have been born in Cortona, where his family lived before moving to Siena probably between 1410 and 1415. Thus Sassetta probably received his training in Siena, most likely in the circle of the masters responsible for the sacristy decoration of the Cathedral.

In the course of his short life, Sassetta excelled especially as a panel painter, but he painted also frescos, miniatures, a banner (1442), and made designs for the Siennese baptismal font (1427), and for stained glass windows (1440). Already his first known work, the now fragmented altarpiece of the Arte della Lana (1423-25, see Cat. 1), reveals his extraordinary talents, which allowed him to seek new paths in Siennese paintings and turn towards a naturalistic rendering of space, nature, the human body and narrative. His sources for this artistic renewal were a careful re-examination of the achievements of his great 14<sup>th</sup>-century predecessors (especially the Lorenzetti brothers), and his attention to contemporary painting in Florence (Masaccio, Masolino, Gentile da Fabriano).

Sassetta is included in the local painters' guild in 1428. It is somewhat uncertain whether he is identical with the Stefano di Giovanni d'Asciano who was paid in 1426 for a design of a battle scene of the story of Joshua for pavement of Cathedral (damaged). His next certain work, the *Madonna of the Snow* altarpiece, was executed between 1430-32 for an altar in the Cathedral at the order of Ludovica Bertini, widow of the former *operaio* of the Cathedral Turino di Matteo, is notable for its precocious effects of spatial realism in its central, unified field (Contini Bonacossi Bequest, Florence). From the *croce dipinta* painted in 1433 for the church of San Martino in Siena, only three terminals survive (Monte dei Paschi Bank Coll., Palazzo Chigi-Saracini, Siena); these testify to the artist's careful attention to Masaccio's innovations regarding the voluminous, solid rendering of the human body. From around the following year, 1434, dates a polyptych for S. Domenico in Cortona (Museo Diocesano, Cortona) executed on the order of the pharmacist Niccolò di Angelo di Cecco. In the fourth decade of the century, he executed the grandiose *Assumption of the Virgin* altarpiece for the Church of the Osservanza (destroyed, formerly Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin, Fig. 2/10).

Besides these important, large-scale works, Sassetta painted many devotional paintings: portable triptychs and many pictures of the Virgin of Child, most of which show the Virgin as

the Madonna of Humility. His female figures are delicate, fragile creatures, who hold a sturdy and lively child. Sassetta did not abandon the traditional punched gold ground in these works, but in the framework of this conventional tradition, his portrayals of the mother and child are vivid and convincingly human. A more monumental example of a *Madonna dell'Umiltà* (1438) was in a tabernacle at the entrance of the Palazzo Pubblico (PNS, inv. 325).

Sassetta's masterpiece is the double-sided altarpiece executed between 1437-1444 for the high altar of the Franciscan church of Borgo Sansepolcro (now dismembered and divided between various collections). The altarpiece combines a glorious vision of transfigured, monumental figures and an extensive narrative cycle on the life of St. Francis of Assisi. In this period, documents testify to many important but now lost works commissioned to the artist by the Sienese government, the Cathedral, and the Hospital. Like Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio and Sano di Pietro, in 1444, Sassetta painted more than one image of Bernardino degli Albizzeschi, who died "in the odour of sanctity" on 20 July that year (one, lost, for the Ospedale; another, probably surviving in an altered condition, for the Compagnia di San Giovanni Battista della Morte).

The painter died of pneumonia in 1450, while working on the frescos of the Porta Romana in Siena, a work commissioned to him in 1447 and later completed by Sano di Pietro. Sassetta was the leading figure of Sienese painting in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and exerted a major influence on all of his contemporaries. His son, Giovanni di Stefano (ca. 1444-doc. until 1502) became a gifted sculptor and the *capomaestro* of the Cathedral in the 1480s.

### Select bibliography:

Romagnoli *ante* 1835 [1976], IV, 419-32; Langton Douglas 1903; Berenson 1909, 244-247; Perkins 1907; De Nicola 1913; Berenson 1932, 511-13; Gengaro 1933; Berenson 1936, 439-441; Pope-Hennessy 1939<sup>1</sup> (with extensive bibl.); Berenson 1946; Graziano 1948; Carli 1957; Berenson 1968, I, 384-387; Vailati Schoenburg Waldenburg 1975; Volpe, "Stefano di Giovanni detto il Sassetta", in Chelazzi Dini ed. 1982, 383-92; Alessandro Angelini, in Bellosi and Angelini ed. 1986, 33-37; Keith Christiansen, "Painting in Renaissance Siena" in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 3-32 (It. ed. 3-36); Keith Christiansen, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 63-90 (It. ed. 77-104); Christiansen 1989; Torriti 1990, 168-176; Israëls 1994; Giulietta Chelazzi Dini, in Chelazzi Dini, Angelini, and Sani 1997, 219-228; Israëls 1998; Miklós Boskovits, in Dal Poggetto ed. 1998, 294-295; Gardner von Teuffel 1999; Israëls 2001; Israëls 2003<sup>1</sup>; Israëls 2003<sup>2</sup>; Miklós Boskovits in Boskovits, Brown et al., 2003, 621-631; Linda Pisani, "Stefano di Giovanni detto Il Sassetta" in Bollati ed. 2004, 947-948.

# 1. Sassetta

*Saint Thomas Aquinas in Prayer*

**Fig. 1/1**

1423-25

tempera and gold on wood

painted surface without modern additions: 24 x 39.2 cm, panel measured on back: 23.7 x 39.4 cm; thickness: 2.4-2.5 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 32.

## **Provenance:**

Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, by 1842 and until 1866, no. 103 (as unknown artist, in the style of Francesco Traini or also of Gentile da Fabriano); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 103 (as unknown artist, in the style of Francesco Traini or also of Gentile da Fabriano); Arnold Ipolyi, Pest, 1867-1872; gift of Arnold Ipolyi to the National Picture Gallery in 1872, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts.

## **Exhibited:**

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (20 December, 1988 – 19 March, 1989): *Painting in Renaissance Siena, 1420-1500*, cat. 1.b; The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal (24 April – 4 August, 2002), *Italian Old Masters from Raphael to Tiepolo: The Collection of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts*, cat. 2.

## **Technical notes:**

The support is a single piece of wood with a horizontal grain (Fig. 1/2). It retains its original thickness; it is slightly warped and much damaged by woodworms. There are extensive remains of chalky priming on the back (Fig. 1/7). The top side has been irregularly planed, which accounts for the lesser height of the panel on the back than on the front. In modern times, thin strips of pine wood have been nailed to all four sides of the panel.

The original painted surface has not been reduced. Its edges are marked by remnants of a *barbe* on all four sides. At the bottom right and the top left edge of the original composition there are remnants of gold leaf and the underlying bole that belong to a now lost engaged frame. Some bole belonging to the engaged frame survives also along the right edge. The composition has been crudely extended over the modern additions of wood, especially at the bottom, where it slightly covers the original paint film.

The work is in relatively good condition. There are small scattered scratches, losses and abrasions and retouches all over (Fig. 1/9). Larger retouchings are located to the right of the vision, in the side windows of the library and in the lower part of St. Thomas' cloak. St. Thomas's face is scratched and the paint is worn on the back of his head. In the centre of his head, the damage caused by the point of the compasses with which his halo was outlined was repaired (Fig. 1/8). The altarpiece, the figures of the heavenly vision, and the background behind the garden are executed over gold leaf. The paint has flaked off to a great extent in all of these areas. The figures in the altarpiece and in the vision above were incised into the gold ground prior to painting. There are small wax drops over the vision and the altarpiece attesting to the use of candles in front of the image. The front of the altar table (antependium) was executed in red paint over gold leaf and is decorated with a striated pattern in *sgraffito*.

The architectural lines have been incised into the gesso prior to painting. The incisions in the door were executed after painting.

**Documentation:**

On the reverse: “*S. Agostino Monaco / Scuola Sanese*” (handwritten in pencil); “*J.A. Ramboux*” (in red wax seal); “*ORSZ. KÉPTÁR. A leltár száma 32*” (printed on white label); “*SZÉPMŰVÉSZE TI MŰZEUM, Budapest. Sassetta: Aquinoi Szt. Tamás Mária oltára előtt imádkozik. Ltsz: 32. Az Ipolyi gyűjteményből*” (typed on white label, inv. no. handwritten).

On reverse of modern wood strip: “964/49” (in blue chalk).

On modern frame: “23” (printed on half ruined 19<sup>th</sup>-century white label)

In the church of a convent, laid out parallel to the pictorial plane and partitioned by diaphragm arches, St. Thomas Aquinas kneels in prayer in front of the altar adorned with a Gothic pentaptych (Fig. 1/4)<sup>289</sup> and fixes his gaze on a heavenly vision over the altarpiece, from where the Dove of the Holy Spirit flies towards him. Behind St. Thomas, a view opens onto the cloister with a well in its centre and an orchard and vegetable garden on its far side (Fig. 1/5). On the right, there is direct access to a vaulted monastic library with wooden desks on which open and closed books are laid (Fig. 1/6).

The unique iconography of the scene has eluded precise interpretation so far. The apparition above the altar is much abraded, but thanks to the detailed preparatory incisions in the gold ground, many figures can still be made out (Fig. 1/3). In the centre, Christ emerges from the group of figures. He looks down at St. Thomas; his face is shown in foreshortening from above. He extends his right arm with the gesture of sending the Dove to the praying saint. On his right, a mitred figure, then a cardinal and a third male saint can be discerned; there is a mitred figure also on his left. They are almost certainly the four church fathers. In the front row, there are four, half-length male figures, perhaps the four evangelists. Importantly, all the saints hold – now strongly fragmented – texts, most probably books, opened towards Thomas.

This scene finds a meaningful context in the programme of the altarpiece to which this predella fragment belonged. It was Sassetta’s first documented altarpiece, executed between 1423 and 1425 on commission of the Sienese Wool Guild (Arte della Lana) for the yearly celebration of the feast of the Corpus Christi. The feast was celebrated in Siena from 1356 on

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<sup>289</sup> The pentaptych shows the standing Virgin and Child in the centre and St. Paul (holding a sword) on her right, in the position of honour. The other saints are not identifiable; the incised preparatory design and the proportions suggest that the one next to Paul clad in blue and red is a male saint, while the saint on the extreme right appears to be female.

under the supervision of the Carmelite order and with the patronage of the Arte della Lana from 1367.<sup>290</sup>

Sassetta's work began after July 1, 1423, when the guild expressed its shame about having to borrow an altarpiece every year for the celebration and levied a special tax on cloth in order to finance the completion of the altarpiece, for which the wood structure had been already prepared.<sup>291</sup> The work must have been finished and visible to the public by 6 June, 1425, when St. Bernardino referred to it in his sermon on the Vigil of Corpus Christi.<sup>292</sup> Originally, the altarpiece was used once a year, set-up on a temporary, open-air altar in the *piazza* in front of the church of S. Pellegrino, where the headquarters of the Arte della Lana were located (present-day Piazza dell'Indipendenza).<sup>293</sup> Mass at this altar was celebrated in the midst of lavish festivities and processions. Between the yearly feasts, the work was preserved in a large cupboard (*armario*) in the palazzo of the Arte della Lana.<sup>294</sup>

In 1448, Pope Nicholas V ordered the celebration of the feast to be transferred to the Cathedral.<sup>295</sup> This may have contributed to the guild's decision to build a permanent chapel adjacent to the church of S. Pellegrino in order to house the *tavola*. The chapel was constructed from 1460 onwards but finished only between 1507 and 1517.<sup>296</sup> In 1798, Siena was struck by a devastating earthquake, in which both the church of San Pellegrino and the chapel were severely damaged and subsequently demolished (1816); the altarpiece was cut up and dispersed.<sup>297</sup>

Fortunately, two detailed eighteenth-century descriptions and many surviving fragments – all but one of the seven predella fragments, eight pilaster figures, two pinnacles (Fig. 1/10), and perhaps two landscape-fragments of the main panel (PNS, invv. 70-71)<sup>298</sup> – provide an

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<sup>290</sup> Israëls 2001, esp. 542 doc. I; Israëls 2006. The feast was initially celebrated in the Carmelite church of San Niccolò al Carmine in Siena. For the actual course of the celebrations, see Israëls 2006, esp. 186-191. The Arte della Lana had close ties with the Carmelite order; by 1431, the guild acquired patronage over the main chapel of the Carmelite church (Israëls 2001, 534, 543 doc. II).

<sup>291</sup> ASS, Arti, 64 f. 22v (guild statutes of Arte della Lana), De Nicola 1913, 214; Pope-Hennessy 1939, 40 n. 18; Israëls 2001, 542, doc. VI. The tax was initially planned for two years, but then extended until 1426 probably because the guild was not able to raise the necessary funds in time.

<sup>292</sup> Christiansen 1989, 265-66. For the passage in the sermon, Ciro ed. 1958, II, 312. Bernardino called his audience to rejoice when seeing the sacrament and celebrate it with a feast, and adore its "significance" "*el quale avete nella tavola*."

<sup>293</sup> Israëls 2001, esp. 536.

<sup>294</sup> Israëls 2001; Israëls 2006.

<sup>295</sup> Keith Christiansen, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 64 (It. ed. 78).

<sup>296</sup> Moran (1980) first noted that the chapel was begun only in 1460 and could not have been the original location of the altarpiece, as previously believed. Israëls (2001, esp. 537-38) specified that the construction was completed only in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. A sketch of the appearance of the church and the adjacent chapel is preserved in the *Memorie* of Girolamo Macchi (1708-50, ASS, ms D107 f. 120r), cf. Israëls, 2001, 532, fig. 1.

<sup>297</sup> Israëls 2001, 537.

<sup>298</sup> These pieces were for long attributed to Ambrogio Lorenzetti. In a brilliantly argued thesis, Zeri (1973) suggested that they were fragments of the central panel of the altarpiece. Cf. also Christiansen 1982, 51, 76-77 n.

idea of the original aspect of the altarpiece.<sup>299</sup> It had a Gothic triptych format “with many pinnacles”. The now destroyed central field showed the Eucharist (*il Venerabile*) in a Gothic monstrance, upheld by many angels playing musical instruments, set against a gold background and above a landscape with “two castles with defences and Gothic fortifications with many beautiful towers, two domes.” In the lateral panels, St. Thomas of Aquinas and St. Anthony Abbot appeared; there was the Coronation of the Virgin above the central panel, and the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Annunciate over the laterals (all lost or unidentified).<sup>300</sup>

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53; Torriti 1990, 81-84. The recent examination of these pieces by Rônen (2006) unfortunately reveal a lack of technical understanding and do not add to our understanding of the origin of the fragments.

<sup>299</sup> The first description by the Dominican friar Angiolo Maria Carapelli dates from 1718 when the work still stood in the chapel next to the church San Pellegrino, cf. Angiolo Maria Carapelli, O. Pred., “Notizie delle chiese e cose riguardevoli di Siena” (1717-18), BCS, ms B.VII.10, f. 32v (modern numeration in pencil): “*Accanto alla Porta di questa Chiesa vi è come una Maestà [?], o Cappella, dove è una tavola dipintovi il Venerabile in un ostensorio antico con molti Angeli che l’adorano, sopra S. Maria Sant(issi)ma, ed il Padre Eterno, ai laterali S. Antonio Abbate, e S. Tomaso d’Aquino, e nell’antico gradino diverse istorie in piccole figure che sono dei miracoli del Sacramento, ove si vede scritto così Hinc opus omne. Patres. Stefanus construxit ad Aras. Senensis Iohannis. Agens citra lapsus adultos.*” The document was first cited by De Nicola (1913, 208) and first transcribed by Pope-Hennessy (1939, 6-7). Cf. Israëls 2001, 532, n. 1. Before Carapelli, the altarpiece was briefly mentioned in the *canonica visitatio* of Bishop Francesco Bossi (1575) and in a note by Giulio Mancini (17th c.), cf. De Nicola 1913, 208, nn. 5-6; Brandi 1933, 273. The second description from later in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the abbot Carli is probably the most elaborate historical description of an early Siennese work of art, cf. Giovan Girolamo Carli, *Notizie di Belle Arti estratte da vari libri* (1768), BCS, ms C.VII.20, ff. 81r-82r, “*Tavola dell’Arte della Lana presso S. Pellegrino. Gran Tavola terminante in molte Piramidi acutissime. In mezzo Ostensorio Gotico, sostenuto da molti Angeli, che suonan lunghe Trombe, Arpe, Organi f. in gran fondo d’oro, e colle vesti con grand’oro, che hanno un poco patito. Le teste sono graziose, tutto il resto cattivo. Sotto sono due Castelli con fabbriche, e fortificazioni Gotiche con molte belle Torri, due Cupole f. In fondo leggesi II# [sic] in semigot. = Hinc opus Omne. Patres. Stefanus construxit ad aras Senensis Iohannis. agens citra lapsus adultos. =. Lateralmente sono in grande in 2 sportimenti separati S. Ant(onio). Ab(bate). e S. Tommaso d’Aquino con buone teste. Sopra in mezzo è la Mad(onna) incoronata da Gesù Cristo; lateralmente in 2 sportimenti l’Annunziata; framezzo in 2 piramidine 2 Santini in mezze figure. Negli ultimi 2 sportimenti laterali 2 Santini per parte in piedi. Sotto è il gradino con sette storiette: a destra 3 di S. Antonio; in mezza la Cena del Sig(n)ore, ove sono belle teste, e l’Architettura non è Gotica; la 5 ha teste di donne e d’uomini anche più belle delle preced(enti), con ~~ossesso liberato~~ uno che spira nello atto che sta per communcarsi, e il demonio porta via l’anima sua; le ultime due appartengono a S. Tom(maso). d’Aquino, e riguardano il Sacramento. Di sufficiente conservazione [...]*” The description was first cited by De Nicola 1913, 208, transcribed by Pope-Hennessy 1939, 6-7 (with some imprecisions corrected here; especially *pinnacole* needs to be corrected as *Piramidi*), and 38 n. 8 (a transcription of the continuation of the source, in which the abbot attempts to interpret the “indovinello”, that is, the inscription of the altarpiece, for which see the text below). With the exception of the *Elijah* and *Elisha* and the predella scene now in Australia, all the surviving fragments were recognized as parts of the Arte della Lana altarpiece by De Nicola (1912, 1913). For a general layout of the altarpiece, see the Machtelt Israëls’ provisional reconstruction (2001, 533, fig.2; 2006, 193 fig. 6), which is fully concinving in general terms, albeit I suspect the overall dimensions of the altarpiece may have been somewhat smaller. The scholar is preparing a more elaborate reconstruction on the basis of detailed physical examinations. Mária Prokopp’s alternative reconstruction drawing (1997, fig. 29) – in which the order of the predella scenes and the lateral figures is reversed, all the pilaster figures are placed on two large pilasters, and the panels of the Annunciation flank the Coronation of the Virgin over the central panel, while the *Elijah* and *Elisha* are placed over the laterals – is not acceptable as it disregards both Abbot Carli’s description and the physical properties of the surviving panels (for example, the different width of the pilaster figures).

<sup>300</sup> For some time, scholars identified the lost right lateral with Sassetta’s *St. Anthony Abbot* (Coll. Banca Monte dei Paschi, Siena) (cf. esp. Zeri 1956). This hypothesis lost its ground when a pendant to this piece showing *St. Nicholas of Myra* (Louvre, Paris) came to light (for a summary, see Roberto Bartolini, in Gurrieri et al. ed. 1988, 294-297, with bibl.; and Israëls 2003<sup>1</sup>, 90-93, for new suggestions about these two panels). Other pieces formerly associated with the Arte della Lana altarpiece (Zeri 1956) are a pair of panels showing the *Archangel Gabriel* (Museo del Palazzo Comunale, Massa Marittima) and the *Virgin Annunciate* (Yale University Art Gallery, New

Placed between the latter three panels, *Elijah* and *Elisha* appeared in Carmelite habit (PNS, inv. 87, 95). The main panels were framed and divided by pilasters: the four church fathers probably appeared on the interior ones (PNS, inv. 169), and the four patron saints of Siena on the exterior (PNS, inv. 168). The predella showed the *Institution of the Eucharist (Last Supper)* in the centre (PNS, inv. 167), flanked by two scenes related to heresy: *The burning at the stake of the heretic Nicolaus* (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne)<sup>301</sup> on the right, and the *Miracle of the Eucharist* (The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle)<sup>302</sup> on the left. On each end of the predella there were two scenes from the lives of the saints shown in the laterals: the *Flagellation of St. Anthony* (PNS, inv. 166) and a lost scene related to St. Anthony on the right, and MFA 23 and *St. Thomas kneeling before the Crucifix* (Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome), on the left.<sup>303</sup> As usual, the last two scenes were pilaster bases and projected from the body of the predella.<sup>304</sup>

The central theme of the altarpiece was the mystery of the Eucharist, the object of adoration at the feast of the Corpus Christi. The iconographical programme is an especially elaborate expression of issues related to the dogma of the Eucharist, and must have been drawn up by a well-prepared theologian. The adoration of the Eucharist by angels is sometimes depicted in 15<sup>th</sup> century Tuscan art but it was unprecedented in Siena as the central subject of an altarpiece.<sup>305</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas' depiction in the position of honour in the altarpiece underlines the theological foundation of the doctrine. The writings of the *doctor angelicus* were essential for the establishment of the feast of Corpus Christi, first universally

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Haven, inv. 1959.15.5), which recent criticism considers being without connection to any altarpiece (see Israëls 2003<sup>1</sup>, 60-61, with earlier bibl.).

<sup>301</sup> For the convincing identification of this much-discussed scene, see Israëls 2001, 539-41, elaborated on the suggestion of Keith Christiansen.

<sup>302</sup> The subject of this panel is sometimes described as exorcism (Gilbert 1990, 188-192), even though already the Abbot Carli (see n. 11) justly recognized that in reality it shows an unbeliever, whose disbelief in the transubstantiation resulted in his death: the devil snatches his soul – shown in the form of a small naked person – while on the plate the copiously bleeding host has revealed itself to be truly the body and blood of Christ.

<sup>303</sup> Carapelli noted that the predella showed “miracles of the sacrament”. Abbot Carli's eyewitness report (see n. 11) is indispensable for establishing the original order of the predella scenes. He described these as three scenes of Saint Anthony to the right, the Last Supper in the centre, a fifth scene [from the right] with a figure who expires when attempting to take communion, and, finally, two scenes of St. Thomas Aquinas on the left that regard the Sacrament.

<sup>304</sup> This explains why the format of the scene in the Vatican is different and its wood grain is vertical (cf. Christiansen 1990, 205).

<sup>305</sup> Angels adore the Eucharist in a monstrelion in the following works: Andrea di Bartolo's miniature between 1415-22 (BCS, ms G.I.14, f. 110r; repr. Chelazzi Dini ed. 1982, 325; Alessi and Martini ed. 1994, cat. 102; De Benedictis ed. 2002, 233 Pl. CXXXIII); Pellegrino di Mariano's miniature, BCS; Siena, Cod. 101-7, f. 63v; Neri di Bicci's altarpiece (repr. Thomas 2003, fig. 87); a *stendardo* by Girolamo del Pacchia (Chigi Saracini Coll., Siena, repr. *Mostra di opere...* II (1981), 136-138, fig. 97; altarpiece part by Gaudenzio Ferrari, ca. 1525? (MFA, inv. 9028; repr. Tátrai ed. 1991, 37) The idea to surround the tabernacle by musical angels seems to have been a Siennese invention, inspired perhaps by Simone Martini's composition of adoring and music-playing angels around the Assumption of the Virgin on the antiporto di Camollia, for which see discussion in Cat. 2.

celebrated in 1264. Thomas wrote extensively about the dogma of transubstantiation in the *Summa Theologiae*, and it is probable that he wrote the office for the Corpus Christ feast. The four church fathers (Fig. 1/10), who must have flanked the central panel, represent orthodoxy and authority, and it is in this capacity that they appear, with other saints, in the vision to St. Thomas in MFA 23. The erudite heavenly company there acts as the source of inspiration and knowledge to the Dominican theologian, holding up their writings to him. Possibly, as Gilbert (1990) hypothesized, they inspire him “to compose the office of Corpus Domini”.<sup>306</sup>

The main purpose of the altarpiece was to visualize the mystery of the transubstantiation to the faithful, and to educate them about the right ways of its veneration.<sup>307</sup> Scholars have often noted that the heretic teachings about the Eucharist in the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> century (John Wycliffe, John Hus) gave an immediate topicality to the latter aspect, and explain why there are two very rare scenes dealing with heresy and disbelief about the Eucharist on the two sides of *Institution of the Eucharist*, which, in turn, manifests the unquestionable truth of the mystery, as it was instituted by Saviour himself. A council held in Siena exactly in 1423-24, where heretic views on the Eucharist were once again condemned, brought this issue to the foreground and called for the necessity of defending the orthodox views on the dogma. The two above-mentioned 18<sup>th</sup>-century sources in fact recorded a highly unusual inscription under the central field: *Hinc opus omne. Patres. Stefanus construxit ad Aras. Senensis Iohannis. Agens citra lapsus adultos*, which has been interpreted as addressed to the “fathers” of the council: “Hence [that is, starting from the monsternace, the central image shown], O Fathers, Stephanus the son of Johannes of Siena constructed the whole work for the altars, acting in detachment from old errors”.<sup>308</sup>

With the main emphasis laid on the mystery of the Eucharist, the two major entities that participated in the Siennese celebration of the Corpus Christi were represented in the altarpiece in a subordinate, albeit many manifold, ways. The Arte della Lana was present via their patron saint St. Anthony Abbot<sup>309</sup> and their coats of arms in the predella of the burning of the

<sup>306</sup> Gilbert 1990, 183.

<sup>307</sup> On the role of images in the task of teaching to believers the dogma of the transubstantiation in the face of Hussite and related heresies, Sallay 2000.

<sup>308</sup> The first to interpret the inscription was the Abbot Carli (see n. 11). On the council of Siena, the theological background and the interpretation of the inscription, see especially the various views of Scapecchi 1979 and revised ed. 1994; Mencaraglia 1981; Gilbert 1990 (from where the present translation is taken). A summary is provided by Keith Christiansen, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 66-67 (It. ed. 80-81).

<sup>309</sup> For St. Anthony Abbot as a patron saint of the Arte della Lana, Israëls 2001, 533. Previous scholarship emphasized St. Anthony’s role as the patron saint of monasticism and the emblematic figure for resisting temptations (also shown in the predella).

heretic, whereas the Carmelites were represented through their legendary founders *Elijah* and *Elisha*, and the friars participating in the two predella scenes dealing with heresy.

This altarpiece has been considered not only as one of the greatest achievements of fifteenth-century Sienese art, but as a turning point in its development, in which Sassetta revealed – in the words of Giulio Mancini – unprecedented “*inventione, intelligenza e gratia*”.<sup>310</sup> To achieve this, on one hand, Sassetta turned to his predecessors with great interest and with an investigative, open mind: both his technique and spatial construction methods owe a lot to earlier Sienese art. His technical refinement continues the tradition of Simone Martini and was handed down to him directly by artists such as Benedetto di Bindo. In the representation of space, the Lorenzetti brothers had a great impact on Sassetta: the articulated space is shown in experimental but very effective perspective laid out with the help of incised lines. The representation of a succession of various rooms opens up the space in the back and provides a rich setting for the scene.<sup>311</sup> On the other hand, Sassetta may have been aware of some of the new developments in early 15<sup>th</sup>-century Florentine painting. There is no scholarly consensus on this very important point and no documentary basis to support those in favour of this view. Personally, I find it difficult to imagine the subsidiary figures in the *Miracle of the Eucharist* scene without some Florentine influence.

In MFA 23, Sassetta gave a delightfully detailed and fresh visual description of the everyday setting of monastic life, organized along the lines of clear visual logic. He evoked three important spaces through some well-chosen motifs. In the library, the open books imbue the scene with a feeling of immediacy. The cloister and the garden provide a glimpse into the mundane life of the friars: a bucket hangs from the rope twisted around the wheel of the draw-well; in the garden there is a path, there are three fruit trees, and small, regularly planted plants underneath them (Fig. 1/5). In the church, the heavenly vision and the elaborate representation of the altar, with its gold-threaded antependium, embroidered altar cloth, and resplendent gothic polyptych, draws the eye to the most sacred part of the representation. Yet, Sassetta is not lost in details and composes the scene with a perfect balance between the descriptive passages and the focus of the attention: the praying Dominican saint engorged in the heavenly vision. All unnecessary elements are eschewed around the friar: the light-bathed nave of the church is conspicuously bare.

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<sup>310</sup> De Nicola 1913, 208.

<sup>311</sup> A particular example that seems to have exerted an influence of the spatial layout of MFA 23 is, hardly accidentally, Pietro Lorenzetti's predella scene in the Carmelite altarpiece from 1329 (PNS, inv. 83), showing the concession of the new habit.

It is not known in what fate MFA 23 had for some time after the dismantlement of the altarpiece. It was the only fragment of the ensemble that Ramboux owned and he did not record where he purchased it. His unusually strange attribution to an “unknown master in the style of Franco [sic] Traini or also of Gentile da Fabriano” suggests that he had no idea of the provenance of the work. In the National Picture Gallery, the painting was ascribed to the Florentine school until Berenson (1897) restituted it to the Sienese school, albeit to Sano di Pietro. The first attribution to Sassetta seems to be the merit of Robert Langton Douglas, (reported by Térey 1906), an opinion never questioned afterwards.

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 19, no. 103 (unknown master in the style of Franco [sic] Traini or also of Gentile da Fabriano, represents St. Thomas Aquinas praying in his oratory and hearing the words of Christ: “Bene scripsisti de me Thoma”); [Ramboux] 1867, 21, no. 103 (same as Ramboux 1862); [Fraknói] 1871, 369 (Francesco Traini or rather Gentile da Fabriano); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1873, 4, no. 6 (Florentine, beginning of 15<sup>th</sup> c., “St. Thomas Agnius”); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1876, 6, no. 78 (Florentine, beginning of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Lützow 1876, col. 7 (no. 49, 15<sup>th</sup> c. Florentine work in Flemish manner); *Országos Képtár* 1878, 6, no. 78 (Florentine, beginning of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Országos Képtár* 1879, 6, no. 78 (Florentine, beginning of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pulszky 1881, 7, no. 31 (Florence, end of 14<sup>th</sup> c., Vision of St. Thomas Aquinas); Pulszky 1888, 5, no. 32 (Florence, end of 14<sup>th</sup> c., Vision of St. Thomas Aquinas); *Országos Képtár* 1897, 19 (Fra Giovanni Angelico da Fiesole); Berenson 1897, 175 (Sano di Pietro, “A Monk”); Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 142, no. 32 (Fra Giovanni Angelico da Fiesole); Destrée 1903, 43 (Sano di Pietro); Térey 1906<sup>1</sup>, 7, no. 25(32) (Sano di Pietro?); Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>, 14, no. 25 (32) (Sano di Pietro, reports that Berenson and Schubring ascribe it to Sano di Pietro, Douglas to Sassetta); Berenson 1909, 245 (Sassetta, St. Thomas Aquinas praying); De Nicola 1912, 42-43 (Sassetta, 1423-26, made for a chapel of the Arte della Lana, documents, identifies all but three of the presently known fragments of the altarpiece) De Nicola 1913, 207-215, 209 fig. A (Sassetta, doc. and reconstruction); Térey 1913<sup>1</sup>, 204-05, no. 25(32); (Sassetta, reports the following attributions: Schubring: Sano di Pietro; Berenson, Suida, Douglas, Venturi: Sassetta); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1903-1915, V (1914), 169 (Sassetta, “St. Thomas Aquinas praying before the Virgin”, 1423-26) [all subsequent authors accept the attribution to Sassetta]; Térey 1916, 53, repr.; Térey 1924, 149; Van Marle 1923-38. IX (1927), 317-319, esp. 318; Berenson 1932, 511 (“Thomas Aquinas in prayer, 1423-26”); Gengaro 1933, 14, 18-19 (“Santo Dominicano in preghiera”); Brandi 1933, 273 (“S. Tommaso in preghiera davanti alla Madonna”); Petrovics 1935, 8, no. 24; [F. Mason] Perkins, in Thieme and Becker ed. XXIX (1935), 482; Berenson 1936, 440; Pigler 1937, I, 231, no. 23 (25), II, pl. 11; Pope-Hennessy 1939<sup>1</sup>, 6-16, 217; Brandi 1949, 37-48, 186-87 note 20, repr. Pl. 47 (1423-36); Pigler 1954, I, 509-10, II, Pl. 13; Zeri 1956, 36-41 (associates a St. Anthony Abbot and two panels of the Annunciation with the Arte della Lana altarpiece); Carli 1957, 7-17; Carli 1958, 58; Coor 1959, 78 fig. 28; Pigler 1967 I, 621-22, II, fig. 19, with earlier bibl. (1423-26); Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, nos. 9-10 (1423-26); Berenson 1968, I, 384, II, Pl. 550 (1423-26); Coulonges 1970, 76 and colour pl. on pp. 77-78 (“Holy spirit enlightens St. Thomas”); Zeri 1973, 22-34; Scapecchi 1979 (revised ed. 1994); Moran 1980, 33-36; Carlo Volpe, in Chelazzi Dini ed. 1982, 388-89, cat. 136 (see also his entry, which however does not expressly mention MFA 23 in *Art gothique siennois* 1983, 338-339); *Early Italian Paintings...* 1983, 51-52, cat. 32.

(“episode from the life of St. Thomas”, gives the location erroneously as in the Narodowe Museum in Warsaw); Cecilia Alessi, “La pittura a Siena nel primo Quattrocento,” in Zeri ed. 1987, I, 216; Roberto Bartolini, in Gurrieri et al. ed. 1988, 294-297, esp. 294 (on Sassetta’s *St. Anthony Abbot*); Keith Christiansen, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 64-79 (It. ed. 78-93); Christiansen 1988, 94-107; Christiansen 1989, 263-270 (altarpiece finished before 6 June 1425); Moran and Mallory 1989, 354 (created shortly after 1460 by the Maestro dell’Osservanza); Torriti 1990, 168, 171-176; Gilbert 1990, esp. 183-187, fig. 6.10; Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 108 (1423-26); Prokopp 1991 (excludes the *St. Thomas kneeling before the Crucifix* scene from the series, suggesting that it dates from the 1430s and is incongruent with the rest of the predella scenes in its artistic concept and format); Santucci 1992, 46-47, repr.; Fiore and Tafuri ed. 1993, 35, repr. of detail on p. 47 (on the affinity of the depicted architecture with Francesco di Giorgio’s buildings); Scapecchi 1994, 239-249, fig. 2; Prokopp 1997 (analysis of altarpiece, suggests mirrored arrangement for the parts of the altarpiece, for reasons not stated); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 557, no. 103 (reconstruction of the Ramboux collection); Israëls 2001, 532-43; Vilmos Tátrai, “From the Quattrocento to the Settecento”, in *Italian old masters...* 2002, 16-80, esp. 31, 80, cat. 2., colour repr.; Israëls, 2003<sup>1</sup>, 54, fig. 15 (doc., reconstruction, analysis of altarpiece); Hyman 2003, 137-140, fig. 109; Israëls 2006 (on the feast of the Corpus Christi in Siena); Axel Vécsey, in Czére ed. 2006, 35-36, colour repr.; Sallay 2008, 4, 14.

**Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio**  
(**Pietro di Nanni d'Ambrogio or di Puccio, also called Ambrosi**)  
(Siena, 1410 – Siena, 1449)

Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio is first documented as a painter in the list of the Sieneſe painters' guild from 1428, into which, however, his name may have been added later. He was in all likelihood formed in the workshop of Sassetta, whose art exerted a determining influence on him.

Pietro di Giovanni was active as a mainly as panel painter, and his services were sought outside Siena – Florence, Milan, Sanſepolcro, Città di Caſtello – as well. His surviving *oeuvre* is relatively small. He was a highly individual artist, who freely borrowed compositional and stylistic elements from a wide range of sources, but transformed the Sassettesque quest for naturalism and important Florentine influences (Domenico Veneziano, Paolo Uccello) to fit his more personal interpretation of reality. Characteristic physiognomic distortions, agitated figures in twisted poses, startling foreshortenings often appear in his works, and in his later production there is a growing tendency towards formal abstraction.

To judge from his surviving works, Pietro di Giovanni must have been active as an independent master already in the 1430s; yet, documented works survive only from the last five years of his life, which renders the chronological judgment of his works difficult. Apart from his baptismal document and his inscription into the guild, he is not documented in Siena before 1438 and it is likely that he spent some of this time elsewhere, possibly in Florence, as some stylistic traits in his works imply. Some works considered to date from his early period on stylistic grounds include a portable triptych now divided between the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin (*Virgin and Child with Sts. John the Baptist and Dorothy*) and the Lehman Coll., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (*St. Michael Archangel, St. Nicholas of Myra*) and predella scenes showing *St. Monica Embarking a Ship* (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, inv. 1097); *Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem* (Pinacoteca Stuard, Parma) and the *Birth of St. Nicholas* (Kunstmuseum, Basel, inv. 1348).

In 1438, the artist was the *gonfaloniere* of the *compagnia* of S. Antonio in Siena and he was sent to be a castellan in Massa Marittima. The following year he married Antonia di Silvestro Niccolai da Cortona; in 1441 he was *vexilliferus* of the *compagnia* of S. Pellegrino.

Documents for his artistic activity appear from the fifth decade on. In 1440, he claimed payments for paintings he had executed in the church of S. Angelo in Città di Caſtello, and painted two “stories” in the infirmary of the Sieneſe Ospedale; these works do not survive. In 1441, he and Giovanni di Paolo are documented as rectors of the painters' guild in Siena.

Many scholars think that around 1442 he participated in the fresco decoration of the cloister of the Augustinian convent at Lecceto near Siena.

From 1444 are his first dated works, a signed, life-size, standing *Blessed Bernardino of Siena* (Chiesa dell'Osservanza, Siena, Fig. 7/7), commissioned by the companions of the depicted to commemorate the death of their leader, and a double-sided processional banner painted for the confraternity of St. Catherine in Sansepolcro, showing *St. Catherine of Alexandria in Glory* (obverse) and the *Crucifixion* (reverse) (Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris). In October, 1444, Pietro di Giovanni also painted a now lost image of St. Bernardino on the “tenda” (curtain) of the Pellegrinaio of the Sienese hospital. He may well be identical with a “Pietro di Giovanni dipintore” who is documented in Florence in 1445. His rare activity as an illuminator is documented in 1446-47, when he decorated with three historiated miniatures in the frontispiece of the *Tractatus de principatu* written for Filippo Maria Visconti (Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan, cod. 138 f. 1r).

Documents record that in 1445 he participated under Vecchietta's direction in the painting of the *Arliquiera*, the cupboard of relics made for the Sienese hospital (PNS, inv. 204), but the parts for which he was responsible are not easy to identify. In 1446 the artist worked in the Palazzo del Capitano in Siena and from this year dates an important frescoed tabernacle with the *Crucifixion* (Palazzo Pubblico, Siena).

Pietro painted another life-size image of the *Blessed Bernardino* in 1448 (signed and dated, Museo Civico, Lucignano) and gilt a tabernacle of the Eucharist for the Sacristy of the Cathedral the same year. A third, undated portrayal of *Bernardino* (signed, PNS, inv. 203) and a triptych in private collection, in which Bernardino appears, can only have been painted between 1444 and 1449. Important late works include the only monumental altarpiece that survives by the artist's hand, the *Adoration of the Shepherds* triptych in Asciano<sup>312</sup> and a recently rediscovered, much damaged *croce dipinta* in the Pieve di San Pietro ‘ad Mensulas’ in Sinalunga. The late works evince the artist's growing adherence to Sassetta's monumental and intensely expressive style; the forms gain more solid volumes and modelling. This revived interest in Sassetta's art may be due to the renewed contact of the two painters around 1444, when both of them were working for Sansepolcro.

The artist died in 1449 and was buried on 4 September in the cloister of San Domenico in Siena.

<sup>312</sup> Machtelt Israëls cautiously raised the question whether this work could not be the result of a commission first given to Domenico di Bartolo in 1437, but apparently not realized and possibly passed to Pietro di Giovanni (Machtelt Israëls, in Bellosi, Fattorini, and Paolucci ed. 2005, 20, 26 n. 34). The stylistic characteristics of the altarpiece would bear out this possibility.

**Select bibliography:** Romagnoli *ante* 1835 [1976], IV, 461-64; Perkins 1922; Longhi 1928 (republ. 1968, IV, 25 n. 7); Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 377-87; Berenson 1932, 457-58; [F. Mason] Perkins, "Pietro di Giovanni di Ambrogio", in Thieme and Becker ed. 1907-50, XXVII (1933), 21; Berenson 1936, 393-94; Longhi 1940 (republ. 1975, VIII/1, 3-65; Brandi 1943; Bacci 1944, 97-110 (doc. and summary of early scholarship); Toesca 1951; Toesca 1956; Gregori 1956; Volpe 1956; Volpe 1963; Berenson 1968, I, 4-5; Miklós Boskovits, "Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio", in *Dizionario Enciclopedico Bolaffi*, IX (1975); Carlo Volpe, "Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio", in Chelazzi Dini ed. 1982, 405-408; Dabell 1984; Laclotte 1985; Cecilia Alessi, "Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio" in Zeri ed. 1987, 739-40; Keith Christiansen, "Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio" in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 91-98 (It. ed. 105-112); Torriti 1990, 211-15; Bongianino-Polton 1993; Cecilia Alessi, in Alessi and Martini ed. 1994, 54-56, cat. 4; Frank Dabell, "Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio" in Turner ed. 1996, 24, 781-82; Catoni 2002; Maria Merlini, "Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio", in Bollati ed. 2004, 870-871 (with bibl.); Laura Martini, "Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio: Croce dipinta", in Guastaldi ed. 2004, 38-39; Raffaelli 2004-2005; Machtelt Israëls, in Bellosi, Fattorini, and Paolucci ed. 2005, 16-22, nn. on pp. 25-27.

## 2.

### Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio

*Assumption of the Virgin*

**Fig. 2/1**

ca. 1440

tempera and mostly modern gold on wood

painted surface: 85.8 x 50.2 cm, panel: 100 x 65.5 cm, thickness: 2.8-2.9 cm

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.185.

#### **Provenance:**

Canon Raffaele Bertinelli, Rome, until 1878, no. 30 (as Starnina); purchased 1878 by János Simor for his private collection, from where it passed to the Christian Museum.

#### **Exhibited:**

Royal Academy of Arts, London (1 January – 8 March, 1930): *Exhibition of Italian Art 1200-1900*, cat. 947.

#### **Technical notes:**

The support consists of three vertically grained poplar (?) planks, a large board in the middle (width: ca. 52 cm) and two narrow strips on each side (width: ca. 6.5-7 cm) (Fig. 2/2). It mostly conserves its original thickness. There is a large vertical crack running somewhat to the right of the central axis of the panel (as viewed from the back). The support has a slight double warp. The reverse has been treated with linseed oil.

A 7.5 cm wide and 9.5 cm deep, modern engaged frame is permanently attached to the support. The modern frame projects 3.5 cm beyond the panel at the back. Two modern crosspieces, one at the bottom and another at about the upper third of the picture, have been glued between its projecting sides. The external sides of the modern engaged frame have been covered for protection with a coating of a thick layer of chalk, overpainted with a mixture of raw ochre and umber pigment bound with animal glue, typical of the paintings coming from the Bertinelli collection.

The painted surface conserves its original form and dimensions. Although the edges have been repaired and retouched in many areas, remnants of an original *barbe* can be discerned all around. Two lines in the bottom of the sarcophagus have been incised into the gesso.

The paint surface has been seriously compromised and altered by modern interventions. The best preserved part is the landscape at the bottom, in which a coherent original paint layer survives, interrupted only by small scratches and scattered losses of paint, a few larger filled and inpainted areas (in and over the sarcophagus, between the road and the cliff on the right, in the cliff), and retouching over the vertical crack and over a large diagonal scratch in the sea above the head of St. Thomas. The curved horizon line has been overpainted. The green paint and the varnish have darkened. The red lake of St. Thomas's mantle has faded.

In the upper part, the original gold ground and the underlying bole has been almost entirely scraped away and reconstructed. The present gold ground is entirely new, applied probably over a new layer of gesso, with no underlying bole. All the halos have been redone. The crudely incised outlines of the halos, of some angel figures and of the instruments are all modern. The rays emanating from God the Father are fully modern.

The head of God the Father is well-preserved except for a thin vertical crack in it and some minor losses of colour to the left of his face. His drapery is fairly well-preserved; it seems to have been executed in azurite with some ochre and red lake over gold leaf. The gold decoration on his clothes is modern but replaces a similar but finer original pattern executed in mordent gilding and now all but lost. The surrounding clouds are mostly modern.

The groups of saints on the sides of God the Father are in relatively good condition. Many of them wear blue diadems, often with a pearl in its centre. On their scrolls there is well-preserved, minute and illegible cursive inscription. The figures are covered by dark varnish; there are small scattered retouchings. The halos, minor areas in some of the draperies and the bottom sides of the clouds are modern.

On the top of the Virgin's head, the checked pattern of the veil has been altered by modern regilding. The inside of the Virgin's hooded robe is decorated with original red glaze over gold leaf. The Virgin's white cloak is original; it is shaded with blue and decorated with a striated *sgraffito* pattern over gold leaf. The original gilt hem of the white cloak, decorated of diagonally incised, lines parallel, survives under modern decoration imitating Kufi script in shell gold. There is a long, curved scratch across the Virgin's body. The clouds below the Virgin are in part original; their dark outer areas are modern additions. The cherubs' faces and wings have been fully or partially reconstructed or retouched with powdered gold. The least altered head is perhaps the second from the top on the right. The bottom two cherub heads on the left are entirely modern.

The angels have been significantly altered by modern restoration. Their wings were originally decorated with red glaze over gold, of which large parts remain under the thick reddish-brown oil paint with which most wings are overpainted. Except for the striated *sgraffito* patterns, all decorative motifs imitating embroidery on the draperies of the angels are modern and are executed in shell gold over the original surfaces. The faces, hands and feet are generally original, whereas the halos, necklines, wrist lines have been systematically scraped away and reconstructed. All the areas decorated with a circle pattern (necklines, bands along the hem of dresses) are reconstructed, with no original paint layer surviving below.

Further notes on individual angel figures follow (the numbering begins with the three angels on the top (1-3), continuing anti-clockwise with the angels who form the circle around the Virgin (4-13) and finishing with the row of angels on the top right, the last one being the trumpeter angel in the foreground (14-16):

Angels 1-3: The dresses and the instruments are fragmented but original.

Angel 4: The head and the right hand are original. The feet are original but reinforced. The dress is extensively repainted; it was originally decorated with a simple *sgraffito* pattern. The gold decoration along the neckline and the embroidered pattern on the dress are modern. The guitar has been regilt and its four strings are the result of modern incision but its outlines appear to be original.

Angel 5: Except for the head and the central part of the right hand, the entire figure and the sheet of music is modern.

Angel 6: Except for the neckline, the figure is relatively well-preserved but the drapery is extensively redecorated. The bagpipe is original.

Angel 7: The figure is original except for the area around the foot, which is reconstructed. Red lake over gold leaf is well-preserved on the sleeve. The gilding, the incised strings, and the coarse outline of the fiddle and its bow are modern.

Angel 8: The hand and the feet are original. The instrument is entirely modern. The drapery seems to follow more or less the original design but the areas decorated with circles are reconstructed.

Angel 9: The area around the lower foot is entirely reconstructed. Only fragments of the belt seem to be original; it is mostly modern and was probably not held originally by the angel

(Fig. 2/11). The inscription on the belt is modern. The hand and a small part of paint around it are original. The palmette pattern is based on a lost original executed in mordent gilding.

Angel 10: The figure is relatively well-preserved except for the areas decorated with a circle pattern. There is a loss of paint between the tambourine and the arm.

Angel 11: The figure is relatively well-preserved except for the neckline but the drapery is extensively redecorated. Much original gold survives under the harp. The only well-preserved original gold ground is found in the triangular area in front of the neck of the figure.

Angel 12: The figure is relatively well-preserved except for the neckline but the drapery is extensively redecorated. The lute has been regilt and its incised strings are modern but the original gold survives in part under the regilding.

Angel 13: The tambourine is entirely modern. The dark drapery is repaired.

Angel 14: The figure is fairly well-preserved but of the object only the part held by the hand is original.

Angel 15: The right hand of the figure and the instrument it holds appears to be original but unidentifiable. The string of beads is modern. The waist- and neckline is regilt.

Angel 16: Most of the trumpet, including its entire left half, is modern but appears to replace an original one. The red glaze of the wing, waistband and lining of the dress is well-preserved.

### Documentation:

On reverse: “30” (black print, corresponding to the number of the work in the Bertinelli collection); “Nr. 30, *Starnina. Mária mennybemenetele*” (probably dating from 1878 and written by Ferenc Maszlaghy); “AZ ESZTERGOMI HERCZEGP(RIMÁSI) KÉPTÁR tulajdon(a). Leltári szám 59” (probably dating from 1878, printed on white label, inventory no. in ink); “59” (in pencil); “*Exhibition of Italian Art. Royal Academy of Arts Jan. 12 – March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1930. Artists: Sassetta; Title of work: Assumption; Name and Address of Owner: Gallery of the Cardinal Prince of Hungary in Esztergom. Medium. Size. Case 18*” (printed label, information specific to the work handwritten in ink and pencil), “100” (in red ink over the previous label, corresponds to the registration no. of the work for the exhibition)<sup>313</sup> (Fig. 2/4), “KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM +” (round stamp on white label); “55.185” (in blue ink written over the round stamp). On modern crosspieces: “*Stefan*” (in pencil); “55.158” (twice, in pencil).

Above a panoramic landscape seen from a bird’s eye view and closed off by a curved horizon, a vast and animated heavenly sphere is portrayed against a gold ground. In its centre, the Virgin ascends to Heaven through a ring of graciously hovering musical angels; two further groups of three angels appear in the background on either side. As usual in Sieneese portrayals of the Assumption, Mary is shown strictly frontally, dressed in a richly decorated white cloak; her hands are joined in prayer. She is supported by a bed of clouds and carried upwards by a host of cherubs who form a sort of a *mandorla* around her. Above, God the Father appears enshrouded in a voluminous cloak; he looks down and extends his arms to receive the Virgin in the heavenly realm. On either side, hierarchically arranged groups of prophets and saints, already inhabitants of Paradise, watch the scene.

<sup>313</sup> According to a tag related to the London exhibition archived at the CM, which reads “Sassetta: Assumption” and “Reg. No. 100”.

Below the Virgin, her girdle appears (now held by an angel as a result of 19<sup>th</sup>-century restoration, but originally almost certainly shown in mid-air).<sup>314</sup> According to the 6<sup>th</sup>- or 7<sup>th</sup>-century apocryphal *Transitus della Beata Vergine Maria Vergine* ascribed to the so-called Pseudo-Joseph of Arimathia, Mary unfastened and dropped her belt to St. Thomas as a proof of her physical Assumption.<sup>315</sup>

“Thomas was suddenly brought to the Mount of Olives and saw the holy body being taken up, and cried out to Mary: ‘make thy servant glad by thy mercy, for now thou goest to heaven’. And the girdle with which the apostles had girt the body was thrown down to him; he took it and went to the valley of Josaphat.”

The solitarily apostle stands below as the only human being in the earthly sphere. His transfigured face betrays the stupor of the visionary religious experience; he spreads out his arms weakly in expectation of the girdle; a gesture that faintly echoes that of the God the Father. Next to him is the tomb of the Virgin, an elaborate stone sarcophagus inlaid with marble and filled with roses and lilies. The fable-like landscape is shown on an entirely different scale. The apostle and the tomb are enclosed by fantastic rock-formations which allude to the Valley of Josaphat (or Jehosaphat), in which, according to the legend that is condensed here into one scene, the burial of the Virgin took place. The landscape is typically Tuscan, with gently undulating roads, cypresses and pine trees. In the distance, the sea appears with sailboats and islands with ports and fortifications.

Pietro di Giovanni’s *Assumption of the Virgin* forms part of a long and manyfold iconographic tradition in Sieneese art. The subject was very popular in the entire region of Tuscany, with a particular focus on versions that included the scene of the donation of the girdle to St. Thomas (*Madonna della Cintola*), connected to the cult that grew about the famous relic of the Virgin’s girdle (*cintola, cingolo*) preserved in the Cathedral of Prato.<sup>316</sup> In Siena, the iconography of the *Madonna della Cintola* had extraordinary popularity, intensified

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<sup>314</sup> As mentioned in the technical description, the belt is mostly reconstructed and there is no proof that it was ever held by the angel. The Gothic minuscule letters inscribed on the belt are all modern. Although Ferretti (2002, 415) discovered an example where the angel holds the belt and acts as an intermediary between the Virgin and Thomas (a work by Ludovico Brea in the Musée du Petit Palais in Avignon), such a solution does not appear among the countless Sieneese examples and can almost certainly be excluded in the case of CM 55.185. See the text below.

<sup>315</sup> See Tischendorf ed. 1866 (reprint 1966), 113-123, English translation Montague Rhodes James 1953, 216-218. On the Assumption of the Virgin, cf. Réau 1955-59, II, 616-21; Schiller 1966-91, IV/2 (1980), 140-147; Ferretti 2002. For an overview of the many versions of the legend of the Assumption of the Virgin, cf. Craveri ed. 1969, 447-48; for an inventory of these sources, Bover 1947. For sources on the role of St. Thomas in the Assumption, see also Shoemaker 2002, esp. “The Late Apostle Tradition”, 67-71; Mimouni 1995, 624-28.

<sup>316</sup> On the iconography of the Assumption of the Virgin in Tuscany and in Western art in general, cf. Staedel 1935; Réau 1955-59, II/2 (1957), 616-621; Os 1969<sup>1</sup> (reprinted in English in Van Os 1992, with extensive bibl. on p. 161); Tulanowski 1986; *La Sacra Cintola...* 1995; Ferretti 2002 (with further bibl. on p. 418 n. 1).

by many local factors.<sup>317</sup> In 1359, the Sieneſe, too, came into the poſſeſſion of a relic of the ſacred girdle, which they then preſerved in the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala and exhibited it on ſpecial occaſions from a pulpit on the building’s façade.<sup>318</sup> Yet, the poſſeſſion of the girdle only reinforced a cult which already exiſted long before. The Aſſumption of the Siena’s protectreſs was the major religious feaſt in the city.<sup>319</sup> The Sieneſe Cathedral was dedicated to the *Assunta*, and the faithful inside the church looked up to Duccio’s rendering of this ſcene in the circular eaſt window already from ca. 1288-90 on.<sup>320</sup> It has been argued (though not definitively proved) that the Virgin’s Aſſumption also appeared once on the façade of the Ospedale, juſt acroſs from the main entrance of the Cathedral, as one of the famous ſcenes painted in the 1330s by Simone Martini and the brothers Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti.<sup>321</sup> Another celebrated representation of the ſubject appeared on the *antiporto* (defenſive outpoſt) of the Porta Camollia. This freſco was poſſibly firſt executed in *sinopia* or monochrome by Simone Martini in the firſt half of the 1330s; finiſhed or coloured after 1360, probably by Bartolomeo Bulgarini, and reſtored or reworked in 1414 by Benedetto di Bindo.<sup>322</sup>

<sup>317</sup> As Enrico Bulletti (1935, 148) remarked, “*Forſe neſſun’ altra ſcuola pittorica trattò queſto ſoggetto coſi frequentemente e con tanta eſuberanza di paradisiaca e calda ſpiritualità, di gaia ma ſignorile e contenuta feſtoſità come la ſeneſe*”. Indeed, virtually every fifteenth-century Sieneſe painter rendered this ſcene on one or more occaſions. On the iconography of the Aſſumption in Sieneſe art, cf. Dewald 1923; Beenken 1928-29; Staedel 1935, 58-66; Van Os 1990, 140-152; Tulanowski 1986, 46-54; Fagnoli 2004, 14-26; Steinhoff 2007, 129-134, 201-204, and eſp. van Os 1969<sup>1</sup>, 143-185 (reprinted in English in van Os 1992, 123-187).

<sup>318</sup> Gallavotti Cavallero, 1985, 80, 132 n. 117; Gagliardi 1996; Ferretti 2002, 418 n. 9. The relic, together with many other ones, was purchased in Venice in 1357 and reached Siena in 1359.

<sup>319</sup> On the feaſt of the *Assunta*, cf. Gigli 1723 (ed. 1854), II, 110-114; Hook 1979, 54-55; Wolfgang Loseries, “Der Dom im ſtädtebaulichen Zuſammenhang vom mittleren 14. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert”, in: Riedl and Seidel ed., 3.1.1.2 (2006), 693-694; Steinhoff 2007, 129-134.

<sup>320</sup> Luciano Belloſi and Alessandro Bagnoli, in Bagnoli, Bartalini, Belloſi and Laclotte ed. 2003, 166-183. Duccio ſhowed the Virgin ſeated in a *mandorla* held and carried to Heaven by four angels in the four corners.

<sup>321</sup> From the vaſt literature on the loſt freſcos on the facade of the Sieneſe hoſpital and the ongoing debate whether it included, in addition to the four certain ſcenes ſhowing the early life of the Virgin, a fifth ſcene with the Aſſumption, I cite only Eisenberg 1981, Gallavotti Cavallero 1985<sup>1</sup>, 70-73; Gallavotti Cavallero 1987; Keith Christiansen, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1998, 146-151 (It. ed. 160-165); Christiansen 1994; Maginnis 1988, Parenti 1991, Kawſky 1995, vol. I, 180-192; Norman 1999, 86-103; Leone De Caſtris 2003, 290-92; Wolfgang Loseries, in Boskovits and Tripps 2008, 124-131; all with further bibl. If there was an Aſſumption freſco on the façade of the Ospedale, it probably ſhowed angels arranged in groups on the ſides, and not around, the Virgin (as in Sano di Pietro’s Cappella dei Signori predella, for which it was preſcribed to follow the freſco prototype).

<sup>322</sup> The problems regarding the decoration of the *antiporto* of Porta Camollia (of which only a few fragments remained after World War II) and the uncertainty about what documents refer to this or to other gates (the Porta Camollia itſelf and the Porta Romana) is ſummed up in Carli 1976 (republished 1996); for more on this problem, cf. Milaneſi 1854-1856, I, 258-259; Luſini 1894; Brandi, 1961; Hueck 1971; De Marchi 1992<sup>1</sup> (with previous bibl.); Narcisa Fagnoli and Anna Maria Guiducci, in Guerrini ed. 1996, 83-84; Maginnis 2001, 132; Leone De Caſtris 2003, 287, 290. According to ſources ſeen by Romagnoli (*ante* 1835 [1976], II, 507) the freſco was completed by Bartolomeo Bulgarini; on Bulgarini’s intervention, cf. Steinhoff 2007, 56-57. For Benedetto di Bindo’s intervention in 1414, cf. Romagnoli (*ante* 1835 [1976], II, 507) and Borghesi and Banchi 1898, 78-79. On the topographical aſpects of the the *antiporto* of Porta Camollia area and its environs: Nevola 2000, 35-36; Nevola 2007, 36-37, and the preſent Cat. 8, eſp. note 437.

These immensely influential images and perhaps other, now lost ones, gave rise to different compositional traditions of the Assumption in Sienese art, which influenced and freely borrowed elements from one another; yet some basic types are clearly distinguishable. Previous scholarship has analyzed and classified these *in extenso*. Especially Henk van Os's categorization of a "heraldic type" (a frontal and iconic rendering of the event) and a "dynamic type" (in which the Virgin rises through a circle of musical angels shown in perspective around Mary) found favour with critics.<sup>323</sup> The composition of CM 55.185 clearly follows the "dynamic type", the first surviving example of which is the celebrated small panel in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, usually ascribed to Simone Martini's circle or to Lippo Memmi (Fig. 2/8).<sup>324</sup> This composition became immensely popular and many versions of it were produced until the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>325</sup>

It is likely, as is generally assumed, that the prototype of this composition is the above mentioned fresco on the *antiporto* of Porta Camollia.<sup>326</sup> A source describes it as a composition "*cum figuris multorum Angelorum, cantantium, jubliantium et musicalibus instrumentis ad honorem et reverentiam Virginis benedictae psallentium et organizantium circumcirca*",<sup>327</sup> and Bernardino himself described it in his sermon delivered on 15 August, 1427, on the Feastday of the Assumption, as follows: "*Tutti gli angioli le stanno d'intorno, tutti gli archangioli, tutti i troni, tutte le dominazioni, tutte le virtù, tutte le podestà, tutti i principati, tutti i cherubini, tutti i serafini, tutti gli apostoli, tutti i patriarchi, profeti, vergini, martori; tutti le stanno da torno giubilando, cantando, danzando, faciendole cerchio, come tu vedi dipènto colà su alla Porta a Camollia.*"<sup>328</sup> These words, especially the expressions "*le stanno intorno*", "*le stanno da torno*", and "*faciendole cerchio*", indeed bring this type of composition to mind.<sup>329</sup> At the same time, in 1550 Giorgio Vasari left a sufficiently detailed description of Pietro Lorenzetti's lost Assumption fresco in the Pieve of Arezzo to provide some doubt about the primacy of the decoration on the *antiporto* of Camollia as a

<sup>323</sup> Meiss 1951, 2123; Van Os 1990, 140-152; De Marchi 1992<sup>1</sup>, 149 n. 57; Fargnoli 2004, 20.

<sup>324</sup> Inv. WAF 671, cf. Kultzen 1975, 102-104; Leone De Castris 2003, colour pl. on p. 289; Syre 2007, 166-69.

<sup>325</sup> An extensive list of versions is provided by De Marchi 1992<sup>1</sup>, 149 n. 57.

<sup>326</sup> Cf. Van Os 1969<sup>1</sup>, 183 (English ed. 1992), De Marchi 1992<sup>1</sup>, 143.

<sup>327</sup> *Analecta ex duabus vitis* (AASS, Maii, vol. IV, Venezia 1740, 767, cited by Carli republ. 1996, 338).

<sup>328</sup> Published Delcorno 1989, I, 106; on the subject see Bulletti 148; Carli republ. 1996, 338).

<sup>329</sup> In a mid-15<sup>th</sup> c. representation of the *antiporto* (Circle of Vecchietta, *Arrival of a Knight*, Barnes Foundation, Merion, Fig. 8/6) the figures appear rather on the side of the Virgin than around her but this may be the result of simplification on the part of the painter (cf. n. 148 below). In two, very similar topographical views by Giovanni di Lorenzo (Biccherna panel, 1526 [?], ASS, Biccherna inv. 49, cf. Valerio Asciani, in Tomei ed. 2002, 224-225, with bibl.); *The Virgin of the Immaculate Conception Protects the Sienese during the Battle of Camollia*, 1528, Church of San Martino, Siena, cf. see Alessandro Bagnoli, in *Domenico Beccafumi*. 1990, 330-331, 336-339, Marco Ciampolini in *id.* ed. 1997, 17-19; Moscadelli, Papi, and Pellegrini 2004, 19, fig. 3), the fresco appears more complex and closer to the circular composition.

compositional prototype: “*Similmente nei volti d’un coro d’Angeli che volano in aria intorno alla Madonna, e con leggiadri movimenti ballando, fanno sembante di cantare, dipinse una letizia veramente angelica e divina; avendo massimamente fatto gli occhi degli angeli, mentre suonano diversi instrumenti tutti fissi e intenti in un altro coro d’Angeli, che sostenuti da una nube in forma di mandorla, portano la Madonna in cielo, con belle attitudini e da celesti cerchi tutti circondati*”<sup>330</sup>.

Whatever was the now lost compositional prototype, the fresco on the *antiporto* had the greatest importance in its enormous success, thanks to St. Bernardino’s high appreciation of it. The young Bernardino’s amorous admiration for this fresco is well-known; he later expressed the high esteem he felt for it also in a sermon in which he declared it the most beautiful of all Marian representation, and by the fact that he ordered a copy of it for his church at the Osservanza.<sup>331</sup>

It is not known whether the fresco on the *antiporto* already showed the donation of the girdle and the figure of St. Thomas; but two views by Giovanni di Lorenzo’s in the 1520s seem to include a small figure seen from the back at the bottom of the fresco. If it was indeed Bulgarini who completed the *antiporto* fresco, it is significant that he portrayed Thomas in this way in his almost contemporary work painted for the Ospedale around 1360 in all probability on occasion of the acquisition of the relic (PNS, inv. 61).<sup>332</sup>

The landscape seems to enter the iconography of the *Madonna of the Cintola* in Siena only in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Benedetto di Bindo’s magnificent fresco in San Niccolò al Carmine

<sup>330</sup> Vasari, ed. Milanese ed. 1878-1885, I (1878), 474. Hueck (1971, 118) nonetheless interprets Vasari’s description as reporting a composition in which the angels are at the side, not around in a circle, of the Virgin. The question whether the prototype of the “räumliche Kreiskomposition” is to be ascribed to Pietro Lorenzetti or Simone Martini was discussed in early scholarship by Dewald (1923), Beenken (1928, esp. 47-50), and Staedel (1935, 60-61). Dewald considered Pietro Lorenzetti’s destroyed fresco to be the prototype (or, alternatively, a similar scene which Dewald believed Pietro painted on the facade of the Sienese Hospital); Beenken argued for Simone Martini as the creator of the composition, of which the Munich panel would be a derivation. Staedel, who calls this composition the “Regina Angelorum”, was inclined to accept Dewald’s opinion.

<sup>331</sup> The young Bernardino would have admired the fresco in its state after the completion of its decoration after 1360. It is uncertain what changes were made to it in the “doing or redoing” of the fresco in 1414. Bernardino’s admiration for the Virgin portrayed in this fresco is very often cited, here I refer only to Carli republ. 1996, 338-39, with further bibl. The copy ordered by Bernardino is mentioned in the “Compendium vitae S. Bernardini autore anonymo”, a late 15<sup>th</sup>-c. manuscript preserved in Collegio di S. Isidoro in Rome (ms. 1/13) published in part (ff. 115a-124b) by Delorme 1935. Delorme considered the *vita* written by a Sienese author probably between 1446-50, before Bernardino’s canonisation (pp. 3-4). The relevant passage reads (p. 10, lines 15-21): “*Unde quamdam pulcherrimam Virginis ymaginem supra portam civitatis Senarum, qua itur Florentiam, cotidie contemplabatur assidueque jocundabatur ibidem ad Virginis pulchritudinem et nobilitatem, ex ymaginis pulchritudine ut incipientibus convenit mentem elevans; quam ymaginem quasi proprie post susceptum habitum Religionis in loco Minorum fratrum de Observantia prope Senas in majori cappella, ut magis devote contemplaretur, ibidem depingi fecit.*” The work is usually identified with Sassetta’s *Assumption of the Virgin*, formerly in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin and destroyed during World War II (Fig. 2/10, cf. Alberto Cornice, “Opere d’Arte all’Osservanza” in *L’Osservanza di Siena* 1984, 51).

<sup>332</sup> Carli republ. 1996, 342; Steinhoff 2006, 201-204.

already contains, if not a proper landscape, an earthly sphere with St. Thomas kneeling beside the Virgin's empty sarcophagus.<sup>333</sup> Sassetta's *Assumption* (destroyed, formerly Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin, Fig. 2/10), which Pietro di Giovanni must have known, includes a landscape at the bottom but it is clearly a later addition.<sup>334</sup> Zeri suggested that Pietro di Giovanni based the general compositional scheme, as well as the landscape with the curved horizon, on Sassetta's lost central panel of Sassetta's *Arte della Lana* altarpiece (cf. Cat. 1).<sup>335</sup> On the basis of the descriptions left of the *Arte della Lana* altarpiece, he suggested that the Virgin replaces the Sacrament in the ring of adoring angels Pietro di Giovanni's composition and that the ratio of the gilt sacred sphere and the painted ground derives too from Sassetta's lost altarpiece. The landscape with the figure of the Apostle is the best preserved and most captivating part of the *Assumption* in Esztergom. Thomas is shown in bravourous *profile perdu* worthy of the brush of Sassetta; his rose drapery beautifully cascades from his arm and behind his figure. The vast landscape with its irregular roads and gently swaying boats fills the viewer with a sense of familiarity.

The panoramic view of the diversified landscape has lead some critics to attribute a symbolic, universal importance to the earthly sphere, dwarfed by the scene of the eternal glorification of the Virgin who would appear as the *Salvatrice Mundi*. The perfectly balanced, symmetrical composition suggests heavenly harmony; the representation is not about the narrative particulars of the Virgin's bodily assumption but on the demonstration of her status between Heaven and ordinary mortals: she connects Heaven and Earth and can intercede for mankind.<sup>336</sup>

The figures inhabiting the heavenly sphere are rendered with a sound sense of perspective. The circle of angels around the Virgin recedes in space; the ones further away are smaller, and especially the two groups of three angels in the back appear at a certain distance from the central group. The strong foreshortening of God the Father, who appears to break through the pictorial plane, derives from Lorenzo Ghiberti's reliefs, as has often been noted.<sup>337</sup>

<sup>333</sup> Repr. before restoration in Lusini 1907, 15. On the fresco see Boskovits 1980, 10, who dates it to the first decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>334</sup> Israëls (1994) explained the necessity of the later interventions in the panel to the damage caused by a lightning that struck the panel on the high altar of the church of the *Osservanza* in 1494. The dating of Sassetta's work remains to be studied. Machtel Israëls anticipated parts of her ongoing research in a lecture held in Siena 2007, in which she suggested a dating around 1430-35. See also Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 33 n. 29.

<sup>335</sup> For the curved horizon, see Christiansen 1989, esp. 267, who suggests it may derive from Venetian painting and may have reached Siena through Andrea di Bartolo, having an impression also on Sassetta.

<sup>336</sup> Van Os 1969<sup>1</sup> (republ. in English in Van Os 1992).

<sup>337</sup> Van Os 1969<sup>1</sup> (republ. in English in Van Os 1992, 143). The Eternal appears in a similar way in other works of the painter, in the *Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist and a female saint* (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin).

Unfortunately it is difficult to comment on what was certainly a highly refined and decorative original aspect of the work. The paint surface in the heavenly sphere has been more damaged and altered by modern restoration (and embellishment) than what is generally realized. The music making angels have all been very much restored; the outlines of their dynamic, elegantly fluttering draperies are nearly all modern. Since only a small island of paint remains of the hand of the angel that now holds the girdle (the wrist too has been completely scraped away and redone, Fig. 2/11), it is virtually certain that he originally held an instrument, not the girdle, as innumerable other 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>-century Sieneese examples suggest. This could have been a lute, held in a similar way as the same angel does in Matteo di Giovanni's and Pellegrino di Mariano's *Assumptions* in London and Cagliari, respectively (Figs. 20/16, 2/9).<sup>338</sup> Immediately to the left of the Virgin, the angel (who now plays a reconstructed timbrel) holds his hand in a position that suggests the original presence of a small portable organ, similar to what appears in the miniature of an anonymous Sieneese painter in the Museo Aurelio Castelli in Siena (Corale 3, f. 61r).<sup>339</sup> In other *Assumptions*, some of the angels do not play an instrument as all but assume adoring postures (perhaps this was the case with the completely reconstructed angel now holding a sheet of music). Though partly restored, the other late-medieval musical instruments survive well-preserved enough to be identified: there are two shawms and a double aulos (*auloi*) in the left background, a guitar, a bagpipe, a fiddle, a timbrel, a frame harp and a lute in the circle of angels, and trumpet on the right (see Technical notes for detailed comments).<sup>340</sup>

Despite its deplorable condition, the panel preserves enough of its original parts – especially the faces, some of the draperies, and the landscape – to endorse Pietro di Giovanni's autography, which was first proposed, after the historic attributions to Starnina and Sassetta, by Bernard Berenson in 1946. The typology of the angels (Figs. 2/7 c-d) compare well to the probably much later *Nativity* in Asciano; similar are the thin red diadems ending in a small triangular gable decorated with a single pearl in its centre and the thin wifts of hair twisted loosely around the diadems. The dating is a more difficult issue in view of the complete lack of datable works from the painter's early career. Although CM 55.185 has sometimes been considered as late work, it must significantly predate the documented late

<sup>338</sup> The angel in the same position, albeit turning towards the viewer, holds a lute in many other Sieneese *Assumptions*. A tambourine is also possible (as in Sassetta's *Assumption*, in the same position) but less likely, since the tambourine in the hand of the following in angel in the circle in CM 55.185 is original. For Pellegrino's *Assumption*, see note 556 below.

<sup>339</sup> Repr. in Bandera 1999, 60, where it is unconvincingly attributed to Benvenuto di Giovanni.

<sup>340</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Dezső Karasszon (Conservatory, University of Debrecen, Hungary), for his kind help with the identification with the musical instruments.

phase of the artist between 1444-48, when his art assumed a strongly Sassettesque character. A date in the late 1330s (when the painter is documented again in Siena after a possible absence) or around 1440 is likely.<sup>341</sup>

Similarly uncertain is the original function of the work, because its dimensions are atypical: it is too large for private devotion and too small for an altarpiece. Strehlke's suggestion that CM 55.185 could be the painting that St. Bernardino commissioned for the Church of the Osservanza as a copy of the *antiporto* fresco is thus not borne out by the small size.<sup>342</sup> I tend to agree with Raffaelli (2004-2005) who considered it as a self-standing piece perhaps once completed by a – not necessarily decorated – small predella. Van Os (1969<sup>1</sup>, reprinted 1992) first regarded it as a panel for personal devotion; later (1990, 148), he suggested that the arched top of the panel indicates an original location on “on an altar in a small shallow niche.” The arched top of the composition is, however, seems better explained by the desire to imitate the fresco of the *antiporto* of Porta Camollia, protected by a semicircular niche, as Ludwin Paardekooper suggested.<sup>343</sup>

#### References:

Maszlachy 1878, 11, no. 59 (Gherardo Starnina); Rényi 1879, 18 (Starnina); Maszlachy 1891, 23, no. 59. (Gherardo Starnina); Colasanti 1910<sup>1</sup>, 408 (Sassetta); Colasanti 1910<sup>2</sup>, iii (Sassetta); Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 340-42 (Sassetta, 1430s, influenced by Giovanni di Paolo); Gerevich 1928, 224, repr. p. 222 (Sassetta); *Exhibition of Italian Art* 1930, 421, cat. 947 (Sassetta; “the sky has been regilt”); Berti Toesca 1932, 946-947, repr. 945 (Sassetta, strongly restored); Berenson 1932, 512 (Sassetta); F. Mason Perkins, in Thieme and Becker ed. 1907-50, vol. 29 (1935), 482 (Sassetta); Delogu 1936, 184, repr. p. 172 (Sassetta); Berenson 1936, 440 (Sassetta); Pope-Hennessy 1939<sup>1</sup>, 113-14, 125, 136, 208 (Sassetta, close to the Chigi-Saracini triptych of about 1437 but inferior); Berenson 1946, 52-53, fig. 50. (Pietro di Giovanni); Gerevich ed. 1948, 95-97, fig. 116 (Sassetta); Podestà 1948, 92 (Pietro di Giovanni, reports Berenson's standpoint without comment); Brandi 1949, 226, note 107 (Pietro di Giovanni, close to the Babbot Madonna in Brooklyn); Galetti and Camesasca 1950, III, 2224 (Sassetta); Meiss 1951, 21 n. 28 (Pietro di Giovanni); Czobor 1955, 8, repr. (Sassetta); Carli 1957, 123 (Pietro di Giovanni); Mojzer 1958, 8 (Sassetta); Volpe 1958, 86 (Pietro di Giovanni); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 54-56 (Pietro di Giovanni); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1967, 48, no. 14, colour repr. (Pietro di Giovanni, probably late work); Berenson 1968, I, 4 (Pietro di Giovanni Ambrosi); Boskovits 1968, nos. 13-14 (Pietro di Giovanni, late 1440s); Vitalini Sacconi 1968, 236, note 253 (Pietro di Giovanni); Os 1969<sup>1</sup>, 177-85, 189-90, fig. 20 (Pietro di Giovanni, 4th decade of 15th c.); Coulonges 1970, 75 and colour pl. detail on p. 74 (Pietro di Giovanni); Hueck 1971, 118 (Pietro di Giovanni); Zeri

<sup>341</sup> A date between 1430-40 has been suggested by Van Os (1969<sup>1</sup>, who dedicated a separate appendix to argue for a dating in the fourth decade of 15th century, but in 1990 he mentioned the work, for reasons not stated, as painted in the 1440s), Boskovits (1978), Tátrai (1993). Giulia Raffaelli (2004-2005) dated the work to 1437-40, supported by the opinion of Luciano Bellosi.

<sup>342</sup> Carl B. Strehlke, “Art and Culture in Renaissance Siena”, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 52 (It. ed. 65).

<sup>343</sup> Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 22-23.

1973, 28-29, fig. 28 (Pietro di Giovanni, composition inspired by lost central panel of Sassetta's altarpiece for the Arte della Lana); Mucsi 1975, 41, no. 196, fig. 41 (detail) (Pietro di Giovanni, late 1440s); Boskovits 1978, nos. 13-14 (Pietro di Giovanni, between 1430-40, notes that the gold ground is renewed); Schiller 1966-91, IV/2 (1980), 144 (on iconography); Polzer 1981, 575 n. 31 (Pietro di Giovanni); Christiansen 1982, 77 n. 52 (Pietro di Giovanni; cites it by error as in Budapest); Tátrai 1983<sup>1</sup>, 33, colour repr. (Pietro di Giovanni, ca. 1440); Laclotte 1985, 111 n. 6; Boskovits 1988, 155 (Pietro di Giovanni, analogy to Berlin); Carl B. Strehlke, "Art and Culture in Renaissance Siena", in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 52 (It. ed. 65) (Pietro di Giovanni, cites it by error as in Budapest, probably the painting ordered by San Bernardino for the church of the Osservanza); Mucsi 1990, 12, pl. VI. (Pietro di Giovanni, after 1440); Os 1990, II, 147-148, fig. 148 (Pietro di Giovanni, 1440s); Os 1992, 143-149 and fig. 42, which by error shows part of a reconstruction of Duccio's Maestà (Pietro di Giovanni, 1430s); De Marchi 1992<sup>1</sup>, n. 57 on p. 149 (Pietro di Giovanni); Vilmos Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 233, no. 95 (Pietro di Giovanni, between 1430-40); Bongianino-Polton 1993 (Pietro di Giovanni); Kawsky 1995, 194, n. 206 (Pietro di Giovanni); Prokopp 1997, 15-16, fig. 8 (Sassetta [?], as is indicated by the landscape style); Kontsek 1998, 31-32, colour repr. 34 (Pietro di Giovanni, 1430-ca. 40); Krüger 2002, 71, fig. 20 (Pietro di Giovanni, 1440s in the text; 1430-40 in the caption); Ferretti 2002, 415 (Pietro di Giovanni, ca. 1440); Kontsek 2002, 19 (Pietro di Giovanni); Fagnoli 2004, 24, fig. 6 (Pietro di Giovanni); Raffaelli 2004-2005, 80-81, 194-199 (Pietro di Giovanni, 1437-40), Hyman 2003, 158, fig. 131 (Pietro di Giovanni, ca. 1450); Sallay 2008, 5, 15 (Pietro di Giovanni).

### 3. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio

*Bust of the Virgin*

**Fig. 3/1**

shortly before or around 1444

tempera and gold on wood

panel: 47.5 x 29.9 cm

painted surface (front): 41.9 x 24.6 cm; painted surface (reverse): 47.5 x 29.8 cm

thickness (panel only): 1.7-1.8 cm, (with original frame): 2.9-3.1 cm

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.186.

#### **Provenance:**

Acquired in Italy by Johann Anton Ramboux before 7 April, 1842;<sup>344</sup> Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne until 1866, no. 149 (as Stephano Sassetta); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 149 (as Stephano Sassetta); Arnold Ipolyi in Pest, Barsszentkereszt/Besztercebánya and Várad until 1886; deposited at the Episcopate of Várad until 1919, no. 42 (“Madonna, painted by Stephano Sassetta”<sup>345</sup>); deposited at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, 1919-1920; acquired through Ipolyi’s bequest in 1920.

#### **Exhibited:**

Műcsarnok, Budapest (18 October – 16 November, 1930): *Őszi kiállítás* (Fall Exhibition), cat. 73; Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest (1971): *A középkor alkonya* (The Waning of the Middle Ages), cat. 7; Westdeutsche Kunstmesse, Cologne (13 April – 21 April, 2002).

#### **Technical notes:**

The support is a vertically grained panel to which two horizontally grained wood strips were fastened at the top and the bottom, respectively 1.1 cm and 0.9 cm high. These strips appear to be original and are made from the same wood as the engaged frame. The reverse is painted to imitate stone inlay, the outlines of which have been incised into the gesso prior to painting (Fig. 3/2). There are many minor losses, scratches and retouchings in *tratteggio* on the reverse, and cracks at the junctions of the horizontal strips and the main panel. The vertical edges of the back are slightly bevelled. 1.3 cm wide modern strips of wood have been screwed to all sides (removed for photography on occasion of the present cataloguing).

The engaged frame is original and presents the same gold and orange-coloured bole and as the gold ground of the obverse. There are cracks and sections of a *barbe* where the painted field joins the engaged frame (Fig. 3/6). All four sides of the panel are covered with a brownish paint of uncertain date; it is possibly original and was certainly applied after the gilding on the engaged frame that stops short of the brownish paint, proving that the sides of the panel were never gilt (Figs. 3/8, 3/9). There are no physical signs to indicate whether – and if so, how – the painting was attached or enclosed in a larger structure. Screw holes in the sides have been caused by the modern addition of the strips of wood.

<sup>344</sup> The work is identifiable in Ramboux’s exportation request list handed in to the Director of the Real Galleria in Florence on 7 April, 1842 (published by Merzenich 1995, 312, 4<sup>th</sup> item in the list; the original numeration is missing): “Una testa di Maria V.[ergine] in fondo d’oro, con un manto azzuro, tav.[ola] / - [braccia]. 16 [soldi]. 6 [denari] / - [braccio]. 10 [soldi]. 6 [denari]”, that is, ca. 48.1 x 30.6 cm.

<sup>345</sup> Cf. Némethy ed. 1896.

The paint surface is in good condition. The outlines of the figure have been incised into the gold before painting. Faint remains of the eyelashes and rays around the irises are discernible in the eyes. The pupils are damaged: the “highlights” have been cut into the paint with a sharp instrument to make the white gesso show through; this intentional, and probably modern, damage has considerably altered the general impression of the Virgin’s gaze (Fig. 3/4). The gold ground is slightly worn. There are minor inpaints in the face and neck of the Virgin. The blue cloak seems damaged and is extensively covered with discoloured overpainting. The originally green lining of the cloak has darkened. The gold contour line along the edge of the Virgin’s blue cloak was executed in mordent gilding. It has been repaired in yellow paint in many areas. The paint is worn in the richly tooled and decorated neckline of the Virgin’s dress and in the brooch that holds together her mantle (Fig. 3/7). The white veil Virgin originally continued under the brooch but is now strongly abraded. The brocaded pattern of the dress was painted with a deep red glaze, now all but lost except for some parts below the hem. It was painted over a gold ground decorated with diagonal parallel incisions.

According to Tibor Gerevich (ed. 1948), the work was restored by László Váli in 1929.

#### **Documentation:**

On reverse: “*J.A.Ramboux*” (in red wax seal)

On reverse of modern wooden attached frame: “55.186” (in blue felt pen)

On bottom side of modern wooden frame: “+KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM” (round stamp of the Christian Museum)

In recent literature it has been rightly and repeatedly affirmed that the painting is not a fragment, as often formerly thought. The work conserves its original engaged frame; the borders of the painted surface are intact and the rays emanating from the head of Virgin stop just short of the borders of the pictorial field and, on the right, some rays even continue slightly into the inner edge of the frame. Within this closely-cut composition, the Virgin appears at bust-length, turning her head slightly to the left and looking directly at the viewer. She wears the blue *maphorion* over a richly decorated golden brocaded dress and a long transparent veil, which originally descended below the brooch but is now hardly detectable because of its worn state. Under the veil, her fair hair is gathered with a red ribbon into a thick tuft above her forehead, from which some locks have broken loose over her finely cut ear.

Representations of the Virgin in bust format are extremely rare in early Italian painting; hitherto only one comparable work has been noted, a painting attributed to Lorenzo Monaco in Amsterdam (36 x 29 cm, Rijksmuseum, inv. SK-A-4004, Fig. 3/10).<sup>346</sup> The lack of evidence for the original context and the use of this and similar images makes the interpretation of the work difficult and leaves it in the field of hypotheses.

Imre Kovács’s (1997) thesis that this type is to be understood as a “portrait-like representation” of the Virgin, whose roots go back to venerated Eastern prototypes attributed

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<sup>346</sup> Saskia Bos, in Os and Prakken 1974, 73-74, no. 38; Vos and Os, ed. 1989, 171. The Amsterdam *Virgin*, too, conserves its original frame and the punchwork along the edges indicate that it cannot be a fragment.

to Saint Luke, seems plausible in broad terms. It is also possible, and in some cases certain, that some images of this type became cult objects in the West (France, Spain) on their own right. Less convincing is the author's complicated theory that the prototype of the *vera effigies* of the Virgin is a lost icon of Byzantine origin, whose earliest known – but by now lost – copy may be the so called *Phileremos Virgin*, an icon venerated by the Knights Hospitaller in Rhodes. Still according to Kovács, this icon would have spread in Europe through the papal court in Avignon and found special veneration in the French court and in Valencia, and the Italian versions would be derived from these. In reality, there are many other Eastern icons that can be candidates for the prototype,<sup>347</sup> but in all of them, as in the *Phileremos Virgin*, the Virgin turns to the right, not to the left, as in the Western examples (but not in the so-called Avignon diptych, which Kovács considers the key image in the transmission<sup>348</sup>) – a question that Kovács does not address but which is not negligible in the context of venerated and copied icons. The Italian paintings in fact seem only distantly related to the French and Valencian examples cited by Kovács and their relation to Eastern prototypes remains unclear.<sup>349</sup>

Michele Bacci (2004), unaware of Kovács's contribution, advanced another hypothesis according to which the various *Schulterbüste* of the Virgin are “abbreviated versions” of icons venerated in the West. The scholar considers these versions, which reproduce the central sections of their famous prototypes, as works intended for private devotion, in which the more closely-cut composition offered a more direct and intimate form of contact between the devout owner and the image (in analogy of larger and smaller versions of Byzantine and Russian icons that demonstrate similar relations). According to his proposal, the Italian images of the *vera icon* or *veronica* the Virgin would be such “compound forms” of the *Aracoeli Madonna*. Thus the Esztergom picture, too, would be a replica of the famous Capitoline image and, according to Bacci, would have been originally placed in a domestic

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<sup>347</sup> Cf. Bacci (2004, 19) for other independent eastern images of the bust of the Virgin.

<sup>348</sup> As often noted, the Avignon diptych seems to be of trecento Italian manufacture in the only visual source known to us, a late 17<sup>th</sup>-century copy of a 14<sup>th</sup> century scene, in which it is presented to Pope Urban V (on which see the basic study: Pächt 1961), but precisely for this reason (in view of the the major differences: the direction in which the Virgin turns, the Virgin's bowed head and her role as the *mater dolorosa*) there is even less reason to associate it with Pietro di Giovanni's work.

<sup>349</sup> Paradoxically, although the title claims that the subject of the article is the iconography of CM 55.186 (in which the Virgin's head is not bowed), Kovács (1997, 14) himself concludes that CM 55.186 is a “modernized version of the Virgin with the bowed head” and that “only the bust form follows the prototype, not known directly to the painter.”

tabernacle.<sup>350</sup> A similar interpretation based on the theory of “reduction” was given already in 1974 by Saskia Bos.<sup>351</sup>

According to these hypotheses, CM 55.186 would have been a self-contained work. Others have suggested that CM 55.186 was the valve of a diptych the other half of which showed Christ. On the basis of the physical properties of the panel, both are possible.

The reverse of CM 55.186 is painted with fictive coloured stone inlay, which consists of a green frame with an inner ring and three recessed fields: the central one is filled with a porphyry disc; the upper and lower fields contain yellow stone inlay. The green frame is painted in perspective and suggests light coming from above and falling on its projecting parts (Fig. 3/2). The regal symbolism of porphyry, deriving from Antiquity, was widely alluded to in the Renaissance, also in works with religious themes. Because of the preciousness of the material, porphyry imitation can be found on the reverse a vast number of small movable works, including portraits, both religious and profane.<sup>352</sup> Kovács (1997) suggested that in the case of the Esztergom Virgin the porphyry imitation alludes to Mary’s status as the Queen of Heaven. While the elevated associations of porphyry are undoubtedly present, it should also be noted that this decorative pattern is common in the Tuscan Renaissance: it often decorates in a serial pattern the base of walls with the same purpose, to suggest stone inlay decoration. Random examples include the interior of Leonbattista Alberti’s *Holy Sepulchre* in the Rucellai Chapel in Florence or left side chapel of the sanctuary in S. Agostino in San Gimignano, in which the same illusionistic lighting scheme from above can be observed (Fig. 3/4).<sup>353</sup> The type of decoration goes back to Late Antique and Byzantine prototypes, where

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<sup>350</sup> Bacci 2004, esp. 29-33. Bacci placed special emphasis on a late 12<sup>th</sup>-century icon preserved at Mount Athos in the Monastery of Agiou Pavlou and called the *Kathreptis Virgin* (Virgin of the Mirror), which he interpreted as an “abbreviated version” of the intercessory *haghiosoritissa* that could have had a pendant on the right with the bust of Christ.

<sup>351</sup> Saskia Bos (in Os and Prakken 1974, 73-74, with previous bibl.) argued, referring also to the studies by Otto Pächt and Wolfgang Kermer, that the Virgin with bowed head, shown in bust format is a rare version of the *advocata nostra*, an iconography of Byzantine origin, called in Greek *haghiosoritissa* or *paraklesis* (leader of prayer), which usually include the hands raised in prayer, but the version without hands can also be considered an *advocata nostra*.

<sup>352</sup> The allusions of porphyry and its use on the reverse of portraits is discussed in Mundy 1977, 12-14; Aronberg Lavin 1985; Mundy 1988, Dülberg 1990, 116-127; Kovács 1997, 12-14, all with further bibl. On the basis of the examples he discusses, Mundy concludes: “the backs [of the portraits] thus complement their overall iconography” (1977, 13). For porphyry in Antiquity see Delbrück 1932; for a discussion and examples of the decoration on the reverse of panel paintings, including fictive stone inlay work, Schmidt 2005, 44-58.

<sup>353</sup> Almost exactly the same pattern, in horizontal format, decorates the front of Masolino’s *Lamentation of Christ* (ca. 1424), a detached fresco now in the Museo della Collegiata di Sant’Andrea, Empoli, inv. 32 (Proto Pisani ed. 2006, cat. 8, pp. 40-41, colour repr.)

porphyry roundels inserted in variously coloured marble were frequent wall panelling and floor elements (*opus sectile*).<sup>354</sup>

The elaborately painted reverse means in any case that the object was regarded as precious, and that its reverse was probably intended to be visible at least at times.<sup>355</sup> The care with which the back is painted is in stark contrast with the fact, never previously noted, that the sides of the panel are unglit and rather sloppily treated. The latter feature indicates that the panel was originally inserted in a larger structure, either simply in a bigger frame but possibly in a more elaborate structure like a tabernacle or a reliquary-like holder with a stand (such as the “veronica” of Martin the Human in the Cathedral of Valencia)<sup>356</sup>. Since a pole could have belonged to the larger frame (and in any case, contrary to what is generally supposed, processional images were not necessarily carried on a pole<sup>357</sup>), nothing excludes that the work was a processional image, but no evidence supports it either.<sup>358</sup> The unglit sides only indicate that it was enclosed in another frame, to which, theoretically, also the hinges could have been fastened if it was the valve of a diptych.<sup>359</sup>

As Kovács, Bacci, Crispí i Canton and others noted, images considered as the *vera icon* (*vera effigies, veronica*) of the Virgin to be painted by St. Luke were venerated in the east coast of the Iberian peninsula<sup>360</sup> and in Rome. In my view, CM. 55.168 certainly relates to

<sup>354</sup> Some examples: Church of Sta. Sabina, Rome, 5<sup>th</sup> c., over the arcades; Hagios Demetrios, Thessalonike, 5<sup>th</sup> c., over the arcades; Ravenna, Orthodox Baptistry, 5<sup>th</sup> c., ground level; Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, 6<sup>th</sup> c., over the arcades; Cathedral, Porec, 6<sup>th</sup> c., sanctuary wall; Pantheon, Rome, 1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C., wall panelling; Roman building, Santiponce near Sevilla, Roman period, floor incrustation; Hagia Sophia, Nicea, 11<sup>th</sup> c.; floor of the Curia, Rome, 4<sup>th</sup> c.; S. Giovanni Battista (Lateran Baptistry), Rome, 5<sup>th</sup> c., wall decoration.

<sup>355</sup> The painting on the reverse had the practical use to protect the panel from environmental damage, thus a particularly elaborate painting on the back may mean no more than the image was held in great esteem.

<sup>356</sup> Cf. Crispí i Canton, 1996, fig. 1 (reproduction reversed);

<sup>357</sup> See the coloured drawing by Niccolò di Giovanni Ventura, *Procession with a Crucifix and an Image of the Virgin and Child*, ca. 1442-43, BCS, ms A.IV.5, f. 5r (repr. Norman 1999, 3, fig. 5), where the priest carries, walking under a canopy, a middle-sized image of the Virgin and Child in his arms.

<sup>358</sup> Imre Kovács connected CM 55.186 with another “saint-portrait” decorated on its reverse with a porphyry disc, the *St. Francis in Prayer* (Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton). Aronberg Lavin (1985) interpreted this work as a processional panel and associated the porphyry disc on it with the Vatican *rota*. The *rota* was one of the porphyry disks embedded in the floor of Old St. Peter’s in Rome and associated with the coronation ceremonies of the Holy Roman Emperors and with the processions of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Aronberg Lavin underlined both the funerary and “imperial overtones” of the porphyry disc in relation to the Princeton painting, and Kovács (1997) extended this interpretation to CM 55.186. In view of the widespread use of porphyry discs as decorative motifs, this seems to me stretching associations a bit far, and I agree with Victor Schmidt (2005, 67 n. 65) who argued against far-fetched associations of this type of decoration, such as that with portable altars.

<sup>359</sup> This is only to say that the absence of hinge-marks in the present panel do not exclude the theory of the diptych.

<sup>360</sup> The diffusion of this type of image in the east coast of the Iberian peninsula has been explained by the Aragonese court’s promotion of the veneration an icon of this type conserved in the royal palace chapel in Barcelona and identifiable with a late 14<sup>th</sup>-century pergamen image preserved in the Cathedral of Valencia. This icon, too, was believed to be made by St. Luke and called by contemporary sources as the “veronica of the Virgin” in analogy of the *vera icon* of Christ preserved at the Vatican. A further development in the cultic veneration of the *veronica* of the Virgin in Spain resulted in the legendary version that St. Luke received the

these works and can be considered as a *vera icon* of the Virgin; moreover, since Mary has direct eye contact with the viewer, it is more likely to be an independent image than part of a diptych (in which case it is difficult to imagine how she would relate to Christ). It also cannot be excluded that in its original context the image referred in some way to St. Luke (perhaps painted for the painters' guild, whose rector Pietro di Giovanni was in 1441?), since in the very few Western scenes that show self-contained *veronicas* of the Virgin in a context, the images appear as St. Luke's attribute.<sup>361</sup> This is the case with a miniature from Toul, in which St. Luke is writing and the picture hung on a tree next to him appears to function simply as his attribute (Fig. 3/15). In Bartolomeo Caporali's painting and in other works (Figs. 3/16-17), the bust of the Virgin is clearly an attribute to St. Luke.<sup>362</sup>

The original context and function of the work remains an open question, but its importance is immense, as Pietro di Giovanni's *veronica* of the Virgin is an absolute *unicum* in Sienese painting.

As most of Pietro di Giovanni's works, CM 55.186 was attributed to Sassetta by early scholarship until Enzo Carli (1957) recognized its true creator. Since then critical scholarship has not doubted this view.<sup>363</sup> There have been too few comments and no consensus regarding its date. I feel that CM 55.186 precedes the strongly Sassettesque last phase of the artist between 1444-48, but not nearly as much as proposed by Raffaelli, who dated CM 55.186 – on very uncertain grounds – to 1433-35. In painter's last works, among which the *Crucifixion* fresco from 1446 provides the most important certain point of reference, better structured, firmly modelled forms, and a search for three-dimensionality are evident. The fresco of 1446 also shows a monumentality and dynamism not yet so pronounced in the *Crucifixion* on the reverse of the signed and dated processional banner from 1444. Stylistically, CM 55.186 is closest to observe of this banner showing *St. Catherine in Glory among personification of Virtues* (Figs. 3/10, 3/11, 3/13) and it may have been painted around the same time (or

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portrait of the Virgin from the Virgin herself, thus the *veronica* reached the status of *acheiropoeton*. This scene is shown in a painting by Llorenç Saragossá (earlier Maestro de Villahermosa; documented in Barcelona and Valencia between 1363-1406), which was originally part of an altarpiece dedicated to St. Luke and erected by the corporation of painters and sculptors. St. Luke joins his hand in veneration in front of the small icon handed to him by Mary, which shows the bust of the Virgin, in this case, frontally (Valencia, Museo de Bellas Artes, inv. 249, 142 x 45 cm, inscribed “*Com feu la veronica la quella Verge Maria se posa en la cara*”, cf. Crispi i Canton 1996, fig. 5; José Gómez Frechina, in Benito Doménech and Gómez Frechina ed. 2007, 96-101 (in Spanish), 212-213 (in Italian); Fernando Benito Doménech, in *Cinco siglos ...* 1996, 24-25.

<sup>361</sup> On St. Luke as a painter, see H. Holländer, “Lukasbilder,” in Kirschbaum ed. 1968-1976, III (1971), coll. 119-122; F. Trenner, “Lukasbild,” in *Marienlexikon*, IV (1992), 183; Bacci 1998 (a summary of which: “La tradizione di san Luca pittore de Bisanzio all’Occidente”, in Mariani et al. ed. 2000, 103-109). For written sources on Luke as a painter: Klein 1933, 7; Bacci 2000, 103 and 108 n. 3.

<sup>362</sup> For Caporali's work, already noted by Bacci, see Kustodieva 1994, 130; for the miniature, Klein 1933, Pl. XII/1.

<sup>363</sup> With the exception of Prokopp 1997.

perhaps shortly earlier, but since the banner is the first datable work this claim is difficult to substantiate). The Virgin in CM 55.186 also compares well to a *Virgin and Child* in the Acton Coll. in Florence and to the St. Galganus in the Asciano altarpiece (Fig. 3/12) in the small pursed lips, narrow earlobes, and in the eccentric distortion of the elongated nose, but the greater plasticity of the heads, the more organic relationship between the facial, the strongly stylized hair and the typically Sassettesque, large, intense eyes indicate a later date for both of these works, close to the fresco of 1446. Among critics, Vilmos Tátrai (1993, followed by Kovács 1997 and Kontsek 1997) and Maria Merlini (2004) shared the view for dating CM 55.186 close to the banner in Paris, while Sgarbi (1984) proposed a date around 1440 and Boskovits (1975), Bongianino-Polton (1993), and Labriola (2008) felt that it was a work from the last years of the painter.

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 26, no. 149 (Stephano Sassetta); Ramboux 1865, fig. 20 (“Stefano Sassetta, scuola senese, sec. XV”); [Ramboux] 1867, 28, no. 149 (Stephano Sassetta); [Fraknói] 1871, 371 (Sassetta); Némethy ed. 1896, no. 42 (“Madonna, painted by Stephano Sassetta”); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1886-1908, IX (1902), 35 n. 2 (report the attribution of the work to Sassetta in the Ramboux coll.); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1908-09, III (1909), 121 n. 2 (report the attribution of the work to Sassetta in the Ramboux coll.); Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 340 (Sassetta, “fragment of a Madonna”, probably 1430s); Gerevich 1928, 224 (Sassetta); Lepold 1930, 14, cat. 84 (Sassetta); Gerevich 1930, 95 (Sassetta); Pope-Hennessy 1939<sup>1</sup>, 88-89 n. 12, 208 (Sassetta, probably the only surviving fragment of an Assumption painted for the church of the Osservanza in 1436); Gerevich ed. 1948, 97, fig. 117 (Sassetta); Carli 1957, 123, Pl. 170 (excellent work by Pietro di Giovanni d’Ambrogio); Volpe 1958, 86 (Pietro di Giovanni); Mojzer 1958, 8, repr. p. 31 (Sassetta); Coor 1959, 78-79, fig. 29 (Pietro di Giovanni, late work, fragment but not of an Assumption but probably of a large Enthroned Madonna) [all subsequent authors cite the work as by Pietro di Giovanni d’Ambrogio]; Volpe 1963, 36-40, esp. 37; Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 56, no. 40 (probably fragment of a large altarpiece, decoration on the reverse is later); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1967, 5, repr. (late work, probably fragment of an enthroned Madonna and Child); Boskovits 1968, no. 15 (perhaps not fragment of a monumental work but may have been originally slightly larger); Berenson 1968, I, 4; II, Pl. 568; Harasztné Takács, Mravik, and Szigethy ed. 1971, 9, cat. 7 (“wood, with its original [sic] frame: 47 x 30 cm; probably fragment of an altarpiece”); Mucsi 1973, 6, colour repr. on cover (left half of diptych, whose right half may have shown the Man of Sorrows); Miklós Boskovits, “Pietro di Giovanni d’Ambrogio”, in *Dizionario Enciclopedico Bolaffi*, IX, Torino 1975, 65 (late work); Mucsi 1975, 41, no. 197 (late work, probably left half of diptych, whose right half may have shown the Man of Sorrows); Boskovits 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, no. 15 (because of the imitation marble painting on the reverse it may not be a fragment at all); Federico Zeri, “Rinascimento e Pseudo-Rinascimento”, in Zeri ed. 1983, 543-72, esp. 559, fig. 389 (fragment, possibly of a large Maestà); Sgarbi 1984, 43 (ca. 1440); Volbach 1987, 44 (close to the Madonna inv. 125 in the Pinacoteca Vaticana attributed to Giovanni di Paolo); Cséfalvay 1989, 104, fig. 10 (reconstruction of the Ipolyi collection); Vos and Os ed. 1989, 171 (not a fragment); Mucsi 1990, 12, no. 29, fig. 29 (after 1440, left half of a diptych, which must have showed the Man of Sorrows on the right); Vilmos Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 234-235, no. 98, colour repr. 98 (ca. 1445, fragment, painting on the

reverse is of later origin); Bongianino-Polton 1993, 41-56 (from the very last years of the painter, most probably valve of diptych); Kovács 1997, 1-18 (ca. 1445, not a fragment, a distantly related western version of the *Phileremos Virgin*); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 566, no. 149, repr. (reconstruction of the Ipolyi collection); Frank Dabell, "Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio" in Turner ed. 1996, 24, 782; Kontsek 1998, 32-33, colour repr. 35 (ca. 1445); Bacci 2004, 26-27, 30, 33 (a "compound form" of the *Aracoeli Madonna*; originally probably placed in a domestic tabernacle); Kontsek 2002, 19; Maria Merlini, "Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio," in Bollati ed. 2004, 870 (fragment showing the head of the Virgin, stylistically close to the banner of Paris); Raffaelli 2004-2005 [2006], 69, 146-152 (ca. 1433-35); Ada Labriola, in Boskovits and Tripps 2008, 171 (from the last years of the painter's activity); Sallay 2008, 5-6, 15, colour repr.

## Sano di Pietro

(Sano di Pietro di Domenico di Pepo)

(Siena, 1405<sup>364</sup> – Siena, 1481)

Sano di Pietro was an extraordinarily prolific painter, who during his long lifetime produced a large number of altarpieces, miniatures, some frescos, and an unparalleled number of devotional Madonna-paintings. His style is easily comprehensible, visually pleasing, and based on a simple and often repetitive figural repertory. His works are usually executed with superb craftsmanship, and are characterized by a brilliant chromatic scheme, finely chiselled but rather flat forms, and carefully tooled gold decoration. A pious, calm and static atmosphere pervades his works, undisturbed by dramatic or eccentric traits. A search for more complex spatial solutions and varied figural poses can be traced only in his earliest surviving works in the 1440s.

Sano was first documented in 1428 as a member of the Sienese painters' guild. Although documents attest that he was active as an artist in the following decade and a half – in 1429 he is paid for painting the baptismal font in the Sienese Baptistry, in 1432 he expressed an expertise on Sassetta's *Madonna delle Nevi* altarpiece; in 1439 he collaborated with Vecchietta –, no certain work survives before his masterpiece, the signed Gesuati altarpiece completed in 1444 (PNS, inv. 246; predella in the Louvre). This work reveals Sassetta's influence in the artist's formation and testifies to Sano's ability to produce highly refined work on a monumental scale, featuring elegant, individualized figures rendered with exceptional delicacy and chromatic freshness.

The Gesuati altarpiece is followed by a long series of works, many of them dated, until 1481, the year of the artist's death. Still from the 1440s date the most successful works of the master, including altarpieces for various churches (*St. George* altarpiece for San Cristoforo, Siena, now Museo Diocesano, Siena; a polyptych for San Giovanni all'Abbadia Nuova, Siena, ca. 1447 (PNS, inv. 231, cf. Cat. 4), central panel of an painted for Ridolfi family for the church of San Giovanni Battista in San Gimignano, 1448). In this period Sano worked for religious confraternities (*St. Bernardino in Glory*; *Two scenes of St. Bernardino preaching*) and received many city commissions. Among the latter were frescos (*Coronation of the Virgin*, 1445; *San Pietro Alessandrino between Blessed Andrea Gallerani and Ambrogio Sansedoni*, ca. 1447, two frescos showing *St. Bernardino*) and the so-called Cappella dei Signori predella for the Palazzo Pubblico (1448-51), a unique work that completed a pre-

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<sup>364</sup> The painter's birth date is often reported as 1406 but Sano was in fact baptized on 2 December, 1405, cf. Vasari 1846-56, vol. 6 (1850), 183; Trübner 1925, 91 n. 15.

existing altarpiece and was modelled on the now lost frescos on the façade of the Sienese hospital by the Lorenzetti brothers and Simone Martini. On the *Coronation of the Virgin* fresco from 1445, Sano collaborated with Domenico di Bartolo, one of the most progressive artists of his time, but he seems to have been very little receptive towards the innovative approach of his colleague. In 1456, he painted for the Palazzo Pubblico a work with an unusual subject matter that reflects contemporary political power struggles, *The Virgin Recommends Siena to Pope Callixtus III*. Between 1459-68, he completed the *Coronation of the Virgin* fresco on the Porta Romana left unfinished by Sassetta's death in 1450.

Sano's talents are most appreciable on his small-scale works – predella scenes, book covers, and miniatures – that reveal his pleasant, anecdotic narrative style. Sano executed miniatures for the choir books of the Siena and Pienza cathedrals, for the Olivetan monks in Monte Oliveto (1459-63, now Museo della Cattedrale, Chiusi) and several other monastic communities. His larger-scale works, especially his many devotional Madonnas were very much in demand but they become increasingly repetitive and monotonous after 1450, when Sano's art began a steady decline, due perhaps to the deaths of Sassetta and Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio and the resulting loss of an inspirative environment. To satisfy his clientele, among whom there appear to have been many members of religious orders, Sano must have relied extensively on workshop assistance, and the use of cartoons became standard practice in his workshop for the production of serial Madonnas. Thanks to the enormous success of these works, Sano established a particular type of devotional image, which influenced the standard Marian devotional image in Sienese art until the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. In these, the Virgin and Child, shown in bust-, half-, or three quarter-length, is flanked by symmetrically arranged saints and angels, who appear two-dimensionally, usually before a resplendent gold ground.

Most of Sano's mature and later works retain their superb technical execution but are increasing based on tired formulas and reveal the artist's little interest in the artistic innovations of his time. The most prestigious commission of his later years came from Pope Pius II, for whose Cathedral in Pienza he painted an altarpiece (ca. 1462). For the rest of his life, Sano executed altarpieces for many religious orders in Siena and in the Sienese territory, (the "*Santa Bonda*" altarpiece for the Benedictine female convent of Ss. Abbondo e Abbondanzio in Siena, 1450s, PNS, inv. 226; the *Saints Cosmas and Damian* altarpiece for the church of the Gesuati order, San Girolamo in Siena; 1450s, PNS, inv. 233; the *Assumption* altarpiece for the Franciscan female convent of Santa Petronilla in Siena, 1479, PNS, inv. 259-60; a late *Crucifixion* for Augustinian patrons, Coll. Monte dei Paschi, Siena, inv. 2957;

an altarpiece for the Benedictine church in Abbadia a Isola near Monteriggioni, 1471) and worked for parish churches in the *contado* (Church of San Giorgio, Montemerano, 1458; Collegiata, San Quirico d'Orcia, 1460s). His last work is a signed and dated *Lamentation of Christ* from the year of his death, 1481 (Monte dei Paschi Coll., Siena).

An open question about Sano's artistic development regards his earliest, undocumented period of nearly two decades. Many scholars feel that a body of works grouped by Roberto Longhi and Alberto Graziani (1948) around a triptych dated 1436 in the church of the Osservanza near Siena (after which the anonymous painter was named "Master of the Osservanza") are in fact Sano di Pietro's youthful works, as proposed by Cesare Brandi (1949). There are indeed strong stylistic connections between the two groups, and it is especially difficult to explain why not a single work survives from the early period of the artist who then suddenly becomes the most prolific Siennese artist of the fifteenth-century.

#### **Select Bibliography:**

Romagnoli *ante* 1835 (1975), IV, 273-308; Milanesi 1854-1856, vol. II, pp. 388-390 n. 268; Berenson 1897, 175-177; Berenson 1909, 237-243; Gaillard 1923; Trübner 1925; Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 466-532; Berenson 1932, 497-505; Berenson 1936, 428-434; Graziani 1948; Brandi 1949, 69-87; Berenson 1968, I, 252-254 (Osservanza Master), 373-383 (Sano di Pietro); Daniele Benati, "Maestro dell'Osservanza" and "Sano di Pietro", in Chelazzi Dini ed. 1982, 393-405; Alessi and Scapecchi 1985<sup>1</sup>; Alessi and Scapecchi 1985<sup>2</sup>; Cecilia Alessi, "Sano di Pietro", in Zeri ed. 1987, II, 750-751 (with previous bibl.); Loseries 1987; Keith Christiansen, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 138-167 (It. ed. 152-181); Elisabetta Avanzati and Marco Torriti, in Gurrieri et al. ed. 1988, 303-307; Torriti 1990, 183-213; Loseries 1993 (revised It. ed. 2003); Cecilia Alessi, "Master of the Osservanza" in *Dizionario Biografico...*, XX (1996), 738-740; Cecilia Alessi, "Sano di Pietro" in Turner ed. 1996, 765-66; Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits and Brown 2003, 479-480, 612-613; Knauf 1998; Israëls 1998; Linda Pisani, in Bollati ed. 2004, 926-928; Norman 2005; Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 82-84, 111-113; Wolfgang Loseries, in Boskovits and Tripps 2008, 123-143; *Sano di Pietro. Qualità, devozione e pratica nella pittura senese del Quattrocento* (Siena and Asciano, 5-6 December, 2005), conference proceedings (in course of publication).

## 4. Sano di Pietro

*The Banquet of Herod*

**Fig. 4/1**

ca. 1447

tempera and gold on poplar

panel: 23.6 x 33.6 cm, painted surface without gilt borders: 23.6 x 28 cm

thickness: 2.6-2.9 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 23.

### **Provenance:**

Acquired by Johann Anton Ramboux in Italy before 1842; Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 136 (as Sano di Pietro); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 136 (as Sano di Pietro); Arnold Ipolyi, Pest, 1867-1872; his gift to the National Picture Gallery in 1872, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts.

### **Exhibited:**

Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle, Cologne (28 October, 1995 – 28 January, 1996): *Lust und Verlust: Kölner Sammler zwischen Trikolore und Preussenadler*, cat. 198.

### **Technical notes:**

The support consists of a single piece of wood with a horizontal grain that has a slight downward bias at the lower left area (as viewed from the back) (Fig. 4/2). It is damaged by woodworms and has been thinned. There are remnants of paper glued to the back along all four edges.

The panel, as viewed from the front, has been cut on the left side through the decorative strip that divided the scene from the preceding one in the predella in which this scene was the last on the right. The gilt decoration is not reduced on the right side, where the edge of the gesso ground is intact and there is a 1-2 mm-wide bare extension of wood (Fig. 4/8). The wood itself is cut on the right (originally the board extended behind the pilaster bases applied to the ends of the predella). The panel is slightly planed at the top, where no *barbe* remains and the gesso ground is cut. The painted field here is only very slightly reduced, as is indicated by the completeness of the incised and punched pattern that concludes the top of the left decorative strip and by the traces of gilding visible along the top under the original paint layer (belonging to an original gilt border). Examination of another fragment from the predella now in Cologne (Fig. 4/11), reveals that the plank, too, is only slightly trimmed on the top: originally it did not extend beyond the painted surface at the top and the bottom, and did not have its own engaged frame. The *barbes* visible in the other fragments from the same predella joined onto another element, probably a moulded frame, which was applied contiguously, at right angles, to the plank of the predella.

The painted surface is in excellent condition. The halo of the head of the Baptist, the door and window in the walls, and the vertical decorative borders are gilt. There are a few minor scattered losses, and the surface is covered by a thin, discoloured layer of varnish. There are repairs in the dress of the soldier on the left and along two horizontal cracks (one passing through the heads of the three figures behind the table; the other, at the height of the waist of the executioner and Salome). Further repairs in the painted surface are found on the left, in a circa 5 mm-wide strip. There is significant inpainting along the vertical edges, which

has flowed down the side in some places. The gold leaf extends under the column on the right and the wall on the left. In the left gilt border, the hexa-bar-stars turn round the corner and continue along the top and bottom of them strip. At the bottom they are covered by overpainting but visible in raking light. At the bottom of the panel, no gold is visible along the edge, but fragments of the *barbe* remain. The wood has been slightly planed here.

Punches: hexa-bar-star (2 mm), oval (2 mm); circle (5 mm in left strip and 6 mm in St. John's halo and in the right strip); complex tre-foil (9.3 x 14 mm) hexa-rosette (15 mm).

In 1974, Miklós Móré executed a minor conservation treatment and retouching in order to prepare the painting for an exhibition in Moscow<sup>365</sup> where the painting eventually was not shown.

### Documentation:

On reverse: "904/32" (in blue chalk); "193" (in ink); "60" (white chalk); "H" (white chalk); "ORSZÁGOS KÉPTÁR. KÉPTÁR. Az 1888. évi leltározás 23. sz." (printed on white label); "SZÉPMŰVÉSZELETI MÚZEUM, BUDAPEST. Sano di Pietro: Salome tánca. 23. Ipolyi Arnold ajándéka, Budapest 1872" (printed on white label).

The painting depicts two consecutive events at the banquet of Herod – the dance of Salome and the presentation of the head of the Baptist – condensed into one scene (Matthew 14, 3-11; Mark 6, 17-2). Holding a timbrel and dressed in an elegantly swaying, long, blue dress, the graceful, blonde Salome still dances as the executioner walks in from the left, carrying the Baptist's head on a golden plate and extending it towards her. As if to indicate the chronological separation of the two events, a thin column divides the two figures. At the simply furnished banquet table, three figures – a bearded man, a crowned young man probably identifiable with Herod, and another young man – sit and express, with mild gestures typical of Sano's undramatic style, their astonishment at the gruesome scene. The events take place in a simple interior bordered by blank walls at the back and the left, and opened toward the viewer by the improbably slender columns. In contrast to a long-standing tradition in Sieneese painting, the artist did not open up the space in the back by showing further interiors or a courtyard through the openings of the room.<sup>366</sup>

The piece once formed part of a predella of which three other fragments now in Cologne (Kolumba Diözesanmuseum, inv. M 5-101, panel and painted surface: 24.2 x 32.7 cm, Fig.

<sup>365</sup> Cf. Archives, Old Masters Gallery, MFA.

<sup>366</sup> This may be due to the relatively little prestige of the commission (for which see below), since in the approximately contemporary and highly prestigious predella of the Cappella dei Signori altarpiece (1448-52) several scenes have a much more elaborate, complex spatial background. This work was painted for the Sieneese *commune*, and includes – in imitation of the prescribed trecentese models on the facade of Santa Maria della Scala – a multitude of figures, with a great variety of postures, gestures and emotions, in a very complex architectural setting, with a lavish use of gold. In comparison, in the predella in question, the number of figures is kept to the minimum, the architecture, interior setting and landscape is simple and undemanding, expression is elementary, and gold is reserved for halos, the decorative strips, and a few other details (characteristically windows and doors). For the Cappella dei Signori altarpiece, cf. Keith Christiansen, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 146-151 (It. ed. 160-65); Wolfgang Loseries, in Boskovits and Tripps ed. 2008, 124-131, with previous bibl.

4/11); whereabouts unknown (ca. 24 x 33.5 cm, Fig. 4/12), and Moscow (Pushkin Museum, inv. 248, panel: 24.1/24.4 x 33.6/3.8 cm, painted surface 24 x 33.6/3.8 cm: Fig. 4/14) were identified by Miklós Mojzer and Federico Zeri.<sup>367</sup> All of these fragments preserve parts of a hitherto unidentified coat of arms which originally appeared twice on the predella between the scenes and shows of a gold bull facing left, standing in a green field against a blue background, with an olive (?) branch in front of it (Fig. 4/17). The central element of the predella was recently identified in the *Crucifixion* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, inv. 1945.1.45, panel and painted surface 24.1 x 33.6 cm, Fig. 4/13), and two more elements, the pilaster bases showing *St. Francis of Assisi* and *St. Bernardino of Siena* (Lehman Coll., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 1975.I.50, 1975.I.46, respectively) were hypothetically added to complete the altarpiece.<sup>368</sup>

Miklós Boskovits first suggested (1968) that the predella may belong to Sano's polyptych no. 231 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Siena (cf. Fig. 4/16).<sup>369</sup> The original provenance of this work is the Augustinian female monastery of San Giovanni all'Abbadia Nuova in Siena, whose church was rebuilt and redecorated in or just before 1447.<sup>370</sup> As its

<sup>367</sup> The common provenance of pieces in Cologne, Moscow and Budapest was recognized by Miklós Mojzer (cited in Boskovits 1968, no. 16.). Federico Zeri added to the series the fourth piece showing the young St. John the Baptist (oral communication cited by Markova 2002, 210). For detailed bibliographical references on all these works, cf. Loseries and Sallay 2007.

<sup>368</sup> Miklós Boskovits first proposed that the *Crucifixion* might belong to the series (in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 612-616); his supposition was proved on the basis of the examination of the wood grain by Loseries and Sallay (2007). As the reverse of the Washington *Crucifixion* is cradled, for this study an inverted X-ray was used made during a restoration when the cradle was temporarily removed (cf. Fig. 4/11 a). The addition of the two pilaster bases in the Lehman coll. remains hypothetical, for arguments about their compatibility in size, punched decoration, style and iconography, cf. Loseries and Sallay 2007; for general information about the two pieces, Pope-Hennessy and Kanter 1987, 152-56. If the association of the Lehman fragments with this altarpiece is accepted, the question arises whether the fact that Bernardino is shown with a halo in this fragment has any bearing on the dating. I tend to agree with those scholars who believe that in a position of minor importance, Bernardino could be haloed also in the time of his canonisation process (as happens in the Sano's Scrofiano altarpiece from 1449, PNS, inv. 255), especially after his feast day was established in Siena in 1446 (see Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 92, with bibl.). For the debate on the possibility of representing haloed figures before their canonisation, cf. Loseries and Sallay 2007, esp. n. 23.

<sup>369</sup> Boskovits 1968, no. 16; and re-proposed in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 612-616. For the polyptych no. 231, see Jacobsen 1908, 32; Trübner 1925, 24-28, fig. 5 on Pl. III; Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 486; Brandi 1933, 251; Berenson 1968, I, 379; Torriti 1978, I, 277; Ciampolini ed. n.d. [ca. 1989], 82-83; Torriti 1990, 201-202, with bibl.; Fattorini 2007, with bibl.; Loseries and Sallay 2007, with bibl.

<sup>370</sup> The provenance was established by Marco Ciampolini (ca. 1989, 80-88) on the basis of the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century notes and a drawing by Assunto Picchioni. At this time the polyptych was already missing its predella. The date of the reconstruction and redecoration of the church in or before 1447 is known from a petition of the nuns in which, "havendo di nuovo facta hedificare una bellissima chiesa nel dicto monasterio", they ask for alms to celebrate the feast of St. John the Baptist in June as beautifully as possible in their "nuova chiesa la quale secondo la loro possibilità anno quanto le possibile ornata ad honore di Dio et di Sancto Giohanni", cf. ASS, Concistoro 2137, f. 105r n. 68 and ASS, Consiglio Generale 224, ff. 67r-v, published by Fattorini 2007, doc. 3; and partially transcribed already by Liberati 1939-1961, LVII (1950), 132-133 and mentioned in Ciampolini ed. n.d. [ca. 1989], 11, 88.

stylistic characteristics indicate, the altarpiece must have been painted at this time.<sup>371</sup> Gabriele Fattorini's recent research on the history and decorative programmes of the monastery has established that the monastery was founded by the Franciscan tertiary Francesco di Pepo di Goro Sansedoni probably in the 1350s, and that its high altar was first decorated with Luca di Tommè's "Tolfe polyptych" (PNS, inv. 586).<sup>372</sup> Furthermore, Fattorini clarified that the commissioner of Sano's polyptych, Bartolomea di Domenico di Francesco – portrayed in at the feet of St. John the Baptist (Fig. 4/9) and recorded in the inscription of the altarpiece "QVESTA TAVOLA A FATA FAR[...] BARTOLOMEA DI DOMENICHO DI FRANCIESCHO PEL ANIMA DI SVO PADRE E DI SVO MADRE" – was the abbess of the community in 1447. Fattorini suggested that Sano's altarpiece replaced Luca di Tommè's work on the high altar, basing his argument on the formal similarities and certain iconographic concordances (the representation of the two titular saints, the Baptist and St. Gregory the Great) between the two polyptychs.

Sano's polyptych shows the enthroned Virgin and Child with angels and four standing saints, St. Jerome, considered in the Middle Ages as the protector saint of nuns, the titular saints John the Baptist and Gregory, and St. Augustine, the patron saint of the order to which the nuns belonged, and further saints in the gables and the pilasters.<sup>373</sup>

In a recent study, Wolfgang Loseries and the present writer argued that the predella fits the polyptych perfectly in style, dimensions, and iconography.<sup>374</sup> The predella can be dated to the second half of the 1440s on the basis of comparison with other small-scale works close in date,<sup>375</sup> such as predella of the Gesuati altarpiece (signed 1444), some figures in the altarpiece dated 1447,<sup>376</sup> or the slightly later Cappella dei Signori predella commissioned to Sano in 1448. Herod's raised left hand, long wavy hair, his triangular profile with a protruding upper lip and a long nose that continues almost uninterrupted in the line of the forehead find close parallels in one of the maidens of the temple in the *Betrothal of the Virgin* (Pinacoteca Vaticana, inv. no. 138) a scene from the Cappella dei Signori predella (Figs. 4/5-4/6). The figure of the elderly Elizabeth leaning forward in the scene whose whereabouts are unknown

<sup>371</sup> Critics agree about the date of ca. 1447 on the basis of a comparison with Sano's signed and dated altarpiece from 1447 (PNS, inv. 232) and with the *Virgin and Child* (PNS, inv. 224) which once formed the central part of the Ridolfi altarpiece from 1448 (for which see Loseries 1993, revised and enlarged ed. 2003).

<sup>372</sup> Fattorini 2007.

<sup>373</sup> The figures in the pilasters are the Saints Michael, Agnes, Anthony Abbot and Ansanus; in the gables, Gabriel Archangel, St. Peter Martyr, Christ as the Salvator Mundi, St. Anthony of Padua, and the Virgin Annunciate.

<sup>374</sup> Loseries and Sallay 2007.

<sup>375</sup> For more on the scholarly consensus on dating the predella to ca. 1445-50, cf. Boskovits in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 616 n. 5.

<sup>376</sup> For the altarpiece from 1447, see Torriti 1990, 188, fig. 232; for the comparison, Ciampolini ed. n.d. [ca. 1989], 82-88.

(Fig. 4/12) is a mirrored variant of the old St. Anne in another scene of the Cappella dei Signori predella, the *Virgin Returns to her Parents* (Lindenau Museum, Altenburg, inv. 70).

Despite the great difference in scale, the very close stylistic ties are evident also between the predella in question and the polyptych inv. 231, as a comparison of Salome's head in MFA 23 and an angel's head in the polyptych reveals (Figs. 4/3-4/4).

An accurate recomposition of the predella fragments, which takes into consideration also the small fragments lost during the dismembering, has helped to establish the combined width of the predella scenes in about 180 cm, which goes well with the ca. 189 cm width of the polyptych without its pilasters.<sup>377</sup> With the completion of the Lehman fragments, the predella becomes about 227 cm wide, which matches the altarpiece (162 x 221 cm) perfectly, as shown in the proposed reconstruction (Fig. 4/16).<sup>378</sup>

The front of the predella originally showed one scene from the life of St. Jerome, probably identifiable as *St. Jerome writing to St. Paola as St. Blesilla appears to him* (Fig. 4/11),<sup>379</sup> and three scenes dedicated to St. John the Baptist, interrupted by the *Crucifixion* in the central, Christological axis of the altarpiece (Fig. 4/15 b). While the interruption of a hagiographic cycle with a central Crucifixion scene is common in Sienese predellas, the division of scenes in a ratio of 1:3 from the lives of two different saints is highly unusual. Nevertheless, this arrangement cannot be doubted, since the bisected coats of arms prove the common provenance of the four fragments, and the second scene has recently found identification, on the basis of a written source, as *The Five-year old St. John the Baptist returns to his parents from the woods* (Fig. 4/12).<sup>380</sup>

The right side of the predella is entirely dedicated to the death of the Baptist. The story extends over two scenes: the first shows the saint's decapitation (Fig. 4/14); the second, the presentation of his head to Salome. This unusually detailed account of the story of the St. John's martyrdom seems to be related to a local cult of the beheading of the Baptist documented at the monastery of San Giovanni all'Abbadia Nuova in Siena already in 1368, in

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<sup>377</sup> Three different types of decorative strips once separated the predella scenes. On the two ends, there was a gilt strip decorated with hexa-rosette punches. Between the first and second and between the fourth and fifth scenes, there were two strips with the coat of arms in their centre and with one and a half roundels decorated with red glaze above and below the arms. The *Crucifixion* was framed by two strips decorated with a series of roundels painted in red glaze and blue paint.

<sup>378</sup> For a detailed account of the reconstruction process, cf. Loseries and Sallay 2007, esp. 93-98.

<sup>379</sup> This interpretation was suggested in Loseries and Sallay 2007 on the basis of the letter no. XXXIX (cf. Migne, 1844-1890, XXII, coll. 466, 472-473) that Jerome wrote to Paola on occasion of the death of her daughter Blesilla.

<sup>380</sup> See the description of the little St. John returning from the woods with flowers in his lap, and being scolded by his parents for being away late, in the anonymous vernacular *Vita di S. Giovambatista* dating probably from the early fourteenth-century, first published by Domenico Maria Manni (1731-1735, III [1734], 185-266, esp. 199-200). The iconography of this scene is discussed in detail in Loseries and Sallay 2007, with further bibl.

the times of its early history.<sup>381</sup> To such veneration testifies probably also Francesco Bossi's pastoral visitation from 1575, which recorded a side altar in the church dedicated to "San Giovanni Decollato".<sup>382</sup> The foundation date of this altar is not known, and at the time of the visitation it was adorned by a painting on canvas (thus probably of 16<sup>th</sup> c. date), but it cannot be excluded it had an older origins. Because of the detailed presentation of the Baptist's death in Sano's predella – and the absence of the scene of the birth of the Baptist, which was the principal feast of the monastery –, it is possible that the original location of the altarpiece was on this side altar and not on the high altar, as proposed by Fattorini. This question remains open but if Sano's altarpiece was destined for the side altar, Abbess Bartolomea's commission may be understood as not replacing but emulating the first altarpiece of the church, by which act she would present herself as the "second founder" of the monastery, under whom the church was entirely rebuilt.

Whether originally on the high or a side altar, the provenance of the predella from Sano's altarpiece for San Giovanni all'Abbadia Nuova finds further confirmation in an inventory from 1640 discovered by Fattorini, which describes one single altarpiece in the church (which, as Fattorini proved, could only have been Sano's polyptych) as "*nell'altare una tavola dorata con l'immagine della beata Vergine col Figlio in braccio, et intorno altri santi, et istorie di san Giovanni.*"<sup>383</sup> One of these "histories" of St. John is, in all likelihood, the *Banquet of Herod* in Budapest.

Sano could rely on a long series of precedents in 14<sup>th</sup>- and 15<sup>th</sup>-century Tuscan art for the composition of MFA 23 and the preceding scene in Moscow. Already in the Trecento, an iconographic tradition was established for the representation of the banquet of Herod, with a fixed repertoire of figures and elements. The participants of the banquet sit behind a long table, placed parallel with the pictorial plane. Herod is usually shown as an older, crowned man, usually bearded and often with a white cloth wrapped around his head. Salome dances in front of table while the executioner walks in with St. John's head on a platter. Often a musician (fiddler, lute-player) appears in the foreground. On the side, the beheading of the

<sup>381</sup> The reference to this cult (ASF, *Diplomatico Sansedoni* 6, 5 July, 1368) was discovered by Fattorini (2007, 90 n. 73). It may be noted that a similar division of scenes occurs already in Duecento Siense art, in the right central register of a panel which, too, is dedicated to St. John the Baptist (PNS, inv. 14, cf. Torriti 1990, 20-21, fig. 18).

<sup>382</sup> AAS 21, Memoriale della Visita Pastorale di Mons. Francesco Bossi, [1575], ff. 91r-92r, cited in Fattorini 2007, doc. 4a.

<sup>383</sup> Fattorini 2007, 90 n. 74.

Baptist in front of his prison often completes the scene.<sup>384</sup> In this compositional convention, closest to Sano's compositions seems to be a predella scene by Bartolo di Fredi and his workshop, which comprises three events, the beheading of the Baptist, the dance of Salome, and the presentation of the head of the Baptist (PNS, inv. 103, Fig. 4/10).<sup>385</sup>

To provide a detailed account of the Baptist's martyrdom, Sano created two separate scenes from this conventional composition. In the *Beheading of the Baptist*, the foreshortened prison building from which the body of the Baptist leans forward is based on the earlier representations. In the *Banquet of Herod*, Sano eliminated the musician and placed the figure in its place to create a narrative continuity between the two scenes. His portrayal of Herod departs from tradition: the young, feminine figure is based on earlier representations of Herodias (while the prototypical Herod-figure, the bearded older male figure with a white cloth around his head, became a simple guest).<sup>386</sup>

Sano's adherence to Trecento conventions may be seen as a deliberate choice – whether it was his own or that of his commissioner's – if we keep in mind that a powerful new representation of the Banquet of Herod impressed the artists of Siena after 1427: Donatello's bronze relief on the fountain of the Sienese baptistry. This far more complex composition inspired not only younger artists (Matteo di Giovanni, cf. Fig. 22/12) but also Sano's contemporaries, among them Domenico di Bartolo (predella scene of an altarpiece in the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria in Perugia) and Giovanni di Paolo, who copied the relief almost literally (predella scene, National Gallery, London, probably 1454). Later in his life, Sano depicted the Banquet of Herod again in a miniature painted for the Poor Clares of Santa Chiara<sup>387</sup>, for which he borrowed isolated elements from Donatello's composition (the kneeling executioner) but made no attempt to follow the essential features of the great Florentine sculptor's dramatic, revolutionary composition.

<sup>384</sup> For some examples, see Giotto's fresco in the Peruzzi Chapel, Sta. Croce, Florence; Taddeo Gaddi's fresco in the castle of Poppi; a Lorenzettian fresco in Sta. Maria dei Servi, Siena; Fra Angelico's panel in the Louvre, inv. R.F. 196, etc.

<sup>385</sup> Freuler 1994, 455, cat. 31, fig. 160; Gaudenz Freuler, "La miniature senese degli anno 1370-1420", in *De Benedictis* ed. 2002, 189 fig. 81 (where see also 189 fig. 80 and 223 Pl. CXIX, an adaptation of this composition in a miniature attributed to Bartolo di Fredi's son, Andrea di Bartolo and his workshop). Freuler (1994, 146-147) notes that Sano borrowed a composition from this predella on another occasion, for the scene of the healing of Petronilla in the altarpiece of 1478 (PNS, inv. 259-260).

<sup>386</sup> This has caused some misunderstanding in the past, when the crowned figure in MFA 23 was interpreted as Herodias and bearded man as Herod (Pulszky 1988; *Az Országos Képtár...* 1897). But Sano portrayed a similarly feminine king in his more-or-less contemporary St. George scene (Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome, inv. 133; Loseries 1987, 64, fig. 6), and in another *Banquet of Herod*-scene, a miniature executed for the Poor Clares of Sta. Chiara, in which he showed Herod again as a blond, crowned (though less feminine) figure flanked by two guests behind the table (BCS, ms X.IV.2, f. 416r, cf. Ciampolini ed. ca. 1989, 95-112, esp. 101 fig. 104, 107 fig. 124).

<sup>387</sup> Cf. note 386.

## References:

Ramboux 1862, 25, no. 136 (Sano di Pietro); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1864-66, III (1866), 79 n. 5 (Sano di Pietro); [Ramboux] 1867, 27, no. 136 (Sano di Pietro); [Fraknói] 1871, 369 (Sano di Pietro); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1869-76, IV/1 (1871), 88 n. 94 (report the work as by Sano di Pietro and formerly in the Ramboux coll.); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1873, 3, no. 6 (Sienese school, 15th c.); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1876, 7, no. 99 (Sienese school, 15th c.); Lützow 1876, col. 6 (No. 6, Sienese school); *Országos Képtár képeinek jegyzéke* 1878, 7, no. 99 (Sienese school, 15th c.); Pulszky 1881, 7, no. 29 (Siena, 15th c., Feast of Herod); Pulszky 1888, 3, no. 23 (Sano di Pietro di Mencio, interprets figures behind the table as Herodes Antipas, Herodias, and a guest); Berenson 1897, 175 (Sano di Pietro); *Az Országos Képtár* 1897, 15 (Sano di Pietro di Mencio, interprets figures behind the table as Herodes Antipas, Herodias, and a guest); Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 142, no. 23 (Sano di Pietro di Mencio); Destrée 1903, 43 (Sano di Pietro); Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>, 387, no. 23 (Sano di Pietro di Mencio); Jacobsen 1908, 38 (Sano di Pietro); Térey 1913<sup>1</sup>, 297, no. 23 (Sano di Pietro di Mencio); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1903-1915, V (1914), 174 (Sano di Pietro); Gaillard 1923, 203 (Salome, as Sano di Pietro); Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 528 (Sano di Pietro); Berenson 1932, 498 (Sano di Pietro); Petrovics 1935, 8, no. 21 (Sano di Pietro); Berenson 1936, 428 (Sano di Pietro); Pigler 1937, I, 230, no. 23 (Sano di Pietro); Pigler 1954, 505 (Sano di Pietro); Coor 1959, 82, fig. 31 (Sano di Pietro, repr. with frame); Pigler 1967, I, 615, II, fig. 18 (Sano di Pietro); Berenson 1968, I, 374 (Sano di Pietro); Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, no. 16 (Sano di Pietro, between 1444-1450, may well have belonged to the polyptych inv. 231 in the PNS and forms parts of the same predella as the fragments in Cologne and Moscow); Pope-Hennessy 1987, 142 (Sano di Pietro, mentions predella piece in Budapest, Moscow and location unknown); Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 106 (Sano di Pietro, possibly companion to the predella fragments in Cologne and Moscow); Markova 1992, no. 41, 81 (Sano di Pietro, three other fragments are in Budapest, Cologne and location unknown); Markova 1995, no. 248 (Sano di Pietro, two other fragments are in Budapest and location unknown); Roland Krischel, in Kier and Zehnder ed. 1995, 585, cat. 198, Pl. CV; Frinta 1998, I, 272 (Gd22), 521 (La131c) (repertory of punches); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 563-64, no. 136 (Sano di Pietro, reconstruction of Ramboux collection); Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 614, 616 n. 10 (Sano di Pietro, the central fragment of the predella may have been the Crucifixion in Washington); Fattorini 2007 (Sano di Pietro, ca. 1447); Loseries and Sallay 2007 (Sano di Pietro, ca. 1447, possibly ca. 1447-50, reconstruction of predella); Sallay 2008, 6-7, 14 (Sano di Pietro, belongs to the predella of the San Giovanni all'Abbadia altarpiece).

## 5. Sano di Pietro and workshop

*Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome, Bernardino of Siena and Two Angels*  
**Fig. 5/1**

ca. 1465-70

tempera and gold on wood

panel with original frame: 65.4 x 43.5 cm, painted surface: 56.4 x 34.4 cm

thickness: 2.8-2.9 cm, with original frame: 5.3-5.5 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 1210.

### **Provenance:**

Purchased by Károly Pulszky 4 July, 1895 from Emilio Costantini in Florence (as Sano di Pietro) for the National Picture Gallery, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts.

### **Inscription:**

On the scroll held by the Child: “E[GO] SVM · LVX | MVNdi ·”

### **Technical notes:**

The support consists of a single board that has a vertical grain (Fig. 5/2). It retains its original thickness, is warped and somewhat worm-tunnelled. Remains of old gesso cover the reverse. The ends of hand-hewn iron that probably hold the frame in place pierce the panel and appear on the reverse along the bottom and the top left (as viewed from the back).

The engaged frame is original; its gilding is the same as the gold ground of the painted field panel and is decorated with a row of hexa-bar-star punches in a groove. The warping of the panel caused cracks and disjunctions in the engaged frame. It seems that the bottom framing element was removed at some time for restoration, in the course of which wedge-shaped sections were removed from its inner side in order to adapt it to the warping of the panel (Fig. 5/4 a). There are two large holes in the bottom of panel (Fig. 5/4 b).

Except for the bottom, the sides of the panel are covered by two layers of paint: a brownish-bordeaux layer over a vermilion-coloured one.

The paint surface is in satisfactory condition; it is worn and very soiled. The gold ground is original and well preserved. There are some losses and scratches, especially in the face and neck of the Virgin. There is a larger repair in the mantle of the Virgin over a knot in the panel, located above the left thumb of the Child. The Virgin's and the Child's garments are decorated in mordent gold, which is slightly worn. The Virgin's blue cloak has darkened. The worm exit holes have been filled and retouched.

Punches: hexa-rosette (15 mm); serrated leaf (6 x 5 mm), pentafoil (7 x 6.3 mm), pointed double-contour arch (5 mm), hexa-bar-star, circle, multiprong (Fig. 5/3).

### **Documentation:**

On reverse: “*Sano di Pietro*” (in pencil); “*ORSZ. KÉPTÁR. 1210*” (printed on white label); “952” (in pencil on previous label); “*SZÉPMŰVÉSZELETI MÚZEUM, BUDAPEST. Sano di Pietro: Madonna gyermekével. 1210. Vétel Emilio Constantinótól, 1895*” (printed on white label).

In front of a richly tooled gold ground, the Virgin is portrayed in half-figure, close to the pictorial plane. She bends her head lightly towards the unusually large Child whom she supports on her right arm. The infant is dressed in an embroidered tunic, with a long cloak over the shoulders, and shows the spectator a *cartellino* inscribed in Latin with the words “I am the light of the world” (John 8, 12; John 9, 5) – perhaps the most frequently found citation in Sienese devotional Madonnas, which certainly called to the pious viewer’s mind the rest of Jesus’ words (John 8, 12): “Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life”. Besides the inscription, a usual cruciform halo indicates Christ’s divine nature. The group of mother and child is flanked by four figures shown on a smaller scale. On the right, St. Bernardino appears, holding his attribute, the YHS tablet; on the left, there is St. Jerome dressed in the habit of the Sienese Gesuati order.<sup>388</sup> His tunic is held together by a brown leather belt and he holds a rosary in his hands joined for prayer. In the upper register of the arch-topped field, two adoring angels enter the sacred space; their heads are ornamented with leaves and red diadems studded with beads. The composition is conceived on a two-dimensional surface and lacks spatial depth.

The painting is a typical example of the large number of Madonnas produced for private devotion by Sano di Pietro and his *bottega*. Although from its first cataloguing by Pulszky and Peregriny in 1896 to the most recent catalogue of the museum in 1991 it was unanimously considered as an autograph work by Sano di Pietro, it in fact falls below the quality level of the artists’ own works and should be considered, as has been done by Marion Knauf (1998), as a work executed with the help of the workshop. Weaknesses in the poor definition of forms or in the vague composition are particularly conspicuous, even when the not excellent condition of the painting is taken into consideration.

Like most Madonnas produced by the artist and his shop, the composition is compiled from elements of various models used in the workshop. MFA 1210 shares with a long series of Madonnas the position of the Virgin’s hands and the parallel inclination of the Virgin’s and Child’s head. The derivative nature of the composition is particularly evident in the arrangement of the infant’s arms and legs. The clumsy placement of the left arm in front of the mother’s body results from a change made to a popular composition, in which the Child’s left arm passes behind the mother’s neck and is thus invisible (e.g. Museo delle Pie

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<sup>388</sup> St. Jerome was sometimes mistakenly identified as a donor, since only a very small section of his halo is visible below that of the child. However, the omission of the upper part of his halo seems purposeful, so as not to interfere with halo of Child. It is similarly omitted in the *Madonna and Child with Sts. Jerome and Bernardino* in the oratory of Ss. Vincenzo e Anastasio in Siena. For the Gesuati order and the portrayal of Jerome in their habit, see the text on p. 148 below.

Disposizioni, Siena,<sup>389</sup> Sergardi-Biringucci coll., Siena<sup>390</sup>). In MFA 1210, the left arm was squeezed into the foreground and the inscribed banderole (in better-composed versions held in the right hand) was transferred to the left hand. The same solution is found, among many other works, in the earlier and autograph but similarly composed Madonna in the Montemerano altarpiece from 1458 (Fig. 5/5).<sup>391</sup> The right hand in MFA 1210 derives from Madonnas where the Child blesses with his right, holds an object (bird, inscription), or lays his hand, exactly in the position seen in MFA 1210 but in a meaningful context, on the Virgin's blue, embroidered mantle (e.g. Sergardi-Biringucci coll., Siena; Gnecco Coll., Genova). The child's left leg that appears to be non-existent in MFA 1210, is in the models partly covered by the Virgin's hand or is hidden behind her mantle but well-articulated at least up to the knee. A close analogue for the group of the mother and child is the full-figure Madonna in the triptych in Buonconvento (after 1461, Museo d'Arte Sacra di Val d'Arbia)<sup>392</sup> where the child's left arm is similarly crammed into the foreground, his right hand is insecurely left in the air, and his left leg missing as in MFA 1210 (Fig. 5/6). The inorganic recombination of many independent compositional elements resulted in a somewhat incoherent composition and in the loss of the intimate relationship between the mother, child and the lateral figures that characterizes several earlier and more successful compositions of the master.

Stylistically, MFA 1210 is close to a group of works datable to the seventh decade of the fifteenth century, in which the Virgin's head is based on the same model (Lindenau Museum, Altenburg, inv. 73, Sergardi-Biringucci coll., Siena; PNS, inv. 263; etc.), and especially two works that appear to date, on stylistic grounds, from the second half of the decade: the central part of the *Caccialupi triptych* in Boston (Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 1907.07.515 (Fig. 5/7),<sup>393</sup> and the *Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome, Bernardino, and Four Angels* in Washington (National Gallery of Art, inv. 1939.1.274, Fig. 5/8).<sup>394</sup> These works postdate the Pienza altarpiece completed in 1462 and are closer to the one at Abbadia a Isola, dated 1471 (Fig. 5/12).<sup>395</sup> The Washington Madonna and a slightly earlier one in private

<sup>389</sup> Photo Sopr. PSAE, inv. 13536.

<sup>390</sup> Cecilia Alessi, in *Mostra di opere ...* 1979, 1981, 1983, vol. 2 (1981), 86-87, no. 27; Photo Sopr. PSAE, inv. 96106.

<sup>391</sup> Cf. Cristina Gnoni Mavarelli, in Gnoni Mavarelli, Sebregondi, and Tramonti ed. 2000, 80-87.

<sup>392</sup> Guiducci ed. 1998, 49-50, 59, repr. p. 49.

<sup>393</sup> Kanter 1994, 190-194, with a proposal of dating to the later 1460s or close to 1470.

<sup>394</sup> Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 619, with a dating to ca. 1460-70.

<sup>395</sup> Cf. Laura Cavazzini, Ludwin Paardekooper and Daniele Rossi, in Bagnoli ed. 1998, 19-33.

collection<sup>396</sup> are also the closest compositional analogues in Sano's autograph production<sup>397</sup> and indicate for MFA 1210 a date around 1465-70.

The figures in MFA 1210 are closely modelled on these works (Figs. 5/9-11): the Virgin has half-closed, straight eyes and finely arched eyebrows set high in her face, a long straight pointed nose, a thin and straight mouth, and a weak chin. Her veil and mantle, which are also precisely copied from the prototypes, decoratively frame her face. The Child is a round-headed baby with wispy reddish hair, large eyes, a small round nose, puffed cheeks, and a little mouth. As for the figures of St. Jerome and St. Bernardino, close analogues appear in the late *Adoration of the Christ Child* in Amherst College, Amherst (Mass.), USA.

The very large number of devotional Madonnas by Sano and his workshop where Jerome is portrayed, on the right of the Madonna, not in his usual cardinal's robes but in the greyish-white habit held together by a dark leather belt of the Gesuati order (*Poverelli di Cristo*)<sup>398</sup> gave rise to a hypothesis that these works belonged to members or supporters of the Gesuati order.<sup>399</sup> Indeed, Jerome – the patron saint of the order – not only appears in the place of honour in these paintings, but in many, the Child turns towards him as a sign of his attention.<sup>400</sup> Sano was well-connected to the Gesuati order and received from them many commissions over several decades.<sup>401</sup>

## References:

Pulszky and Peregriny 1896, 12 (Sano di Pietro), Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 22 (Sano di Pietro); Berenson 1909, 237 (Sano di Pietro); Térey 1906<sup>1</sup>, 7, no. 24 (1210) (Sano di Pietro); Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>, 13, no. 24 (1210) (Sano di Pietro, mistakes St. Jerome for a donor), Jacobsen 1908, 38 (Sano di Pietro); Térey 1913<sup>1</sup>, 203, no. 24(1210) (Sano di Pietro); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1903-1915, V (1914), 174 (Sano di Pietro); Peregriny 1909-1915, III (1914), 53-54 (Sano di Pietro, mistakes St. Jerome for a donor); Térey 1916, 24, repr. (Sano di Pietro); Gaillard 1923, 203 (Sano di Pietro); Térey 1924, 148-149 (Sano di Pietro, similar works in the Sterbini coll. in Rome and in the Buckingham Palace in London); Van Marle 1923-38, IX

<sup>396</sup> Repr. Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 617, fig. 1.

<sup>397</sup> For further Madonnas related by composition and date, cf. Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 620, nn. 11-13, 18, with bibl.

<sup>398</sup> For the Gesuati order, see Romana Guarnieri, "Gesuati" in Guerrino and Rocca ed. 1972-2003, IV (1977), 116-1130; Mario Sensi, in Rocca ed. 2000, 435-38, no. 119 (with special focus on the habit of the order).

<sup>399</sup> Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 617, 617, 620 n. 11; Wolfgang Loseries, in Boskovits and Tripps ed. 2008, 135-136.

<sup>400</sup> This is a frequent formula in Sano's works, with which the importance of a represented saint was visually emphasized. On the Child turning away from the Virgin to look at a lateral figure, cf. Shorr 1957, 87-94.

<sup>401</sup> Sano's masterpiece, the Gesuati altarpiece (1444, PNS, inv. 246) and the altarpiece of the Saints Cosmas and Damian (ca. 1450-55; PNS, inv. 233) come from the main church of the order in Siena, San Girolamo (Torriti 1990, 183-186, 205, respectively). In the latter, as well as in two panels showing the *Coronation of the Virgin*, Jerome appears kneeling together with the founder of the Gesuati order, the Blessed Giovanni Colombini. One of the *Coronation* panels is still found in San Girolamo in Siena; the other is in the Pinacoteca of Gualdo Tadino. See also Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 617; Wolfgang Loseries, in Boskovits and Tripps ed. 2008, 136.

(1927), 492-94 (Sano di Pietro); Berenson 1932, 498 (Sano di Pietro); Petrovics 1935, 8, no. 22 (Sano di Pietro); Berenson 1936, 428 (Sano di Pietro); Pigler 1937, I, 230, no. 1210 (24), II, pl. 13 (Sano di Pietro); Pigler 1954, 505 (Sano di Pietro); Pigler 1967, I, 615 (Sano di Pietro); Berenson 1968, I, 374 (Sano di Pietro); László Mravik, in László Mravik and Szigethy Ágnes, "Festményvásárlások az Országos Képtár és a Szépművészeti Múzeum részére", in Mravik 1988, 106, no. 394 (Sano di Pietro, 1460s, info on provenance); Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 106 (Sano di Pietro); Frinta 1998, I, 328, 345, 521 (repertory of punches); Knauf 1998, 346-47, Cat. B1 (largely by Sano's workshop); Sallay 2008, 4, 14 (Sano di Pietro and workshop).

## 6. Workshop of Sano di Pietro

*Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome and Bernardino*  
**Fig. 6/1**

third quarter of 15<sup>th</sup> c.  
tempera and gold on wood  
panel with original frame: 64 x 43.5 cm; painted surface: 55.7 x 35 cm  
thickness: 0.3-1.3 cm; with original engaged frame: 2.5-3.1 cm

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.180.

### **Provenance:**

Acquired by Johann Anton Ramboux in Siena before 26 June, 1838;<sup>402</sup> Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne until 1866, no. 133 (as anonymous Sienese, probably by Sano di Pietro); sold to Arnold Ipolyi 1867 at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 133 (as anonymous Sienese, probably by Sano di Pietro); Arnold Ipolyi in Pest, Barsszentkereszt/Besztercebánya and Várad until 1886; deposited at the Episcopate of Várad until 1919; deposited at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, 1919-1920; acquired through Ipolyi's bequest in 1920.

### **Inscription:**

On scroll in the Child's hand: "EGO [S...]"

### **Exhibited:**

Műcsarnok, Budapest (18 October – 16 November, 1930), *Őszi kiállítás* (Fall Exhibition)], cat. 73.

### **Technical notes:**

The support is a vertically grained panel consisting of a central board (25.7 cm) and two narrow planks on the side (both ca. 8.8 cm wide) (Fig. 6/2). It has a strong convex warp, which has caused the original engaged frame detach from the panel in the bottom left corner and slightly at the upper parts of the polygonal top. There are two old, hand-hewn iron nails in the bottom part of the frame, one visible from the front on the right, one from the back on the left. At a date posterior to the warping, the panel has been thinned to its present thickness of 0.3-1.3 cm, with the result that the support is now thickest along its vertical axis and thinnest at the vertical edges. The surface of the thinned reverse is uneven and shows chisel marks. There are several fillings in the back containing wood-powder. The panel is well-preserved, with very little worm-tunnelling. The engaged frame conserves its original gilding and tooled decoration with tetra-lobe round punches running in a groove of the moulded frame and on the outer edge of the moulding (cf. Frinta 1998, I, 366, punch Ja21, 4.3 mm, inv. indicated erroneously as 55.160). The sides of the panel are covered with a somewhat abraded dark-red coat of paint over another layer of red paint, except for the bottom surface, which is painted with a relatively recent coat of white paint. The lower right section of the exterior part of the engaged frame is repaired.

<sup>402</sup> The work is identifiable in Ramboux's exportation request handed in to the Direttore della Real Galleria delle Statue on 26 June, 1838 (published by Merzenich 1995, 310, no. 14): "*Una Madonna col bamb(ino). e S. Girolamo, e S. Bernardino mezze figure /id. [tavola]/ I [braccio]. 2 [soldi]. - [denari]/ - [braccio]. 15 [soldi]. - [denari]*", that is, ca. 64.2 x 43.8 cm.

The gold ground is original and well-preserved. The paint surface is cracked and somewhat abraded and soiled. The faces are somewhat abraded, with minor inpaintings. The mordent gilt decoration along the hem of the Child's red robe (imitating fringes) and Mary's blue cloak is abraded. Along the white tunic of the child, a wide band of mordent gold decoration remains in fragments. The paint in Mary's blue cloak is very cracked and extensively retouched; there are some raised paint areas. Its green lining has darkened. There are many inpaintings in all of the red draperies. There are larger, filled repairs in the Child's left shoulder, in the back of Jerome's right hand, and in the left part of St. Bernardino's halo. There is a large crack in the Virgin's forehead. In the brooch on the Virgin's mantle, the ground shows through; it was perhaps once decorated with an applied motif. The red drapery on the right shoulder of the Child originally folded over just below the neck, as is marked by an almost completely abraded edge of mordent gold.

Punches: circle, pentaprong; hexaprong; lozenge (8x4.7 mm); hexa-rosette (15 mm); pointed tre-lobe at 60 degree (4.3 mm); pointed double-contour arch (6.7 mm) (Fig. 6/4).

### Documentation:

On reverse of panel: "n<sup>o</sup>. 14." (in ink on a 19<sup>th</sup>-century white label; referring to the numeration in Ramboux's exportation request of 26 June, 1838); "133" (in blue chalk on the same label, corresponding to the number of the work in the Ramboux collection; the earlier "n<sup>o</sup>. 14." is crossed out in the same blue chalk); "133" (in pencil, corresponding to the number of the work in the Ramboux collection); "250" (in blue chalk); "45" (large black print with 2.7 cm high digits on a white label, related to the Fall Exhibition of 1930, overlapping the "250" in blue chalk); "73. 1930. őszki kiállítás" (printed on a white label and referring to the Fall Exhibition of 1930); "4<sup>o</sup> Sano di Pietro" (in pencil); "Ansano di Pietro 1406-1481 Siena" (in pencil); "55.180" (in ink); "55.180" (in blue ball point pen); "ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MŰZEUM" (stamped, twice); "+ KERESZTÉNY MŰZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM" (round stamp); "55.180" (in ink written over the round stamp);

The Virgin is shown at three-quarter length, dressed in a green-lined blue cloak and a red dress. She bends her head gently towards the Child, who sits on her right arm. The Christ Child is dressed in a white tunic and wrapped in a red garment. The Child looks up into his Mother's eyes, while the Virgin's glance is unfocused in the distance. The central group is flanked by St. Bernardino of Siena on the right, dressed in a greyish Franciscan habit, and St. Jerome on the left, who wears the fur-lined *cappa magna* of a cardinal, with its hood pulled over his head.

In the devotional Madonna paintings by Sano and his shop, Jerome appears much more frequently in a Gesuati habit (see discussion in Cat. 5) than as a cardinal.<sup>403</sup> In both cases, he is usually paired with St. Bernardino, and it has been hypothesized that some of the works in

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<sup>403</sup> Some other Madonna paintings where Jerome appears dressed as a cardinal, bareheaded: A. H. Heineken coll, Noordwijk (cf. Os et al. ed. 1989, 118-120); San Raimondo al Rifugio [Consevatorio Femminile] (cf. Van Marle 1928-38, IX [1927], repr. p. 499); The Art Institute, Chicago; Lehman Coll., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, invv. 1975.I.42 and 1975.I.43 (Pope-Hennessy and Kanter 1987, 146-149); Acton Coll., Florence (Fototeca Zeri, inv. 43990); wearing a cardinal's hat: Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables; and with only the hood of his robe pulled over his head, as in CM 55.180, in the Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. 782 (probably by Sano's shop).

which he is portrayed as a cardinal were commissioned by members of the confraternity of San Girolamo, Francesco and – from 1444 – Bernardino, which met at the Sienese Hospital of the Scala and for which Sano executed some works.<sup>404</sup> While this is possible, there is no evidence in this regard and such a supposition may also not be necessary, since both Jerome and Bernardino enjoyed enormous veneration in general among the Sienese in the second half of the fifteenth century.

CM 55.180 was acquired in Siena by Johann Anton Ramboux and is first recorded in his exportation request dating from 1838. Ramboux (1862, 1867) thought it was probably Sano's work; yet, in the caption of its first reproduction in the lithograph published by its owner (1865) it is attributed to the school of Vecchietta (Fig. 6/3). Although since then the work was generally attributed to Sano di Pietro, Tátrai (1983) and Knauf (1998) rightly noted that it falls below the quality of the autograph works of the master. The hesitant drawing, the lack of plasticity in the modelling, the drooping, slack, and clumsy forms leave no doubt that it is a workshop product. The proportions of the figures and the composition too differ from Sano's standard Madonnas: rarely are the accompanying saints so tall and have their heads at the same level with, or even higher than, Mary.

Because of the modest quality and the lack of comparable dated works by the workshop, a precise chronological assignment of CM 55.180 is difficult. Knauf's claim (1998, 353) that Bernardino's presence indicates an execution date of 1450 is unacceptable. Equally lacks foundation Van Marle's (1927) suggestion to date the work just around 1458 (presumably on the basis of a comparison with the dated Montemerano altarpiece); similarly, Tátrai's dating to around 1460 (1983) must be understood in a wide sense. At the most, the presence of the haloed St. Bernardino almost certainly provides a *terminus post quem* of 1450; a comparison with the stylistic and compositional models of the work too suggest a placement in the third quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century; in the mature period of the head of the workshop.

The Madonnas turned out in staggering numbers by Sano and his shop are habitually composed from a stock of motifs, usually copied by way of cartoons. A frequently used motif is that of the Child pressing his cheek to (and often kissing) the Virgin's face and embracing her neck, which derives from the Byzantine Madonna-type referred to as *Glykophilousa* or *Eleusa*. Already in the thirteenth century, this type was known in many versions in Sienese art (occasionally combined with other Byzantine icon-types, such as the *Hodegetria*), and was

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<sup>404</sup> Laurence Kanter, communication to Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 620 n. 11. For the Confraternity of San Girolamo, see Liberati 1939-1961, X (1939), 342-44; Christiansen 1991; Alessi 2003. For Sano's works for this confraternity, cf. Trübner 1925, 96-97; Mallory and Freuler 1991; Christiansen 1991.

most frequently represented during the fourteenth century.<sup>405</sup> While the emphasis of this representation is primarily on the intimacy between the Mother and Child, the gesture also refers to the Passion by means of its analogy to the Virgin pressing her cheek to the face of the Dead Christ during the lamentation.<sup>406</sup>

The model for CM 55.180 was the apparently mostly autograph *Virgin and Child with Six saints* at Christ Church Picture Gallery, Oxford (Fig. 6/8) or a similar work, in which, besides the compositional similarities in the group of the Virgin and Child, also the relation of the lateral saints to the central group is analogous. Compositionally (albeit *en reverse*) and stylistically (especially for the Child's head), CM 55.180 is closest to the full-length *Virgin and Child with Two Angels* in Siena (133.5 x 67.5 cm, PNS, inv. 252, Figs. 6/5, 6/7), which is somewhat better in quality but seems in part also executed by the workshop.<sup>407</sup> PNS 252 is larger and thus the heads of Mary and Jesus were not directly made from the same cartoon, but their relation is evident, along with several minor compositional elements (the infant's feet, the contour line of the Virgin's shoulder, the arrangement of the robe on Christ's shoulder, etc.).

#### References:

Ramboux 1862, 24, no. 133 (Sienese school, probably Sano di Pietro); Ramboux 1865, fig. 13 ("maniera di Lorenzo di Pietro, detto il Vecchietta, scuola sen., (sec. XV)"); [Ramboux] 1867, 26, no. 133 (Sienese school, probably Sano di Pietro); Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 528 (Sano di Pietro, ca. 1458); Gerevich 1928, 225, repr. p. 224 (Sano di Pietro); Lepold 1930, 14, cat. 73 (Sano di Pietro); Gerevich 1930, 95, repr. (Sano di Pietro); Berti Toesca 1932, 947 (Sano di Pietro); Berenson 1932, 499 (Sano di Pietro); Berenson 1936, 429 (Sano di Pietro); Gerevich ed. 1948, 95 (Sano di Pietro); Czobor 1955, 7 (Sano di Pietro); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi, 1964, 65, no. 50, fig. III/50. (Sano di Pietro); Berenson 1968, I, 375 (Sano di Pietro); Mucsi 1975, 40, no. 192 (Sano di Pietro, end of 1450s); Tátrai 1983<sup>1</sup>, 35, colour repr. on p. 34 (Workshop of Sano di Pietro, ca. 1460); Cséfalvay 1989, 104, fig. 9. (Sano di Pietro, reconstruction of the Ipolyi collection); Merzenich 1995, 310, no. 14 (publication of Ramboux's exportation request); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 563, no. 133, with repr. (Sano di Pietro, reconstruction of the Ramboux collection); Frinta 1998, I, 83 (Bb8), 233 (Fda45b) 261 (Gb11b), 366 (Ja21), 521 (La131c) (Sano di Pietro, repertory of punches); Knauf 1998, 353-54, Cat. B4 (1450, "the quality of execution points largely to Sano's workshop"); Sallay 2008, 14 (workshop of Sano di Pietro).

<sup>405</sup> Shorr 1954, 38-47, esp. 40-41 and Type 6 Siena 1, 5, 9. The Byzantine origin of this representation was emphasized by Loseries on occasion of his discussion of the Ridolfi altarpiece (1448), where this compositional formula first appears in Sano's art (1993, 161-63, figs. 10-12; revised and enlarged ed. 2003, 123-124, with further bibl.). For the iconography of the "Madonna affettuosa" in early Sienese art, with a special attention to sculpture, see also Sara Recupero, "Dall'Oriente bizantino alla Toscana del Quattrocento: Fortuna e reinterpretazione della "Madonna affettuosa", in Luciano, Fattorini, and Paolucci ed. 2005, 117-120, with further bibl.

<sup>406</sup> Shorr 1954, 39.

<sup>407</sup> Torriti 1990, 198, fig. 248. The Virgin's bust in turn is most closely modelled on PNS, inv. 236 (Torriti 1990, 194-195, fig. 241).

## 7.

### Workshop of Sano di Pietro

*Saint Bernardino of Siena*

**Fig. 7/1**

ca. 1450-80

tempera and gold on wood

panel and painted surface: 33.5 x 19.3 cm

thickness: 0.5-0.6 cm, with modern support: 1.4-1.5 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 39.

#### **Provenance:**

Acquired by Johann Anton Ramboux in Italy before 1842; Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 143 (Ansano or Vecchietta / Sano's school); sold to Arnold Ipolyi in 1867 at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 143 (Ansano or Vecchietta / Sano's school); Arnold Ipolyi, Pest, until 1872; his gift to the National Picture Gallery in 1872, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts.

#### **Inscription:**

On the book in antique Roman letters: "QVE | SVR | SVM | SVN | T·SA | PITE | NON | QVE [super terram]"

In the sun: "yhs"

#### **Technical notes:**

The support is a single plank with a vertical grain, which has been thinned to 0.5 cm and applied to a new, 0.7 cm-thick support consisting of two horizontally grained planks (Figs. 7/2, 7/5). The original support is cut on all four sides and shows extensive worm tunnelling. The edges of the reverse of the new support are bevelled on all four sides. There are three, 0.9 cm wide modern strips of wood nailed to the top and to the two vertical sides. At the bottom, a fourth strip of wood is now probably lost and the two vertical strips extend beyond the panel by 0.5 cm on the left and by 0.3 cm to the right.

The painted surface is worn; there are minor damages, scratches, cracks, small indents, and several vertical cracks in the support. The dark background is original and is surrounded by a brownish border decorated with contiguous "pointed tetra-lobe" motifs executed in madder lake. The ground contains lead white. The "yhs" sign is executed in mordent gilding; the halo was originally executed in tooled gold leaf but has been repaired in shell gold. There are minor inpaints in the lower part of the habit. There are more extensive repairs in the background, especially along a long, curved vertical crack in the area to the right of the saint (Fig. 7/3). Dispersed small repaints (to the right of the saint's left foot). In the bottom foreground there is a large filled area between the saint's feet (Fig. 7/3-4). The panel is damaged along its edges. There is a deep indented damage between the decorated border and the dark background on the left at the height of the saint's right hand.

The painting is enclosed in a carved and gilt modern frame.

#### **Documentation:**

On reverse of modern backing: “198.” (in ink, probably from the 19<sup>th</sup> or the early 20<sup>th</sup> c.); “*N<sup>o</sup> 143 / Preis 10 Tler (?)*” (in pencil, the number corresponds to that of the Ramboux coll.);<sup>408</sup> “*ORSZ. KÉPTÁR. A leltár száma 39*” (printed on white label); “26” (in pencil on white label). On modern frame: “*Szépművészeti Múzeum. Lelt. sz. 2684*” (printed on white label, number handwritten in ink), “*ORSZÁGOS KÉPTÁR. KÉPTÁR. Az 1888. évi leltározás, 39. sz.*” (printed on white label); “*K 1004*” (in blue ink on white label, overlaps label from 1888, refers to inventory no. of frames), “*39. Sienai festő. Sienai Szt. Bernardin.*” (in pen, on white label with red vertical borders).

Saint Bernardino turns slightly to the left, standing barefoot on a fictive marble floor, in front of dark background. He wears the light grey Franciscan habit held together by the *corda* and holds two of his common attributes. In his right hand, the *trigramma* – the “yhs” standing for the Holy Name of Jesus – enclosed in the rays of the sun recalls a cult that he fervently promoted in his sermons: the glorification of Jesus’ name. As is well known, Bernardino used to hold up a tablet with this abbreviation to his audience.<sup>409</sup> In the saint’s left hand, there is a red-bound, open book shown to the beholder and inscribed with the words “*QVE SVRSVM SVNT SAPITE NON QVE* [super terram]”, one of the preacher’s mottos based Colossians 3, 2: “Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things.”<sup>410</sup>

The small panel is a distant echo of one of the most important hagiographic invention of Quattrocento Sienese painting, related to the city’s great fifteenth-century preacher, the Observant Franciscan Saint Bernardino.<sup>411</sup> Immediately after the death of Bernardino degli Albizzeschi on 20 May, 1444, in Aquila, large-scale portrayals of him – mostly panel paintings and painted banners – sprang up in Siena, much before his canonization in 1450 and even before his canonization process opened on 25 April, 1445. As Machtelt Israëls has suggested, the great demand for his portrayal may be due to the disappointment of the Sienese at their failure to secure the body, which remained in Aquila.<sup>412</sup> Indeed, the many large, life-size representations of the saint created after 1444 show the saint with an unprecedented

<sup>408</sup> As far as I know, this type of inscription in German, reporting the Ramboux collection number and the price, is unique among the pieces of Ramboux collection now in Hungary.

<sup>409</sup> St. Bernardino is often shown in 15<sup>th</sup>-c. art preaching and showing his audience the YHS tablet (Sano di Pietro, Museo dell’Opera, Siena, inv. 3506, 1444-1450; Neroccio de’ Landi, predella fragment, Musei Civici, Siena, 1460s). For St. Bernardino preaching, cf. Polecritti 2000; Martini 2006; Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 92-101, with bibl.

<sup>410</sup> Cf. Kaftal 1952, col. 196, with references to Bernardino’s sermons.

<sup>411</sup> On the iconography of St. Bernardino, cf. Misciattelli 1932; Niccoli ed. 1950; Kaftal 1952, coll. 195-200; Mode 1973 (on early images related to canonisation); Arasse 1974; Arasse 1977 (depictions in historical context); *Enciclopedia Bernardiniana*...1980-1985, esp. vol. 3; Arasse 1982; Cyril 1991; Mallory and Freuler 1991 (on commissions from the confraternity of the Virgin), Christiansen 1991; Raffaelli 2004-2005, 100-111; Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 92-101; Israëls, forthcoming.

<sup>412</sup> Lecture given at *Sano di Pietro: Qualità, Devozione e Pratica nella Pittura Senese del Quattrocento*, Siena, Accademia dei Fisiocritici di Siena – Asciano, Museo Cassioli, 5-6 December, 2005, see Israëls, forthcoming. Bernardino’s body is preserved in the Observant Franciscan church of San Francesco in Aquila.

fidelity to life (as can be judged from a surviving death mask of Bernardino in Aquila<sup>413</sup>): with sunken cheeks, a toothless and downturned mouth, and pointed chin. These images are not only among the first surviving portrait-like renderings of an individual in Sieneese art,<sup>414</sup> but also the first true-to-life depictions of a highly revered person awaiting canonization.

Bernardino's characteristic features would have been familiar from a first-hand experience to every Sieneese painter active in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century. The iconographers of the new saint-to-be were the leading painters of the period: Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio, Sassetta, Sano di Pietro, and, to a lesser degree, Giovanni di Paolo.<sup>415</sup> Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio (who, having died in 1449, did not live to see the canonization) painted an image of Bernardino for the preacher's home church, the Convento dell'Osservanza on the Capriola Hill near Siena already in 1444 (Fig. 7/7), to be followed by similar images (PNS, inv. 203; Museo Comunale, Lucignano, dated 1448).<sup>416</sup> The images painted by Sassetta, who formerly worked for Bernardino at the Osservanza, are – or were believed to be – lost.<sup>417</sup> But it was Sano di Pietro who painted the largest number of Bernardino's images, which he produced, in Van Marle's words, "with no fear of monotony".<sup>418</sup> In 1445, he was commissioned an image of the saint by the Compagnia della Vergine (of which he himself was a member), in which the verisimilitude of the representation was unusually emphasized (Museo dell'Opera, Siena).<sup>419</sup> Some of his most important other portrayals include two monumental frescos in the Palazzo Pubblico (Sala della Biccherna, Sala del Mappamondo)<sup>420</sup> and a large panel that comes from the Osservanza church and was once dated, according to Ettore Romagnoli, 1463

<sup>413</sup> Repr. Misciattelli 1925; Misciattelli 1932, pl. 1.

<sup>414</sup> Earlier portrait-like rendering appears include the so-called *Serristori Pietà* by the Master of the Osservanza (1432) or in Domenico di Bartolo's fresco showing the *Virgin of Mercy*.

<sup>415</sup> By Giovanni di Paolo, no independent life-size image of Bernardino is known from the early period following Bernardino's death (1444-50). For the celebrations of the canonization, Giovanni di Paolo painted three processional banners painted on every side with the image of St. Bernardino, for which he was paid by the Spedale in June 1450 (Bacci 1944, 78).

<sup>416</sup> Pietro di Giovanni also painted the image of Bernardino (mentioned as *santo* in the document) in 1444 on the "tenda" of the Pellegrinaio in the Spedale della Scala (Gallavotti Cavallero 1985<sup>1</sup>, 425). In the same year, he included the blessed Bernardino in a processional banner now in the Jacquemart André Museum in Paris. The date of the Bernardino-image in the PNS is uncertain (Torriti 1990, 211-212, fig. 267). For the image in Lucignano, cf. Luciano Bellosi, in Bellosi, Cantelli and Lenzini Moriondo ed. 1970, 22.

<sup>417</sup> The Spedale di Santa Maria della Scala paid Sassetta in January 1445 (Sieneese style 1444) for a panel with the image of the blessed Bernardino (Carli 1957, 78; Gallavotti Cavallero 1985<sup>1</sup>, 425). A suggestion for identifying a *St. Bernardino* in the PNS (inv. 205) with one commissioned to Sassetta in 1444 will be published by Machtelt Israëls (forthcoming).

<sup>418</sup> Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 474.

<sup>419</sup> Cf. Mallory and Freuler 1991; Christiansen 1991; Viviana Cerrutti, in *Siena e Roma...* 2005, 84-87; Tavolari 2007, 98-103.

<sup>420</sup> Repr. Brandi ed. 1983, figs. 184, 343 (the dates of these works are disputed). The fresco in the Sala del Mappamondo forms part of a series of distinguished Sieneese saints and *beati*.

(PNS, inv. 238).<sup>421</sup> This work may well have been commissioned by Bernardino's fellow brethren. Another work now in the museum of Montalcino comes from the local Observant Franciscan church,<sup>422</sup> yet another panel from Montalcino was painted in or before 1450 for a certain F. (Fra?) Leonardus (PNS, inv. 253).<sup>423</sup>

The earliest images of Bernardino were limited to showing the essential elements identifying the saint; only later, closer to the time of the canonization, were they gradually enriched with glorifying symbols (a schematized world-map under his feet; angels elevating him; three mitres referring to the refused bishoprics of Siena, Ferrara and Urbino) and personal references (a case for his eyeglasses hanging from his corda).<sup>424</sup> MFA 39 follows the early, puritan versions, in which Bernardino is shown primarily as a preacher. Except for showing the figure barefooted, the portrayal is closely modelled on Pietro di Giovanni's image from 1444 (Fig. 7/7). So is its closest analogy, another small work by Sano or his shop in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (inv. 39.801, 40.0 x 20.3 cm; tempera on parchment (?) laid on panel, Fig. 7/8), except for the world map that appears beneath the feet of the saint.<sup>425</sup>

In all of these works, Bernardino appears in front of a dark ground which is frequently surrounded on three sides by a decorated gilt border. In Quattrocento Sieneese painting, this scheme was generally used for self-contained, independent images.<sup>426</sup> Since MFA 39 is cut on all sides and has been thinned, it has lost every physical indication that could have provided a clue about its original context. For its size and format, it could be a fragment of the pilaster of an altarpiece or of the wing of a portable triptych but the dark background surrounded by a gilt and decorated border suggests that it was conceived to stand alone and serve as a private memento – a modest and unpretentious copy of the famous images of Bernardino, perhaps limited to the most essential features for economic, not iconographic, reasons – for one of the devotees of the great preacher.

<sup>421</sup> Romagnoli *ante* 1835 [1976], 293 (reporting an earlier reference from 1625); Brandi 1933, 254; Torriti 1990, 205, with bibl.

<sup>422</sup> Brogi 1897, 264; Bagnoli ed. 1997, 66, repr. p. 69, 74.

<sup>423</sup> Torriti 1990, 193, fig. 238; Bagnoli ed. 1997, 66.

<sup>424</sup> This tendency was pointed out by Machtelt Israëls in a lecture, cf. n. 124 above and Israëls, forthcoming.

<sup>425</sup> The work is attributed to Sano di Pietro but its condition makes it difficult to judge whether it is an autograph work or a shop product. Everett Fahy (communication, 1985) expressed doubts about its autography, whereas Kanter considered it as "certainly by Sano", cf. Kanter 1994, 188.

<sup>426</sup> See the images of St. Bernardino by Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio's (life-size full-length figures in Lucignano, from 1448, and in the PNS, inv. 203), by Sano di Pietro or his workshop (full-length figure; church of San Francesco in Civita Castellana), Sassetta's circle (small three-quarter figure; Salini coll., Siena); circle of Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio (small-scale full-length figure with arched top; Priv. Coll, repr. Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 269, It. ed. 283). A *Crucifixion* attributed to Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio in the Cini Coll., Venice (55.2 x 32.5; inv. 20, cf. Raffaelli 2004-2005, 203-205), seems too an independent image: the Crucified Christ is shown against a dark background. The scene is surrounded on all four sides by stripes of punched gold decoration, and the panel is enclosed in what appears to be an original engaged frame.

MFA 39 was first documented in the Ramboux collection, in whose catalogue (1862) it appears ascribed to “Ansano or Vecchietta” but the text specified that it “looks like a work from Sano’s school”. At the Gallery of Pest it was first ascribed to the Umbrian, then, from 1881, to the Sienese school. In 1897, Berenson published it as a work by Sano di Pietro, but the work was omitted from the subsequent editions, presumably because the author came to consider it a shop product. Until 1991, all the Hungarian catalogues kept to the general definition as “Sienese school,” and dated the piece to the 15<sup>th</sup> century except for Pigler (1954, 1967), who dated it to the last quarter of the century. This dating is unlikely, since such images were probably made rather closer than further in time from the death of the saint. Besides, Sano died in 1481 and there is no evidence that his assistants continued to create works in his style. In 1991, Tátrai correctly narrowed the definition of the work to the workshop of Sano, with which attribution the work features also in the reconstruction of the Ramboux collection (Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998). The quality of the work is modest but it shows such close relations to Sano di Pietro’s style that it is rightly considered as a product of his *bottega*.

**References:**

Ramboux 1862, 25, no. 143 (Ansano or Vecchietta / “seems to come from Sano’s school”); [Ramboux] 1867, 27 (Ansano or Vecchietta / “seems to come from Sano’s school”); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1869-76, IV/1 (1871), 88 n. 94 (report the work as by Sano di Pietro and formerly in the Ramboux coll.); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1873, 4, no. 26 (Umbrian school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1876, 7, no. 100 (Umbrian school); *Országos Képtár* 1878, 7, 100 (Umbrian school); *Országos Képtár* 1879, 7, 100 (Umbrian school); Pulszky 1881, 6, no. 18 (Sienese, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pulszky 1888, 5, no. 39 (Sienese painter, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Az Országos Képtár* 1897, 24, no. 39 (Sienese painter, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Berenson 1897, 175 (Sano di Pietro); Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 142, no. 39 (Sienese painter, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Destrée 1903, 43 (Sano di Pietro); Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>, 388, no. 39 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Térey 1913<sup>1</sup>, 297, no. 39 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pigler 1954, 527 (Sienese, last quarter of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pigler 1967, I, 645 (Sienese, last quarter of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); H. Takács and Nyerges ed. 1973, 30, cat. 53 (Sienese painter, last quarter of 15<sup>th</sup> c.; according to the notes of the Old Masters department, the work was not exhibited). Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 107, repr. (workshop of Sano di Pietro); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 564, no. 143, repr. (workshop of Sano di Pietro); Sallay 2008, 14 (workshop of Sano di Pietro).

**Lorenzo di Pietro known as Vecchietta**  
**(Lorenzo di Pietro di Giovanni)**  
(Siena, 1410 – Siena, 1480)

Lorenzo di Pietro – or Vecchietta, according to the amusing nickname meaning “the little old one”, which he himself used – was a key personality in Quattrocento Siennese art. An open, progressively minded and versatile artist of outstanding talent, he made a major contribution especially in the fields of fresco and panel painting as well as in bronze and wood sculpture. His importance lies in his manifold contacts with non-Siennese – especially Florentine – artists, whose artistic innovations he incorporated into his own work and handed them down to the next generation of artists, many of whom he trained. Among his students were such defining artistic personalities of the second half of the Quattrocento as Francesco di Giorgio, Neroccio de’ Landi, and Benvenuto di Giovanni.

It is not known from whom Vecchietta received his initial training. His name is listed among the members of the painters’ guild in 1428, but in the following decade he was working outside Siena for the Cardinal Branda Castiglione in Castiglione Olona in Lombardy (and, according to some scholars, also in San Clemente, Rome) on frescos under Masolino’s direction.

After his return in Siena by 1439 the latest, when he collaborated with Sano di Pietro on an Annunciation group for high altar of Duomo (lost), Vecchietta worked extensively for the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, decorating its various rooms with frescos. The three stories of Tobit he frescoed in 1441 are lost, but his surviving scene of the *Story of the Blessed Sorore* in the Pellegrinaio testifies that the artist fully embraced the early Renaissance lesson during his absence, and designed a scene of complex *all’antica* architecture shown in calculated and emphatic linear perspective. His most imaginative work is a fresco cycle illustrating the articles of the Creed in the old sacristy, which he completed in 1449. Besides the frescos, Vecchietta painted for the Ospedale a cabinet of relics, the so-called *Arliquiera* (1445, PNS, inv. 204), in which he was assisted by Pietro di Giovanni d’Ambrogio.

In this period, Vecchietta also frescoed some scenes in the cloister of the Augustinian Hermitage of Lecceto near Siena and the Martinozzi chapel in the church of San Francesco in Siena (1445-48; only a niche fresco showing the *Lamentation* survives in the Museo Diocesano of Siena). His next major undertaking in fresco was the decoration the Siennese Baptistry between 1450-53, where he depicted again the Articles of the Creed, Passion scenes and the Annunciation. In 1461, he executed in the Sala del Mappamondo in the Palazzo

Pubblico a highly influential fresco of *St. Catherine of Siena* on occasion of canonization (Fig. 13/10).

In the second half of his career Vecchietta turned more towards panel painting (altarpieces in the Uffizi, Florence, 1457; Cathedral, Pienza, completed in 1462; Museo Diocesano, Pienza, from the Grancia of Spedaletto near Pienza, late 1460s) and, especially, to sculpture. His statues of extraordinary expressive power were deeply influenced by the late work of Donatello, who spent his last years in Siena (1457-61). Vecchietta made two marble statues, the *St. Paul* (1458-59) and the *St. Peter* (1460-62) for the Loggia della Mercanzia in Siena; whose restless emotionalism is in strong contrast with the calm classicism of the Antonio Federighi's statues in the same series. After January 1463, Vecchietta left for Rome to execute the bronze effigy for the tomb of Bishop Girolamo Foscari (Sta. Maria del Popolo, Rome) and returned to Siena before May 1464. The masterpiece of his later years is the calmer and more classicizing Eucharistic bronze ciborium (1467-72) for the high altar of the Church of the Annunziata of the Hospital (moved to the high altar of the Cathedral in 1506). For this work, a unique, full-scale preparatory painting survive (1467, PNS, inv. 404). Besides the bronzes, the artist's life-size polychrome wooden statues are of great interest: the *St. Paul* (Museo Horne, Florence, inv. 16), a standing *St. Bernardino* (before 1474?, Bargello, Florence) and the *St. Anthony Abbot Enthroned* from 1475 (S. Giovenale, Narni).

A splendid work must have been his lost silver statue of St. Catherine of Siena made for high altar of the Sienese Cathedral in 1472-73 (perhaps reflected in Neroccio's elegant and classicizing marble statue of the saint in 1474 in the chapel of St. John the Baptist of the Cathedral).

For his own his funerary chapel in the Church of the Annunziata in the Hospital, the aged artist created a bronze statue of the *Risen Christ* (1476, now on the high altar of the church) and a large painting of the *Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints* (ca. 1478-79, PNS, inv. 210). The extraordinarily prolific artist died after a long and magnificent career in 1480. His workshop near the Cathedral passed onto one of his many talented students, Neroccio de' Landi, who completed his unfinished *Assumption* relief-altarpiece commissioned for San Frediano in Lucca (Museo Nazionale di Villa Guinigi, Lucca).

### Select Bibliography:

Romagnoli *ante* 1835 (1976), IV, 515-570; Berenson 1909, 262-263; Berenson 1936, 508-509; Vigni 1937; Brandi 1949, 121-132; Coor 1961, *ad indicem*; Del Bravo 1970; Os 1974<sup>2</sup>; Os 1977; Berenson 1968; Bruno Santi, in *Mostra di Opere...* II (1981), 94-98; Natali 1984; Gallavotti Cavallero 1985<sup>1</sup>, 156-82; Bertelli 1987; Andrea De Marchi, "Vecchietta / Lorenzo di Pietro" in Zeri ed. 1987, II, 764-65; Carl B. Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke

1988, 258-263 (It. ed. 272-77); Bagnoli 1989; Torriti 1990, 249-257; Bellosi ed. 1993, *passim*; Golay 1995; Paardekooper 1996; Bonaiti 2000-2001; Paardekooper 2002<sup>2</sup>, esp. 80; Catoni 2002; Fagnoli 2004; Fattorini 2005; Alessandro Angelini, “Il primato della scultura a Siena al tempo di Pio II”, in Martini ed. 2006, 17-31; Patrizia La Porta, “Iconografia di Pio II”, in Martini ed. 2006, 33-39; Gabriele Fattorini, in Martini ed. 2006, 49-57; Alessandro Bagnoli, in Martini ed. 2006, 91-99; Gabriele Fattorini, in Syson et al, 2007, 351-52; Nardinocchi 2007; Bianchin et al. 2007; Marilena Caciorgna, “Gli articoli del credo nell’arte senese da Ambrogio Lorenzetti al Vecchietta,” in Caciorgna and Guerrini 2007, 190-26.

## 8.

### Circle of Vecchietta

*Conferral of the Flag of Siena*

#### Fig. 8/1

middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century

tempera, gold and silver (?) on wood

panel: 28.1-28.5 x 38.6-38.9 cm

painted surface: 25.5 x 36.6 cm

thickness: 0.8-1.1 cm (with the *pastiglia* border); 0.3-0.5 cm (panel only)

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.161.

#### Provenance:

Possibly Rusca Collection, Florence; acquired by Johann Anton Ramboux in Florence before 1842; Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 111 (as Masolino da Panicale, in the style of, or perhaps Sienese school); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 111 (as Masolino da Panicale, in the style of, or perhaps Sienese school); Arnold Ipolyi in Pest, Besztercebánya/Barsszentkereszt and Váradi until 1886; deposited at the Episcopate of Váradi until 1919, no. 48 (“scene from Dante’s Divine Comedy”<sup>427</sup>); deposited at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, 1919-1920; acquired through Ipolyi’s bequest in 1920.

#### Technical notes:

The support consists of three horizontally grained panels: two wider ones of approximately equal height (ca. 13.5-13.7 cm each) and a thin strip at the bottom (height: 0.8-1.3 cm) (Fig. 8/2). The support is a little warped along the horizontal axis. The reverse has been thinned and slightly bevelled on all four sides. There are red wax patches near all four edges with remnants of paper which was formerly applied to the back. There are holes and damages at the centre top caused by previous fittings used to hang the picture. A layer of canvas, visible at the edges, appears to extend below the gesso ground. An X-ray examination of the panel was not possible.

The painted surface conserves its original dimensions. 0.8-1 cm wide mouldings in *pastiglia* surround it on all four sides. Above and below the mouldings there are fragments of remains of vegetal ornamentation in *pastiglia* whose surface is gilt and decorated with a multiprong punch.

The painted surface is much abraded and scratched, and has a prominent *craquelure*. A roughly horizontal scratch extends from the head of the figure on the extreme left to the arm of the knight. There are many smaller retouchings, and a few indents and minor losses. The outlines of the architecture have been incised into the ground prior to painting. The cover of the black horse is gilt over bole; the coat of the Sienese official is gilt underneath a now worn paint layer and is decorated in *sgraffito*. The armours of the condottiere and the two men sitting on the horses appear to have been originally decorated in silver and incised.

The work is enclosed in a modern frame.

#### Documentation:

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<sup>427</sup> Cf. Némethy ed. 1896.

On reverse: a red wax oval seal showing two crossed sunflowers in a shield, with a helmet above, 26 x 22 mm (Fig. 8/4 b); “*J.A.Ramboux*” (in red wax seal); a fragmentary seal showing a multi-story building with arcades, its fragment measures 9 x 13 mm (Fig. 8/4 a); “*Danthe è Electo Capitano | a quel di Siena ,, | Dante nell’atto, che gli | viene conferita la curia | di gonfaloniere. | quadretto del Rusca di Firenze.*” (in ink, 19<sup>th</sup>-century hand) (Fig. 8/3); “*sullo fare del Massaccio.*” (in pencil) (Fig. ); “*dante elett[... long damage] | a quel di Siena*” (in pencil); “212” (in blue chalk); “111” or three parallel slanting lines (in pencil); “164” (in black chalk or pencil); “31/41” (scratched into the wood); “*ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MŰZEUM*” (stamped, three times); “*M. 28.5 x 36.5*” (in pencil, 20<sup>th</sup> c.), “55.161.” (in black ink)

In an urban square that has been identified as the Piazza di San Cristoforo in Siena,<sup>428</sup> two groups meet in front of the church of San Cristoforo. On the left are the officials of the *commune* of Siena (of the Concistoro?); on the right an armoured knight, perhaps a *condottiere*, with his retinue. A main Siennese official dressed in a splendid gown embroidered with golden lily-motifs (Fig. 8/10), hands over the black-and-white Siennese flag, the *balzana*, to the knight who wears a cloth twisted around his head (8/11). Four members of his retinue wear armour. One stands next to him with crossed arms, three others are mounted on one white and two chestnut horses. The man on the white horse leans forwards and talks to a blue-dressed servant who holds the black horse of the knight. The background is one of the first topographically recognizable urban *vedute* in Siennese art, dominated by the Romanesque church of San Cristoforo, whose characteristic black-and-white checked façade and campanile recur in other representations before the transformation of the church in 1800.<sup>429</sup>

The painting forms part of a series with at least four other panels. The series is unparalleled in fifteenth-century Siennese art for its political subject matter and has raised much interest; yet the questions of authorship, iconography, and function all remain unresolved and have been the object of much conjecture.<sup>430</sup> The scenes seem to have been first associated around 1973: Whitfield (1973) listed four of them, and in the same year the

<sup>428</sup> By Wolfgang Loseries on suggestion of Ingeborg Bähr, in Riedl and Seidel ed., 2.1.1 (1992), 355, 2.2, fig. 340.

<sup>429</sup> On the history and architecture of the church of San Cristoforo, see Wolfgang Loseries, in Riedl and Seidel ed., 2.1.1 (1992), 343-367. The representation of the San Cristoforo is somewhat simplified in CM 55.161: the painter has omitted some horizontal strips of white rhombuses on a black ground decorating the façade, which appear in the roughly contemporary coloured drawing by Niccolò di Giovanni Ventura (Chronicle of the Battle of Montaperti, 1443, BCS, ms. A.IV.5, f. 2v, colour repr. Barzanti, Cornice and Pellegrini 2006, 337) and in Antonio di Taddeo Gregori’s painting (*Translation of the Virgin of Provenzano*, after 1611, antechamber of the Sacristy, Sta. Maria in Provenzano, Siena; cf. Annalisa Pezzo, in *Siena e Roma* 2005, 70-71, cat. 0.4, with colour repr. and previous bibl.; Barzanti, Cornice and Pellegrini 2006, 330-31, colour repr. on pp. 328-29). The white columns dividing the monophores in the façade and the lunette over the door are barely visible in CM 55.161 because of the abraded condition of the surface.

<sup>430</sup> The study of the five panels must have been hindered also by their difficult accessibility: two are conserved in little known public collections and three are with private owners. Even today, photographs are not easily available, and an autopsy of the four other panels was not possible for the present writer.

fifth scene – the *Duel* – was recognized as a companion to CM 55.161 (Art sale, Louis Salavin Coll., 1973). The five panels were first reproduced together in 1991, by Freuler.

Although often believed to be predella scenes,<sup>431</sup> the pieces are in fact fragments of a profane object, almost certainly a piece of furniture.<sup>432</sup> The excessive wear and the underlying canvas are typical of furniture fragments, and the remnants of vegetal motifs in *pastiglia* that survive around CM 55.161 (Fig. 8/5) clearly indicate its original context in a profane object, since this type of decoration is very frequently seen in furniture and similar items but not in *predelle*.<sup>433</sup>

The depicted story remains obscure as the previous suggestions regarding the subject are either unconvincing or inconclusive. Scholars attempted to identify the scenes with events that had as protagonists Charles of Anjou (Whitfield 1973); Frederick III (Boskovits 1978) or Antonio di Cecco Rosso Petrucci, a important figure in Sienese politics from the 1420s to 1456, when he was exiled (Freuler 1991). All of these interpretations include parts that are not born out by the representations, although Freuler's hypothesis may well contain important observations. A step towards deciphering the story may be the identification of the characters in the five scenes, based on the observation of their individual traits and clothing, as well as the colour and equipment of their horses.

First of all, it has not yet been noted that the protagonist seems to be the same knight in all the five scenes. His attire (armour and a white kerchief around his head), his characteristic physiognomy (a wide head with a squared, prominent chin, a high-ridged and straight nose), and his black horse with gold caparison and red bridle leave no doubt about his identity in four of the five pictures. It is him, and not a ruler (let alone King Sigismund)<sup>434</sup>, as often

<sup>431</sup> Among the scholars who considered the fragments predella pieces, the theory of Carl Strehlke is most daring (in Christiansen, Kanter and Strehlke 1988, 264, It. ed. 278). On the basis of a documented payment, the scholar proposed that Giovanni di Pietro (for whom see below) painted the “obscure scenes” in 1463 [but in fact 1465, cf. Borghesi and Banchi, 184] for the confraternity of St. Ansanus. The hypothesis was rightly rejected, among many others, by Freuler (1991, 99-100) because of the profane character of the series and because the proposed date 1463 is stylistically too late for our series. Strehlke did not accept this objection and repeated his former hypothesis in an exhibition review of Freuler 1991 (Strehlke 1991<sup>2</sup>, 466-467). It is not clear what Strehlke (1991<sup>2</sup>, 467) meant that in Freuler's publication “the sequence of photographs is incorrectly reproduced”, since no one yet knows what the correct sequence is.

<sup>432</sup> As proposed already by Freuler (1991, 100), albeit without any support for his hypothesis. Even earlier, Boskovits (1968) – and, following him, Mucsi (1975) – considered the work a fragment from a *cassone*. Tátrai (1993) thought they were pictures “inserted into the wood panelling of the room”. The surrounding *pastiglia*-motifs and the small size of the painting speak against the latter hypothesis.

<sup>433</sup> For example, closely analogous in format and in the *pastiglia* border is a Sienese *cassone* front from the circle of Giovanni di Paolo, formerly in the possession of the art dealer Paul Bottenwieser in Berlin (Gundersheimer 1928). For other Sienese examples of painted scenes surrounded with *pastiglia*, see Misciattelli 1929, esp. figs. 8-10, 24.

<sup>434</sup> In previous literature, the rider was often considered to be a ruler. Freuler (1991), Barzanti, Cornice, and Pellegrini (2006, 372) identify him as Sigismund, which must be excluded because of Sigismund's well-known,

believed, who arrives to Siena in the *Arrival of a knight to Siena* (26 x 37 cm, The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania, inv. BF 868, Fig. 8/6),<sup>435</sup> which probably preceded CM 55.161 in the succession of the events.

In this scene, the knight approaches the city from the right, sitting on his black horse and accompanied his mounted and armoured men (two of them, on the white and the chestnut horses, reappear in CM 55.161), and a few servants. He wears armour and holds a mace (war hammer?) in his right hand and the same white cloth twisted around his head as in CM 55.161. The Sienese ride forth from a city gate to meet him. Their leader, probably the *capitano del popolo*, raises his hand with a gesture of greeting, while two others hold forward the flags of the city combined of the *balzana* and the lion of the *popolo*.

The site can be identified on the basis of the characteristic fifteenth-century aspect of the outer north gate of Siena leading to Florence, the *antiporto* of Camollia (also called Porta della Vergine), whose now-destroyed decoration depicting the Assumption of the Virgin (cf. Cat. 2) and a statue of the Sienese *lupa* are decipherable under the protecting portico on the front of the gate.<sup>436</sup> The Gothic church in the back is Sant'Antonio da Padova, used after 1685 by the Compagnia di San Bernardino al Prato from which it got its new title, San Bernardino.<sup>437</sup>

The scene in front of San Cristoforo in CM 55.161 could take place after the arrival of the knight: he has proceeded from Porta Camollia to the Piazza S. Cristoforo,<sup>438</sup> where he dismounted his black horse (the only one in the scene without a rider and held by an

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bearded appearance (see Tátrai 2006<sup>1</sup>). Besides, Sigismund entered Siena under a canopy and was presented with the keys of the city (Nesti 1941, 165, referring to Malavolti 1599; Nevola 2007, 36-37, citing archival sources).

<sup>435</sup> Dimensions of the panel with unpainted gesso layer around the image: 26 x 37 cm; painted surface: 25.2-25.3 by 36.8 cm. The panel has a horizontal grain and is warped on the horizontal axis. It has been thinned to 0.85 cm and is presently applied to a plywood support (entire thickness 1.6 cm). There are remains of unpainted gesso along the edges. The panel is cut down and inserted in a modern frame. I thank Barbara Buckley (Barnes Foundation, Merion, PA) for kindly furnishing me with this information. The work was earlier with the Enrich Galleries, New York (1925). On the panel, see Freuler 1991, 98-100; Barzanti, Cornice, and Pellegrini 2006, 372, repr.; Nevola 2007, 36, 37 fig. 55 (colour repr.). Photographs are conserved at the Fototeca Zeri, inv. 43465 and at the Fototeca Berenson, Tatti, filed with Domenico Morone.

<sup>436</sup> The fresco on the gate is not executed in clear details, but shows a "circle of figures surrounding a central figure which would appear to be the Virgin." (Barbara Buckley, written communication, September 13, 2002).

<sup>437</sup> The site is well-comparable to the one seen in Giovanni di Lorenzo's *The Virgin of the Immaculate Conception Protects the Sienese during the Battle of Camollia* (1528, Church of San Martino, Siena) where also a small square Renaissance edifice, built after the depiction of our scene, appears between the two buildings (repr. Pellegrini 1992, 6, fig. 3; Barzanti, Cornice, and Pellegrini 2006, 36-37). For the ground plan of the site, see in Francesco Laparelli's drawing from 1562, where the name of the Gothic church is inscribed above the corresponding building: "S Ant<sup>o</sup>". (Pepper and Adams 1986, fig. 52). For Sant'Antonio, see Liberati 1939-1961, esp. 1955-56, 227. A Biccherna-scene from 1498 showing the arrival of envoys depicts the setting precisely from the same angle as CM. 55.161 (repr. Morandi 1964, 122-123; Nevola 2007, 34 fig. 50). For the description of the area, cf. Carli 1976, republ. 1996, 343).

<sup>438</sup> For this processional route, see Nevola 2007, 37.

attendant) and takes over the *balzana*.<sup>439</sup> As Tátrai (1993) suggested, it is reasonable to suppose that he is a *condottiere* the service of Siena, who receives a commission to defend the city.<sup>440</sup>

The scene showing a *Duel outside a city gate* (formerly private coll., Geneva, Fig. 8/7)<sup>441</sup> would logically follow this event. The knight, recognizable by his horse, is fighting on the Sieneese side, as is indicated by the high-flying *balzana* held by his escort. The recorded moment is that of the victory: the knight thrusts his lance into the helmet of the adversary, who falls back on his horse, while his own, fallen lance is picked up by an attendant. Curiously, the enemy is not marked by a specific heraldic motif: both the flag and the caparison of the horse are distinguished with the scorpion only, the general symbol of evil. The town in the right background is of Sieneese interest but not necessarily Siena: the Sieneese coat of arms are not shown on the city walls (as often are with 15<sup>th</sup>-century representations of Siena, cf. fig. 9/1) and the landscape is not typical of the immediate surroundings of the city.

For the time being, the two remaining scenes cannot be inserted into the chronological succession of the events. They are similar in many respects:<sup>442</sup> both show the protagonist and his retinue before an uncrowned, enthroned ruler who wears the same white head kerchief, holds an orb and a sceptre, and is accompanied by high-ranking officials or courtiers. The different urban setting indicates that the two sites are not identical.

In *A knight kneeling in front of a ruler* (Private Coll., Fig. 8/8),<sup>443</sup> the setting is a medieval city square. The ruler converses with the genuflecting knight, who appears to be our protagonist but does not wear the white cloth, which however appears on the head of one of his armoured companions. A Renaissance loggia with onlookers and a medieval palace frame the scene. The scene is very damaged and it is difficult to say whether the ruler is the same as

<sup>439</sup> To me it seems to be clearly the Sieneese official who hands the flag over to the knight and not vice versa: he firmly places his hand on the lower part of the pole. Boskovits (1968), however, interpreted the action in the contrary direction, that the knight gives the flag to the official.

<sup>440</sup> Alternatively, the “arrival” may be a scene later in the series, perhaps when the *condottiere* returns from his successful mission.

<sup>441</sup> 26,6 x 39 cm; cf. art sale, Palais Galliera, Paris, 5. December, 1973, collection of Louis Salavin, lot 38 (as Giovanni di Paolo); *Connaissance des Arts, numéro spécial sur les ventes publiques à Paris janvier 1973 - juillet 1974*, 1973, p. 147 (as Giovanni di Paolo); colour repr.: Freuler 1991, 101.

<sup>442</sup> This and the complicated provenance history of the two panels have caused confusion in the past. Freuler’s (1991) references to the two works are mixed up. For provenance information and reproductions of the scenes, see below.

<sup>443</sup> Dimensions: claimed to be 27.5 x 33.5 cm, but this is not borne out by the proportions of the photograph, according to which the width of the image must be similar to the others in the series. Recorded provenance: private coll., Florence; Anonymous Sale, Lynn Walters, Clackamas, Oregon, March 24, 1975, lot 550; Art Market, Portland, Oregon; William Garred, Iowa, who donated it to the The J. Paul Getty Museum in 1976 (inv. no. 76.PB.45); Christie’s sale, New York, May 21, 1992, lot 17 (colour repr.); sold to an Italian private collector. Bibl.: Freuler 1991, 98-100; Palladino 2002, 53-54, 226 fig. 23. A photograph is at the Fototeca Zeri, inv. 43464, with the annotation “cent. 44 x 33, già Roma, Paolini”.

the one who appears in the *A knight standing in front of a bearded ruler* (Private Coll., Scotland, Fig. 8/9).<sup>444</sup> Here the sovereign sits on what looks like a throne temporarily set up in an open street, covered with a rich textile and with a throne carpet hung behind it. The knight stands before the king but is not engaged in direct conversation or even in eye contact with him; he seems to turn to the accompanying group instead, three of whom wear armour. A child in the back and some city dwellers in the windows of a rusticated Renaissance palace observe the scene. A hanging garden is in the background.

The identification of the depicted story remains unresolved,<sup>445</sup> and we cannot be sure that the series is complete. The total width of the five known scenes with the *pastiglia* decoration around them would have been well over two meters if arranged all in one row, which seems definitely too long for a *cassone*. Certainly, two of the five scenes could have decorated the ends of a *cassone*,<sup>446</sup> or the series may have belonged to an altogether different type of furnishing, but it is also possible that the scenes were divided to decorate a pair of *cassoni*, as often happens, in which case one or more scenes should be considered lost. For these questions – namely, which pieces were painted on the same plank and in what order – an examination of the wood support of the fragments could furnish new information.

Despite many attribution attempts, the painter of the series remains anonymous and no further works can be attributed to his hand. His style is highly individual: his figures are rather short, move a bit stiffly, and have angular heads and short necks. The facial features are very marked and accentuated with strong highlights; the hair forms wiry curls. Though the architecture is constructed with the help of incised guidelines, it is still profoundly Gothic in its concept and reveals the lack of understanding of the principles of linear perspective. Yet the artist has a distinct narrative talent and is successful in evoking an animated and familiar atmosphere through the depiction of many every-day details, such as the cloth laid

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<sup>444</sup> Reportedly ca. 28 x 38.5 cm and cradled. According to Gay Naughton, Agnew's (written communication) the panel measures 25.5 x 36.5 cm (which corresponds to the painted surface of the Esztergom panel). Recorded provenance: Léopold Goldschmidt Coll., Paris; Comte André Pastré Coll., Paris; Comtesse Charles de Vogüé Coll., Paris; Art Sale: Palais Galliera, Paris, March 14, 1972; Messrs./Thos. Agnew and Sons, London; sold 1974 to private coll., Scotland. Bibl.: Sale Palais Galliera, Paris, March 14, 1972, lot 180, repr.; Agnew and Whitfeld 1973; Nicolson 1973, 621, fig. 78; Freuler 1991, 98-100. A colour reproduction of this scene was not available to me. An old photograph at the Fototeca Zeri shows this panel in an overpainted condition, owing to which the knight appears to have a goatee.

<sup>445</sup> Petra Pertici (oral communication) and Freuler (1991) suggest that the depicted story takes place during the war of Lucca (1429-33) and the stay of Sigismund in Siena (1432-33). If this could be proved, the bearded ruler might be Sigismund himself. In my view, the omnipresence of the white head kerchief (which, however, in the duel scene appears on the enemy's side) might have relevance for the story, and it should be examined whether it could refer to the order of the kerchief founded by Sigismund's brother, the Bohemian King Wenceslas, who conferred it upon Giangaleazzo Visconti, among others, and possibly also on Sigismund (cf. Kovács 1987, esp. 136-140).

<sup>446</sup> This possibility was already suggested by Strehlke 1991<sup>2</sup>, 467. At the same time, it should be noted that scenes decorating the ends of *cassoni* usually have different proportions than the scenes decorating the front.

out to dry on a rod in front of the windows. His figure-grouping is a bit awkward but conveys effectively the dynamics of the events, and some of his figures, like the cross-armed companion to the knight in CM 55.161 or some of the conversing attendant figures in several scenes bear witness to the artist's delightful anecdotic vein.

Traditionally, and until now most convincingly, scholarship has placed the anonymous artist in the circle of Vecchietta. Occasionally, Vecchietta's authorship was suggested.<sup>447</sup> Roberto Longhi's attribution of one scene to Giovanni di Paolo (before 1973)<sup>448</sup> does not hold up but contains some elements of truth, as an influence of Giovanni di Paolo is indeed perceptible in the series, as pointed out by Boskovits (2001). Building on a suggestion by John Pope-Hennessy, another group of scholars, lead by Everett Fahy, attributed the scenes to the brother of Vecchietta, the painter Nanni di Pietro, who until recently was erroneously believed to be identical with the painter Giovanni di Pietro from Corsignano, Matteo di Giovanni's business partner. Other works attributed to Giovanni / Nanni di Pietro included parts of the San Pietro Ovile altarpiece (Museo Diocesano, Siena), its supposed predella (divided between the Louvre and the Johnson Coll. in Philadelphia), and some other pieces.<sup>449</sup> The unreliability of this attribution was pointed out by Tátrai (1993) and Boskovits (2001) even before Paardekooper's findings definitively stripped Giovanni di Pietro of any Vecchiettesque associations.<sup>450</sup>

The provenance history of the work is rather tortuous and needs further research. Ramboux bought it in Florence, and the early attributions, including Ramboux's own, associate the work with the Florentine school. An inscription on the reverse says that "it follows the manner of Masaccio"; Ramboux considered a work by Masolino or "in his style" (although he confusingly added that it was "also perhaps from the school of Siena"). The various seals on the reverse imply that the fragment had had a few other private owners before Ramboux. The historically incongruous inscriptions on the reverse, which name the subject as Dante being elected *capitano* of Siena and Dante taking over the *curia di gonfaloniere* could only have been written by a Florentine owner. In fact, yet another inscription on the reverse states that the picture is the "*quadretto del Rusca di Firenze*".

<sup>447</sup> Boskovits 1968, no. 11 (with a question mark, and later retracted: Boskovits 1978, 2001); Coulonges 1970, 80; Palladino 2002, 53-54; Nevola 2007, 39 (as Vecchietta or his workshop).

<sup>448</sup> Reported in Art sale, Louis Salavin Coll., Palais Galliera, Paris, 5 December, 1973, lot 38.

<sup>449</sup> Cf. Carl Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 264-69 (It. ed. 278-83).

<sup>450</sup> Paardekooper 2002 (with extensive earlier bibl.); Ludwin Paardekooper, "Giovanni di Pietro di Leonardo da Corsignano – Nanni di Pietro di Giovanni", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 55 (2007), 70-72 (with extensive earlier bibl.). On Giovanni / Nanni di Pietro, see also Palladino 2002 and De Marchi 2002<sup>1</sup>.

There was an important Rusca collection in Florence in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but since Ramboux has exported CM 55.161 from Florence before 1842, it is not certain, only possible, that we are dealing with the same collection, which may have belonged to the Rusca family for some time. Research aimed at the identification of either of two seals on the reverse (Figs. 8/4 a, b) with the arms of this family yielded no results so far.<sup>451</sup> One of the seals showing two, crossed sunflowers in a shield with a helmet above must have marked a fairly large collection, since works that carry this seal are dispersed in many collections: in Esztergom, in the Pinacoteca Vaticana, in the Lindenau-Museum in Altenburg, and in the Staatliches Museum, Schwerin.<sup>452</sup>

CM 55.161 was one of the very few works with a profane subject matter that Ipolyi bought from the Ramboux collection. His reason for doing so was Ramboux's attribution to Masolino, which raised Ipolyi's interest because of its historical Hungarian associations.

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 21, no. 111 (style of Masolino da Panicale, but also perhaps from the Sienese school); [Ramboux] 1867, 23, no. 111 (Masolino or perhaps Florentine, acquired in Florence); [Fraknói] 1871, 370 (Masolino Panicale, Dante as gonfaloniere); Némethy ed. 1896, no. 48. (scene from Dante's Divine Comedy); Benesch 1929, 70 (circle of Benozzo Gozzoli); Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 246 (possibly Vecchietta, "small restored predella panel with a scene from antique history[?]"); Gerevich ed. 1948, 98 (Sienese painter, mid-15<sup>th</sup> c.; the flag of Siena is handed over to Dante?); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 52 (Sienese painter, mid-15<sup>th</sup> c., most probably by a follower of Sassetta); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1967, 46, no. 13, colour repr. (Tuscan painter, mid-15<sup>th</sup> c.); Boskovits 1968, nos. 11-12 (Vecchietta[?], not later than the first half of 1430s, possibly part of a cassone showing scenes from the life of a person with important political function); Coulonges 1970, 80, with colour pl. detail (Lorenzo di Pietro); Auction catalogue, Palais Galliera, December 5, 1973, lot 38 (attributed to Giovanni di Paolo); Clovis Whitfeld, in Agnew and Whitfeld 1973 (Sienese school, protagonist may be Charles of Anjou, the Esztergom scene may show the "lifting of the excommunication imposed on the town"); Nicolson 1973, 621 (exhibition review); Art sale, Louis Salavin Coll., Palais Galliera, Paris, 5 December, 1973, lot 38 (companion piece to the *Duel*, attributed Giovanni di Paolo by Roberto Longhi and considered to be a predella fragment) *Connaissance des Arts, numéro spécial sur les ventes publiques à Paris janvier*

<sup>451</sup> The Rusca collection was sold between 10 and 21 April, 1883, see *Catalogue de la collection Rusca de Florence: objets d'art et de curiosité*, Florence, 1883. The collection sold there was formed over many years by Antonio Rusca, and contained mainly works of the decorative arts, but also some important paintings, like Francesco di Vannuccio's double sided reliquary now in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin. Archival material preceding the 1883 sale is preserved in the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome (Archivio della Direzione Generale delle Antichità e Belle Arti (1860-1890), Musei, Gallerie, e Pinacoteche, Busta no. 201, folder 46-79). Unfortunately, no private seal of the Rusca survives among the correspondence preserved there.

<sup>452</sup> The same seal is found on the reverse of two fourteenth-century works, a Venetian diptych (inv. 55.144) and on a Florentine *Adoration of the Magi* (inv. 55.138) in the CM: Ramboux must have been purchased these together from the previous owner. The seal appears on at least two paintings in the Pinacoteca Vaticana (inv. 101 and 186, cf. Volbach 1987, cat. 16, fig. 25 and cat. 37 and fig. 65); on at least six works in the Lindenau-Museum in Altenburg (inv. 36, 46, 49, 93, 94, 14; cf. Parenti 2005, esp. fig. 2 on p. 200 for the seal); on the back of an Umbro-Florentine *Pietà* dated 1500 in Schwerin, inv. G 943 (Berswordt-Wallrabe [1999], 48, repr.).

1973 – *juillet 1974*, 1973, 147 (attributed to Giovanni di Paolo, predella scene); Mucsi 1975, 41, no. 192, fig. 29 (Vecchietta, 1430s, fragment of the decoration of a cassone); Boskovits 1978 (created in Vecchietta's workshop or under his influence, dating uncertain, possibly in the sixth decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> c., perhaps cassone or inlaid panel in a room on the life of a politically pre-eminent person); Everett Fahy, written communication, 1984 (Giovanni di Pietro); Carl B. Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 264 (It. ed. 278) (Giovanni di Pietro, part of a predella painted for the Compagnia of Sant'Ansanus in 1463); Freuler 1991, 98-100, cat. 32. (Giovanni di Pietro, ca. 1450, probably furniture fragment, protagonist may be Antonio di Cecco Rosso); Strehlke 1991<sup>2</sup>, 466-47 (Giovanni di Pietro, ca. 1463, predella for "knightly brotherhood of St. Ansanus"); Wolfgang Loseries, in Riedl and Seidel ed., 2.1.1 (1992), 354-55; 2.2 (1992), fig. 340 (attributed to Giovanni di Pietro, around 1440; the scene takes place in the Piazza S. Cristoforo in Siena); Christie's, New York, May 21, 1992, lot 17 (Giovanni di Pietro); Vilmos Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 102 (circle of Vecchietta, between 1450-60; probably depicts a contemporary scene); Bellosi 1995, 82 (the attribution to Giovanni di Pietro seems correct, but the painter of the series is not the same who painted the predella associated with the Ovile altarpiece; the series are predella scenes relating to the "balzana", the attribute of St. Ansanus); Boskovits 2001, 306 n. 14 (not by Vecchietta; the pieces reveal an artistic culture close to Vecchietta but also to Giovanni di Paolo); Palladino 2002 (Vecchietta, perhaps predella fragments); De Marchi 2002<sup>1</sup>, 64, 73 n. 55 (not by Giovanni di Pietro); Paardekooper 2002<sup>2</sup>, 79 (on the formation of the corpus "Giovanni/Nanni di Pietro"); Barzanti, Cornice, and Pellegrini 2006, 338-339, 372, fig. 236 (attr. to Nanni di Pietro, ca. 1450); Nevola 2007, 39, fig. 57 (Lorenzo di Pietro, called 'Vecchietta' or his workshop, ca. 1440); Sallay 2008, 7, 15 (Circle of Vecchietta, furniture fragment [?], uncropped repr.).

## **Giovanni di Paolo**

**(Giovanni Guasparre di Paolo di Grazia, known also as Giovanni dal Poggio)**

(Siena, 1398 – Siena, 1482)

The circumstances of Giovanni di Paolo's training are not known. An otherwise unknown painter Nanni di Giovanni di ser Cecco, who in 1428 named Giovanni di Paolo's mother as his universal heir, may have had a role in his formation. Giovanni's early style, deeply rooted in the Sieneese Gothic tradition, betrays influences especially from Paolo di Giovanni Fei, Taddeo di Bartolo, and especially Benedetto di Bindo. Throughout his life, he worked many foreign influences into his paintings, always filtering them through a personal vision that resulted in a highly imaginative and autonomous artistic language.

For most of his life, the exceptionally productive and long-lived artist resided and had a workshop in the area of Poggio Malavolti, in the *compagnia* of S. Giglio (Egidio). His earliest products acquire a spiritually charged intensity through the incisive, nervous drawing, the heightened *chiaroscuro*, and the fragile, elongated figural types. His first documented activity is connected to the friary of San Domenico in Siena, through which he received commissions for two panel paintings and perhaps an illuminated Offices of the Virgin from the members of the Castiglioni family (1417-20). In 1426 and 1427 he executed two altarpieces for the Dominican convent, of which several panels survive. In these and other works from this period, the delicate beauty of the figures, the refined technical execution, the richly decorated surfaces and naturalistic flowers betray a fresh response to Gentile da Fabriano, who worked in Siena in 1425 and whose art remained a lifelong point of reference for Giovanni.

In the first half of his career, he was often employed by the Sieneese government to paint book covers for their financial offices. Besides lost pieces from 1423 and 1430, book covers by his hand survive from 1436, 1437, 1440 and 1445. From the 1440s, he regularly worked for the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, creating altarpieces, banners, embroidery designs for liturgical vestments, and other minor works, now mostly lost. His impressive *Presentation of Christ in the Temple* was erected in the hospital church in 1449 over the altar of the guild of the Pizzicaiuoli (PNS, inv. 211). In the 1450s, the painter and his workshop painted another, simplified version of this composition (PNS, I.B.S. n. 9.). The repetition of figural types and compositions is common in his oeuvre, a fact that has induced scholars to hypothesize the extensive use of the cartoons and sketch books in his workshop. Giovanni was repeatedly employed for adding or repairing polychromy of statues, which brought him in contact, among others, with the work of Domenico di Niccolò. His painterly compositions – especially his derivations from Ghiberti's and Donatello's reliefs on the Sieneese Baptismal fountain –

testify to his continuous attention to the most accomplished sculptural achievements in his environment. The models are, however, freely transformed by the artist to concord with his eccentric treatment of space and expressive narrative style.

Compared to his contemporaries, he seems to have executed few Madonnas for private devotion. In two versions of the Madonna of Humility (PNS, inv. 206; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), the backgrounds are filled with Giovanni's typical fantastic, chessboard-like landscapes which lead diagonally into the distance and are interspersed with outlandish rock formations.

In a panel from the church of the Osservanza, signed and dated 1440 (PNS, inv. 200), Giovanni di Paolo's art acquired a new monumentality under the influence of Sassetta. The contorted gestures of the mourning Virgin and St. John fill the figures with a new, if somewhat theatrical pathos, and the poses take on a stiffness that will become increasingly characteristic of his art. Chronologically close is a fragmentary, monochrome fresco in San Leonardo al Lago near Siena, which is pervaded by the same dramatic tension. In 1441, the painter is recorded as one of the two rectors or *sindici* of the Sienese painter guild. In 1445, he completed, still under strong Sassettesque influence, yet another altarpiece ("Guelfi altar", Florence, Uffizi) for San Domenico in Siena, which was ordered, it seems, by the Dominican friars themselves. Also from the 1440s date two codices that contain the artist's masterpieces of illumination: an antiphonary from the Augustinian monastery of Lecceto, identified with a documented "Communella dei Santi" from 1442 (BCS, ms. G.I.8) and his illustrations to Dante's *Paradise* in a codex made for Alfonso V of Aragon (London, British Library, Yates-Thomson ms. 36) dating from ca. 1439-mid 1440s.

In the 1450s, Giovanni di Paolo executed two altarpieces for Franciscan commission: the St. Clare and the St. Nicholas polyptych, the latter signed and dated in 1453 (PNS, invv. 191, 173, respectively). In the same decade, he was much employed also by the Augustinian order. A polyptych dated 1454 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), was possibly intended for Sant'Agostino in Cortona and may have been completed by a fragmented predella with scenes from the life of St. John the Baptist in the National Gallery in London. For another Augustinian community, Giovanni painted in 1457 a life-size standing figure of St. Nicholas of Tolentino (Montepulciano, S. Agostino), originally flanked by scenes of the saint's miracles.

From the later 1450s, the master's style on a monumental scale became increasingly drier, more static, and less decorative, with a summary and sometimes distorted rendering of the figures. At the same time, his imaginative narrative style found its full expression in the

depiction of small-scale hagiographic cycles. Around 1455-60, he painted a series of twelve scenes on the life of St. John the Baptist, of which eleven survive. The panels formed part of a *custodia* or cupboard probably made to contain a statue or a relic of the Precursor. Another occasion where he could fully put forth his narrative vein was a predella showing ten scenes on the life of St. Catherine of Siena and a *Crucifixion*, created in or shortly after 1461 on occasion of the saint's canonization. In these scenes, rendered with great spontaneity and invention, the artist concentrated on the intensity and immediacy of the narrative, which emphasize Catherine's visionary and miraculous experiences.

Though advanced in age, Giovanni di Paolo was still considered to be one of the most illustrious Sieneese painters when Pope Pius II commissioned altarpieces for his newly constructed cathedral in Pienza. In his work dated 1463 (Cathedral, Pienza), however, he conformed with some difficulty to the unified pictorial field prescribed for the altarpiece program: the figures hardly relate to one another and are placed in an ambiguous space.

The surprisingly large number of altarpieces that survives from the artist's last creative period attest to the undiminished demand for his gold-ground Gothic polyptychs. The declining period of Giovanni di Paolo's art is characterized by the repetition of an ingrained figural repertoire, the appearance of awkward, malformed figures with wooden features and bony, disjointed limbs, a rough, dry, and chalky brushwork, and a more pallid palette. At this time, he relied more extensively on the help of assistants. His last masterpiece is the San Galgano polyptych executed for the Cistercian order, with which the painter had close contact in his last years (PNS, invv. 198, 199, 201). In 1477, the painter made a last will, *corpore languens*, wishing to be buried in the church of S. Egidio, in his own chapel dedicated to St. John the Baptist. The will instituted the Cistercian Abbey of San Galgano as his general heir. In 1478 he declared to be old and unable to work because of poor vision; in 1480, he married his housekeeper Domenica. In a new last will from 1482, he repeated his wish to be buried in S. Egidio but made no mention of his chapel or of the Cistercians. He left his credits to a certain Francesco di Giovanni and instituted his wife as his universal heir. In March 1482, the credits from the Monti of the Sieneese Comune are already paid to Francesco, implying the painter was dead by this time.

**Select bibliography:** Romagnoli, *ante* 1835 (1976), IV, 309-332; Berenson 1909, 176-181; Gengaro 1932; Berenson 1932, 244-49; Berenson 1936, 210-14; Pope-Hennessy 1937; Brandi 1941, Bacci 1944; Brandi 1947; Berenson 1968, I, 175-82; Pope-Hennessy 1988; Carl B. Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 168-242 (It. ed. 182-256); Pope-Hennessy 1993; Panders 1997; Carolyn Campbell Wilson, "Giovanni di Paolo", in *Dizionario Biografico* ..., vol. 56 (2001), 138-146 (with bibl.); Bollati ed. 2006; Dóra Sallay, "Giovanni di Paolo", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon* ..., vol. 55, 2007, 55-62 (with bibl.).

## 9.

### Giovanni di Paolo

*St. Ansanus Baptizes the People of Siena*

#### Fig. 9/1

between ca. 1442-54

tempera and gold on wood

panel: 31.3 x 32.4 cm (with added modern wooden strips on all four sides); dimensions of original painted surface: ca. 28.5-29 x 30 cm; thickness: ca. 0.2 cm

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.181.

#### Provenance:

Acquired in Italy by Johann Anton Ramboux before 26 June, 1838;<sup>453</sup> Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 123 (as Giovanni di Paolo/school of Giovanni di Paolo); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 123 (as school of Giovanni di Paolo); Arnold Ipolyi in Pest, Barsszentkereszt/Besztercebánya and Várad until 1886; deposited at the Episcopate of Várad until 1919 (perhaps no. 24, “St. John the Baptist”<sup>454</sup>); deposited at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, 1919-1920; acquired through Ipolyi’s bequest in 1920.

#### Exhibited:

Royal Academy of Arts, London (1 January – 8 March, 1930): *Exhibition of Italian Art 1200-1900*, cat. 74; Műcsarnok, Budapest (18 October – 16 November, 1930): *Őszi kiállítás* (Fall Exhibition), cat. 10.

#### Technical notes:

The vertically grained support consists of a single piece of wood that has been thinned to 0.2 cm and mounted on a new support with a horizontal grain (Fig. 9/2). There are several deep vertical cracks and a few minor horizontal cracks in the original support; one on the left has opened up, creating a gap in the surface.

St. Ansanus’ halo and dish are gilt. The outlines of the architecture and of the saint’s halo have been incised into the ground. For the latter, the artist used compasses whose point left a damage in the saint’s head (Fig. 9/5). The paint surface is soiled; there are minor indents, damages, paint losses and retouchings. The upper bodies of the neophytes are somewhat abraded and there is some minor paint loss around the saint’s halo.

Approximately 0.1-0.3 cm wide modern strips of wood have been added to all four sides and the composition extended over them. The overpaintings often overlap the edges of the original composition. The original painted surface seems not to have been cropped. Parts of a *barbe* can be detected along the top and the bottom edges at the joints of the added wooden strips, thus the original height of the composition can be established in about 28.5 cm. A *barbe* is not detectable along the vertical edges (but is possibly covered by overpainting). On the right, at ca. 4 mm from the edge, gold leaf shows through two small spots where the paint surface has flaked off (in the wine-coloured garment of the figure that leans forward and in the background area immediately below it). This gold must be the extending part of the gold

<sup>453</sup> The work can be identified in Ramboux’s exportation request list handed in to the Director of the Real Galleria on 26 June, 1838 (published by Merzenich 1995, 310, no. 60): “*S. Ansano che batezza / id. [tavola] / - [braccio]. 12 [soldi]. - [denaro] / - [braccio]. 10 [soldi]. - [denaro]*”, that is, ca. 35 x 29.2 cm.

<sup>454</sup> Cf. Némethy ed. 1896.

leaf of an applied moulding that bordered the composition near this point. The left edge is more damaged and more heavily overpainted, but some gilding is perceivable also here, along the uppermost part. Consequently, the original width of the composition seems to have been identical or only slightly wider than the original parts visible today. Patches of gilding can be observed under the paint layer along the upper original edge on the extreme left and along the bottom edge under the foremost kneeling neophyte.

### Documentation:

On reverse of modern support: “*Giovanni di Paolo. ~~Freeento~~ [corrected below: 4<sup>o</sup>] Siena*” (in pencil); “254” (in red chalk); “*EXHIBITION OF ITALIAN ART. ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS. Jan. 1st – March 8th, 1930. Title of work: Baptism. Name and Address of Owner: Gallery of the Cardinal Prince Primate of Hungary in Esztergom. Size: 13 x 12 ½, [C]ASE 20*” (label of the London exhibition in 1930), “74” (in white chalk, corresponding to the cat. no. of the work in the 1930 London exhibition); “10. 1930. őszi kiállítás” (black print on a white label and referring to the Fall Exhibition of 1930); “42” (large black print on white label, related to the Fall Exhibition of 1930); “24” (in black pencil, corresponding to the number of the work in the Ipolyi coll.); “83. *Giovanni di Paolo. XV. sz. Sz. György megkereszteli a líbiai királyt és népét*” (in red ink on white label tacked to the support), “*KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM +*” (round stamp on white round label, twice); “55.181” (in black ink).

On reverse of modern frame: “55.181” (twice, in black ink).

According to tradition, it was a young Roman soldier, Ansanus, who converted and baptized the people of Siena. Ansanus later suffered martyrdom by decapitation near Siena (d. 303). He became one of the four male patron saints of the city together with Sts. Savinus, Crescentius, and Victor, with whom he is frequently represented in Siennese art.<sup>455</sup>

Narrative cycles, or even narrative scenes, about his life are, at the same time, very rare.<sup>456</sup> In the small painting in Esztergom, the light-footed, youthful Ansanus is clad in a voluminous cloak and pours water from a large bucket on the head of three neophytes kneeling in front of him. His feet hardly touch the earth and seem to step forward with a crossed, dancing step, which echo the position of his left arm crossing in front of his body to gather his cloak. On the right, a densely packed group of Siennese people cast off their clothes with serious expressions and wide gestures (Fig. 9/9). In the background a city gate and a crenellated wall appears with a few buildings behind it.<sup>457</sup> The vivid colour scheme is based

<sup>455</sup> On St. Ansanus and his cult in Siena, see Gori 1576; Beccarini 1878; Kaftal 1952, coll. 59-62 (with previous bibl.); Matteucci and Kienerk 1961; Scorza Barcellona 1990, 10-30; Fabio Bisogni, “L’iconografia di Ansanus”, Pt. II of Argenziano and Bisogni 1990, 95-115 (with a critical review of previous sources); Mazzini 1995. On the four male patron saints of Siena, see Consolino ed. 1991; Argenziano 2003, Scorza Barcellona 2007, esp. 201-204.

<sup>456</sup> Shortly earlier than the present scene, probably around 1437, Domenico di Bartolo was commissioned to paint frescos in the sacristy of the Siennese cathedral. Of these, only fragments of perhaps the life of St. Crescentius remain, cf. Strehlke 2004, 116.

<sup>457</sup> After its acquisition by the Christian Museum in 1920, the work was first mentioned by Raimond Van Marle in 1927 (1923-38, IX, 430), and first reproduced by Tibor Gerevich in 1928 (224-225, fig. on p. 223). It received wider international attention on occasion of its exhibition in London in 1930.

on the interplay of lemon yellow, bright orange, red, claret, pink and blue against a dull green background. The sudden leap of scale between the saint and the other figures, the treatment of light that disregards cast shadows, the rhythmic grouping of figures, and the distorted perspective are important elements of Giovanni di Paolo's essentially Gothic and characteristically fable-like visual world.

Its first known owner, Ramboux, correctly recorded the work as a scene representing St. Ansanus; early scholarship nonetheless often referred to it as St. John the Baptist or St. George baptizing. It was rightly identified by Fraknoi (1871) and again by Kenneth Clark (1931), who – like Ramboux before him – noted the appearance of the *balzana*, the Sieneese black-and-white coat of arms on the city gates in the background.<sup>458</sup>

Originally, the small panel formed part of a series, another scene of which, the *Beheading of St. Ansanus*, is preserved in the Carrand Collection in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence (inv. 2019c, Fig. 9/3).<sup>459</sup> Because of the perfect consonance of style, dimensions, scale, colour scheme, halo decoration, and subject matter, the common provenance of the Esztergom and Bargello fragment is beyond doubt. Their relation was first noted by Pope-Hennessy (1937). It has been generally supposed that the two pieces formed part of a predella.<sup>460</sup> Many scholars associated with the series a third piece showing the attempted martyrdom of a young saint in a cauldron of oil (Priv. Coll.<sup>461</sup>). In the voluminous debate that ensued from this proposal, many counter-arguments were presented against the inclusion of the third scene, focusing on the incompatibility of the dimensions, dates, and halo decoration between the first two scenes and the third one, as well as on the identity of the saint tortured in the boiling oil. By now it seems certain that the third scene did not form part

<sup>458</sup> In Balniel and Clark ed. 1931, vol. 1, 35, no. 102 (without repr.). Clark connected the subject with a *Vita et Officium S. Ansani* published in 1764.

<sup>459</sup> For this piece, see Perkins 1931; Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 422 (as “Execution of a holy martyr”); Gengaro 1932, 19; Perkins 1933, 52, pl. 54; and the authors dealing with the relation of the two works cited in n. 171. The identity of St. Ansanus in this scene is confirmed by the *balzana* held by the soldiers and by the rare representation of the three holes in the ground. These relate to an episode in St. Ansanus' legend according to which the saint's head bounced back from the ground twice after it had been severed, leaving depressions from which water, oil and wine sprang forth (Mazzini ed. 1995, 81).

<sup>460</sup> Pope-Hennessy 1937, 76-77; Brandi 1947, 74 n. 36; Kaftal 1952; Coor 1959, 86; Matteucci and Kienerk 1961, Berenson 1968, I, 177; Mucsi 1975, 41, no. 198; Giulietta Chelazzi Dini, in Chelazzi Dini ed. 1982, 362; Wormhoudt 1984, 123, 225; Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 232, no. 93.

<sup>461</sup> This piece passed through many private hands (Paris, Desmottes Coll.; Paris, Martin LeRoy Coll.; Christie's, London, 29 June, 1979, lot 58; Florence, Lino Pasquali Coll.; Florenz, Art Dealer Grassi). Cf. Pope-Hennessy 1937, 78, 108-09 n. 56, Giulietta Chelazzi Dini, in Chelazzi Dini ed. 1982, 363-64 with repr.; Carl B. Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 213, fig. 36b (It. ed. 227, fig. 36b). Christiansen (1990, 210) provides a good technical description of this fragment.

of the Esztergom-Bargello series but belonged to another group of fragments documented together in 1863 in Montepulciano (the so-called *Compagnia degli Artisti predella*).<sup>462</sup>

In the course of these arguments, it was not proved or even questioned that the pieces in Esztergom and the Bargello are predella fragments. Recent physical examinations, however, revealed that both fragments are painted on vertically grained wood (Fig. 9/4) and their square format is original and uncropped. *Barbes* around the original paint surface in both works testify to the one-time presence of engaged frames around the scenes.<sup>463</sup> The square format strongly discourages<sup>464</sup> and the vertical wood grain excludes that the pieces could be predella fragments. Instead, it seems highly likely that they originally appeared one above the other, separated and surrounded by an engaged frame, because the panels seem to have a related system of vertical cracks (with a very slight bias from the upper right to the lower left, as viewed from the front), the most prominent of which are situated roughly at about each third in the pictorial fields. The two scenes thus appear to have been originally painted on the same plank. The fact that both compositions are oriented to the right also speaks for such an arrangement.

<sup>462</sup> Pope-Hennessy (1947, 139) proposed first that the three panels at issue are fragments of a predella with scenes from the life of St. Ansanus. Many scholars accepted this association (Boskovits 1968, no. 17; E. Weis. in Kirschbaum ed. 1968-1976, V, col. 94) but often only tentatively (Kaftal 1952, col. 60; Matteucci and Kienerk 1961, col. 1335; Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 57; Wormhoudt 1984, 163, n. 137; Panders 1988, 31). Contrary to, or sceptical of, the inclusion of the third scene in the series were Coor (1959, 86 n. 24); Chelazzi Dini (1982, 362, with previous bibl.); Pope-Hennessy (ignoring his own proposal of 1947, in Pope-Hennessy and Kanter 1987, 125-127), Christiansen (1990, 210, n. 13), Bisogni (1990, 113). Most authors who dissociated the third scene from the Esztergom and Bargello fragments believe that it comes from another series of fragments, the *Compagnia degli Artisti predella* (cf. Carl Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 210-213; It. ed. 194-203). The view that the scene of the young saint's torture in hot oil is identifiable with the fragment recorded by Francesco Brogi in 1863 (1897, 305) is underpinned by Brogi's footnote (1897, 305 n. 7, noted by Mallory and Moran, 1989, 353) which mentions damage done to the heads. Chelazzi Dini's (1985, 362) condition report testifies that the piece in question indeed suffered a particular type of damage when overzealous observers scratch the tortures's heads. (For a pre-1985 photograph of this piece, cf. Christie's, London, 26 June, 1979, 54-55, lot 58 and Herbert 1979, repr. p. 21.) Although it can hardly be doubted any more that the panel showing the young saint in the cauldron of oil is identical with the one described by Brogi in 1863, the problem of the identification of this saint is by no means resolved. The episode of torture in hot oil features in the hagiography of both St. Ansanus (Mazzini ed. 1995, pp. 14-15) and St. John the Evangelist (Jacobus de Voragine, ed. Ryan 1993, 51) and neither had a settled iconographical tradition in Sienese art before Giovanni di Paolo's representation in question.

<sup>463</sup> Because of the additions of modern wood, the support of the Esztergom fragment cannot be examined either from the back or from the sides, but the vertical cracks in the wood and the structure of the wood visible through the opened-up crack leave no doubt as to the orientation of its wood grain (cf. Technical notes). The Bargello piece is better conserved. Its support has been thinned to 1.5-1.7 cm and reinforced on the back with two small crosspieces. Although it, too, has 0.5-0.6 cm wide wooden strips added on all sides inpainted in black, remnants of a *barbe* can be observed along all four edges of the original painted surface. Without the added strips, the original painted surface measures 29.1 (left) / 29.3 (right) by 29.7 (top) / 30.3 (bottom) cm.

<sup>464</sup> Predellas with square fields are very rare in Sienese art, though not without example: Giovanni di Paolo himself painted around 1430 a predella whose scenes, with the exception of the central Crucifixion, are square (cf. Strehlke 2004, 169-174, with previous bibl.).

In the absence of surviving comparable structures in Quattrocento Siense painting, it is difficult to suggest an original context for the scenes. The minimal dimensions of the hypothesized panel on which they appeared are about 75 by 40 cm (taking into consideration the destroyed engaged frames), and it could of course have been larger. The panel could possibly have been the (left?) lateral of a small altarpiece (perhaps part of a *vita* panel)<sup>465</sup> or part of a shrine or *custodia* (cupboard)<sup>466</sup> enclosing a relic or a statue of Saint Ansanus.<sup>467</sup> It is probable that the cycle originally comprised further scenes.

As mentioned, the representation of St. Ansanus' life does not seem to have had a well-rooted iconographical tradition in Siena.<sup>468</sup> In addition to the Esztergom-Florence series, only one narrative cycle on his life is known from the fifteenth century, a series of reliefs originally from the Chapel of Sant'Ansano in the Siense cathedral and now located on the inner architrave of the main portal of the Duomo.<sup>469</sup> It shows four scenes: *Protasius Baptizes Ansanus in the Presence of Massima*; *Ansanus Baptizes the People of Siena*; *Ansanus Before the Judge*; *Decapitation of Ansanus before a Judge*. The second and the fourth of these scenes are the same as the surviving scenes from the Esztergom-Bargello series and it may well be

<sup>465</sup> *Vita* retables, portraying a saint surrounded by scenes from his or her life, were popular in the 13th and 14th centuries. A Siense example is Taddeo di Bartolo's altarpiece (Pinacoteca, San Gimignano), which shows St. Gimignano flanked by eight upright scenes of his life arranged in four vertical rows, two on each side. From the 15th century, no such intact Siense work survives. A dismembered series by the Osservanza Master on the life of St. Anthony Abbot (cf. Keith Christiansen, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 104-123 [It. ed. 118-137; Christiansen 1990, 207-208, with earlier bibl.]). Recently, Carl Strehlke (2004, 177-82) convincingly associated two upright scenes, and surmised another missing two, of miracles by St. Nicholas of Tolentino with the standing image of the saint in Montepulciano. On *vita* retables, cf. R. Sauer, in Sander ed. 2006, 131-176.

<sup>466</sup> For an example for a *custodia* by Giovanni di Paolo, cf. Carl Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 215-218 (It. ed. 229-32), with earlier bibl. A surviving *custodia* of relics is Vecchietta's Arliquiera made for the Ospedale di Sta. Maria della Scala (PNS, inv. 204).

<sup>467</sup> Several relics of Saint Ansanus were conserved in and near Siena: part of his body was in the Cathedral, his jaw with the confraternity of Sant'Ansano, an unidentified relic in Sant'Ansano in Castelvechio, and his left arm in the chapel of Sant'Ansano a Dofana built on the site of the saint's martyrdom to the east of Siena (Gigli 1854, vol. 1, 362; vol. 2, 574-77; Kaftal 1952, col. 60; Monika Butzek, in Riedl and Seidel ed. 1.1 (1985), 330, 331 n. 96, 336, 338; Argenziano 2003). For his head, conserved in Arezzo, cf. Scorza Barzellona 1990, esp. 25-30.

<sup>468</sup> Representations of the standing St. Ansanus in the act of baptising include: Master of St. Ansano, fresco in S. Ansano in Castelvechio, Siena, mid-15<sup>th</sup>; Giovanni di Stefano, statue, Capella di S. Giovanni, Cathedral, Siena, 1488; Sodoma, fresco, Sala del Mappamondo, Palazzo Pubblico, 1530; Riccio, Cataletto della Compagnia di S. Ansano, 1569. Cf. Mazzini ed. 1995, 76. Sano di Pietro depicted the *Martyrdom of St. Ansanus* in the Antiphonary no. 15 for the Siense Cathedral (now Cod. 27/11, f. 10v, repr. Ciardi Dupré 1972, 50, fig. 2) in a landscape, in front of a few spectators.

<sup>469</sup> Cf. Fabio Bisogni, "L'iconografia di Ansanus", pt. II of Argenziano and Bisogni 1990, 112-113, figs. 28-31 (unknown Siense sculptor, Piero del Minella or Giovanni Contadini, from ca. 1450-60); Giancarlo Gentilini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 186, fig. 1 (Giovanni di Meuccio Contadini?); Alessandro Angelini, "Il lungo percorso della decorazione all'antica tra Siena e Urbino", in Angelini ed. 2005, 307-85, esp. 330 and figs. 20-21 (as Giovanni di Meuccio Contadini). In other periods, too, cycles on St. Ansanus' life are rare. A 16<sup>th</sup>-century cycle of three scenes was once painted over the predella scenes of Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Carmelite altarpiece, which was later transferred to Dofana near Montaperti. This overpainting was subsequently removed but is documented in photographs (repr. Israël 2001, 536 fig. 5).

that the latter cycle originally comprised the other two shown in the reliefs, although would be admittedly usual to position the last – martyrdom – scene on the lower left.

Nothing is known about the original provenance of the fragments. For the sake of further research, it may be worth recording some occasions around the 1440-50s in Siena for the creation of a cycle on the saint's life. In 1438, the Compagnia di Sant'Aniano was transferred under the church of San Vigilio, which could have been followed by the decoration of the new ambience.<sup>470</sup> Francesco Bossi in his pastoral visitation of 1575 to the meeting place of the confraternity mentions a picture and a statue of Saint Ansanus (ASS, Visite Pastorali, ms. 21). Worthy of mention is also the construction of an oratory, Sant'Aniano in Castelvecchio, between 1443-48, next to the tower in which the saint was believed to have been incarcerated.<sup>471</sup> While the oratory was built, the chapel in the contiguous tower of Sant'Aniano also received new furnishings. The altars in these settings seem to have been fitted with pre-existing altarpieces,<sup>472</sup> but the decorative program could have included other types of structures. An old wooden statue of the saint is recorded in the church inventories of 1620 and 1741 but there is no mention of a *custodia*<sup>473</sup> and a provenance from the Oratory of Sant'Aniano in any case is made less likely by the fact that the baptizing figure of Saint Ansanus was already shown there in a fresco painted at the mid-fifteenth century. In the 1450s, the St. Ansanus chapel of the Cathedral was renovated, but the new decorations executed then seem to have been mainly in marble.<sup>474</sup>

As critics have rightly noted, the Esztergom and Bargello pieces are from the master's mature period. Dates between ca. 1440 and 1453 (the date of the St. Nicholas altarpiece in the Pinacoteca in Siena) were proposed by most scholars, a timeframe with which I agree.<sup>475</sup> Similar fragile figural types moving with the same dance-like, sprightly movement can be seen in *Paradise* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), which once belonged to the

<sup>470</sup> Giovacchino Faluschi, *Chiese senesi*, after 1821, BCS, ms. E.V.16, f. 36; Liberati 1939-1961, LXI (1954), 132-137, see in particular p. 133 for a document of November 30, 1608 that reports the decision to “rifare l'altare dell'oratorio di nuovo e sua tavola o pittura”. Faluschi (loc. cit., f. 28) also reports the one-time existence of a compagnia of S. Aniano behind the Sala del Mappamondo in the Palazzo Pubblico.

<sup>471</sup> Hans Teubner, in Riedl and Seidel ed., 1.1 (1985), 322-328.

<sup>472</sup> Monika Butzek, in Riedl and Seidel ed., 1.1 (1985), 333-334; *ead.*, in Cecchi ed. 2001, 59, n. 88.

<sup>473</sup> Monika Butzek, in Riedl and Seidel ed., 1.1 (1985), 335-338.

<sup>474</sup> Monika Butzek in Riedl and Seidel ed., 1.1, 334 and n. 121. See the list of payments from 1444-45 and 1448-9 *ibid.*, 1/1, 513-14.

<sup>475</sup> For individual proposals, see References below. Some chronologically more extreme proposals included Pope-Hennessy's (1937, 76-77) who compared the executioner in the Bargello panel to figures in the *Miracle of St. Nicholas of Tolentino* (Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna, 1457). Brandi (1947, 74 n. 36) disagreed with this proposal and noted in turn that the landscape shows similarity with the *Agony in Garden* in the Vatican picture gallery (now generally dated to the early 1430s).

predella of a Dominican (in earlier literature: Guelfi) altarpiece dated 1445.<sup>476</sup> In the two Ansanus scenes, the draperies are detailed, often tight and arranged in small parallel creases. In the Esztergom scene, Ansanus' cloak is richly folded and his hands are disproportionately small, features that characterize the Gabella cover also from 1445 (Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome). The small size and the miniature-like rendering of the Ansanus-scenes lend them especially well to comparison with illuminations. Many of their stylistic characteristics – a sketchy and summary execution of the faces and the hair, the emphasis on highlights on the wrinkles, characteristic details such as a black line applied with one quick brushstroke for the edge of the upper eyelid; the fragile figural types – appear in the large miniatures of the codex G.I.8 in Siena, which Grazia Vailati Schoenburg Waldenburg identified with a *Communella dei Santi* from Lecceto illuminated in 1442 (Figs. 9/12, 9/14).<sup>477</sup> In the *Martyrdom of two saints* (Fig. 9/7), the riverbank with the pebbles, the poses of the kneeling saints and of the executioner resemble the Bargello scene (Figs. 9/13, 9/14). In *The Triumph of Death* (Fig. 9/14), two tree types, a type of palm and a tree with thickly placed, round leaves (rare for Giovanni di Paolo, who usually painted cypresses and small triangular trees with dotted leaves) appear in the Bargello panel (and nowhere else in the artist's production), in the same combination. In both series, the same quick, summary rendering of the facial features is characteristic, with a few quick parallel vertical lines on the forehead to mark wrinkles. Although for CM 55.181 and its *pendant* a dating in the 1440s is most likely, these features are still present in the predella fragments showing scenes from the life of St. John the Baptist probably from 1454 (National Gallery, London, NG. 5451-4), in which the summary treatment of hair with individual highlighted strands is especially close to CM 55.181,<sup>478</sup> and the figures in CM 55.181 also show some similarity with the minute figures on the vestments of St. Nicholas in the altarpiece of 1453, it cannot be excluded that the date of the St. Ansanus scenes is as late as the early 1450s.

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<sup>476</sup> Bähr 2002.

<sup>477</sup> On the codex, see Brandi 1947, 85-86, n. 70; Vailati Schoenburg Waldenburg 1981; Gino Garosi and Chelazzi Dini, in Chelazzi Dini ed. 1982, 364-68 (with previous bibl.); Carl Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 180-188 (It. ed. 194-203); G. Vailati Schoenburg Waldenburg, "La libreria di coro di Lecceto", in *Lecceto...* 1990, 329-572, esp. 383-399; Vailati Schoenburg Waldenburg 1992; Bollati ed. 2006, I, 102-105. At about the same time, Giovanni di Paolo executed another series of illustrations for Dante's *Paradise* (after 1439, completed after 1442 and probably in the mid 1440s; cf. Pope-Hennessy 1993; Bollati ed. 2006, esp. pp. 109-116 for the dating), in which the smaller miniatures lend themselves less conveniently for comparison but similarities can nonetheless be observed with the Esztergom-Bargello series, cf. for example the figure of Apollo on f. 129r (Pope-Hennessy 1993, plates on pp. 69, 71) with the riding soldier in the Bargello fragment.

<sup>478</sup> Gordon 2003, 85-103, compare esp. fig. 16 on p. 93 with the St. Ansanus in Esztergom.

Giovanni di Paolo's extensive use of visual quotations from a vast area of Italian painting has often been pointed out.<sup>479</sup> In the *St. Ansanus baptizing*, too, a hitherto not noted citation from Italian Baptism-scenes occurs: the figure in the right foreground bending forward to pull off his large green cloak (Fig. 9/10).<sup>480</sup> Such figures occur in Italian painting since the 14<sup>th</sup> century and a similar, albeit naked figure appears in a drawing of the *Baptism of Christ* made in Pisanello's workshop after Gentile da Fabriano's lost frescos of in San Giovanni Laterano (Louvre, Paris, RF 420 recto, Fig. 9/11).<sup>481</sup> His isolation from the rest of figures lends him emphasis, just as it happens in the Esztergom fragment. The similarities between the two figures suggests that, as in so many other cases, Giovanni di Paolo may have taken inspiration from Gentile's work, perhaps with the intermediation of a drawing. This figure, well known to the contemporary audience from other Baptism scenes, would have been easily understood at the time as the typical representation of the proselyte.

#### References:

Ramboux 1862, 23, no. 123 (Giovanni di Paolo / School of Giovanni di Paolo, represents St. Ansanus); [Ramboux] 1867, 25, no. 123 (School of Giovanni di Paolo, represents St. Ansanus); [Fraknói] 1871, 370-371 (Giovanni di Paolo, "Ansanus baptizing the leaders of the people"); Van Marle 1923-38, vol. 9 (1927), 430 (Giovanni di Paolo, St. John the Baptist); Gerevich 1928, 224-225, repr.: 223 (Giovanni di Paolo, middle phase of activity); Benesch 1929, 70 (Giovanni di Paolo, "Baptism of Christ"); *Exhibition of Italian Art* 1930, 66, cat. 74. (Giovanni di Paolo, Scene of Baptism, the saint is identified as "the Baptist"); Lepold 1930, 11, cat. 10, repr. (Giovanni di Paolo, St. George Baptizes the Libyan king and his people, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); "Opere d'arte Senesi alla mostra di Londra," 1930, 161, no. 31 (Giovanni di Paolo, "Scena del Battesimo", the saint is identified as "il Battista"); Gerevich 1930, 95, repr. on p. 85; Balniel and Clark ed. 1931, vol. 1, 35, no. 102, without repr. (Giovanni di Paolo, represents S. Ansanus Baptizing the Sienese); Gengaro 1932, 27 (lists it twice by error, under the Galleria Arcivescovile as "San Giovanni battezza," and under the Galleria del Principe Primate d'Ungheria as "Scena di Battesimo", both as Giovanni di Paolo); Berti Toesca 1932, 944, 946, repr. p. 943. (Giovanni di Paolo, Baptizing saint in front of gates with coats of arms of Siena); Berenson 1932, 245 (Giovanni di Paolo, "Youthful saint baptizing"); Delogu 1936, 184, repr. p. 173 (Giovanni di Paolo); Berenson 1936, 211 (Giovanni di Paolo, St. Ansanus); Pope-Hennessy 1937, 76, 100 (Giovanni di Paolo, Ansanus, ca. 1453, close to the St. Nicholas altarpiece); Brandi 1941, 245, note 36 and Brandi 1947, 74 n. 36 (Giovanni di Paolo, Ansanus, not later than 1445); Pope-Hennessy, 1947, 139 (associates a third scene with the "Esztergom-

<sup>479</sup> See esp. Ladis 1995.

<sup>480</sup> For a discussion of this and other types of disrobing figures, cf. Aronberg Lavin 1981, 109-113; Kecks 2002. Lavin supposes a Byzantine origin for the iconography of catechumens undressing for baptism and points to the church father's interpretation of the act as "the stripping off of vice to become clean in the reception into faith" (p. 112). She records a 14<sup>th</sup>-century fresco in the Baptistery of Parma as the first Italian example of this type of figure, leaning forward and taking off his upper garments. Giovanni di Paolo may well have known Gentile's work but nonetheless adhered to a more archaic tradition exemplified in the Parma fresco in that he shows the figure in his undergarments rather than naked. Kecks notes similar undressing figures, bending forwards and pulling their upper garment over their heads, in the *Fountain of Life* fresco in the Castle of Manta in Piedmont.

<sup>481</sup> De Marchi 1992<sup>2</sup>, 203, 206, fig. 104 on p. 200; Degenhart and Schmitt 2004, I, 125-40, esp. 130-33, fig. 107; II, 443-448, cat. 758.

Bargello predella” by Giovanni di Paolo); Gerevich ed. 1948, 73, fig. 80 (Giovanni di Paolo, St. George Baptizing the Libyan King and his People); Kaftal 1952, coll. 60-62, fig. 57 (Giovanni di Paolo, Ansano); Czobor 1955, 7, repr. (Giovanni di Paolo, Ansano, predella piece); Mojzer 1958, 8, repr. p. 36 (Giovanni di Paolo, Ansano); Coor 1959, 86; Matteucci and Kienerk 1961, col. 1335 (Giovanni di Paolo, Ansano, predella); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 56-58 (Giovanni di Paolo); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1967, 50, no. 15, colour repr. (Giovanni di Paolo, predella fragment, from the middle phase of the artist); Berenson 1968, 177 (Giovanni di Paolo, Ansanus, predella panel); Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, no. 17 (Giovanni di Paolo, 1440s, closest in style to the Pizzicaiuoli altarpiece from 1447-49); E. Weis, “Ansanus (Sano) von Siena” in Kirschbaum, ed. 1968-1976, V (1973), coll. 193-94 (misinterpreting Kaftal, states that all four images cited by Kaftal belonged to the same predella); Mucsi 1975, 41, no. 198 (Giovanni di Paolo, predella fragment, two companion pieces in the Bargello in Florence and in the De Luart collection, Paris; late 1440s); Herbert ed. 1979, 21; Tátrai 1983<sup>1</sup>, 34, colour repr. p. 32 (Giovanni di Paolo, 1440-50); Wormhoudt 1984 [1992], 123, 163 n. 137, (Giovanni di Paolo, “dated 1447-49”, but on pp. 125 and 216 assigns the Bargello panel to the first half of the 1440s, despite the fact that she considers them companion pieces); Panders 1988, esp. 31, fig. 5 (Giovanni di Paolo); Cséfalvay 1989, 104 (reconstruction of the Ipolyi collection); Fabio Bisogni, “L’iconografia di Ansano”, in Argenziano and Bisogni 1990, 95-115, esp. 113 (Giovanni di Paolo); Christiansen 1990, 210, n. 13 (*Attempted martyrdom* did not belong to Bargello and Esztergom panels); V. Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 232, no. 93, Pl. 93 (Giovanni di Paolo, ca. 1450); Merzenich 1995, 310, no. 60 (list of Ramboux’s exportation request); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 561, no. 123 (Giovanni di Paolo, ca. 1440-50), Dóra Sallay, “Giovanni di Paolo”, in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 55, 2007, 55-62, esp. 56 (Giovanni di Paolo, part of unidentified vertical structure), Sallay 2008, 7, 10 colour repr., 16 (Giovanni di Paolo, 1440s, not a predella fragment, part of unidentified vertical structure).

## 10.

### Giovanni di Paolo (and workshop?)

Portable triptych: *Madonna and Child* (in centre); *Saint Ansanus, Saint Anthony Abbot* (in left wing); *Saint Bernardino, Saint Francis of Assisi* (in right wing)

**Fig. 10/1.**

ca. 1450-60

tempera and gold on wood

panel with engaged frame: central panel 42.2 x 31.7 cm; left wing 41.8 x 16.4 cm (15.7 cm at width of indentation); right wing 47.1 x 15.5 cm (15.8 cm at width of indentation); painted surface: central panel 35.5 x 25.3 cm; left wing 37.3 x 11.8 cm; right wing 37.2 x 10.8 cm thickness: central panel 2.9-3.3 cm (1.8-2 cm without the engaged frame); left wing 2.6 cm (1.6 cm without the engaged frame); right wing 2.4 cm (1.5 cm without the engaged frame)

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.182.

#### Provenance:

Acquired in Italy by Johann Anton Ramboux before 1842; Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 319 (as Giovanni di Paolo); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 319 (as Giovanni di Paolo); Arnold Ipolyi in Pest, Barsszentkereszt/Besztercebánya and Várad until 1886; deposited at the Episcopate of Várad until 1919 (no. 25 or 26, “Madonna Triptych” or “Madonna Triptych with saints”<sup>482</sup>); deposited at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, 1919-1920; acquired through Ipolyi’s bequest in 1920.

#### Technical notes:

Each wing consists of a single piece of vertically grained wood. The central part seems to preserve its original thickness and may comprise two planks, as it has an uneven warp (Fig. 10/2). The wings are thinner than the central part and their reverse has a more even surface. It is possible that they were thinned down before the application of brown paint which now covers the reverse of all three parts. This brown paint is of modern date but predates Ramboux’s seal. The right wing has a strong convex warp. The back part of the left edge of the left wing and the front part of the right edge of the right wing are indented in an interlocking manner for the closure of the wings (Fig. 10/3). The vertical edges of the reverse of the central panel are bevelled at about 45°. In the central panel, losses in the brown paint reveal old gesso underneath. The panels have suffered moderate worm tunnelling, with a few intact exit holes on the reverse. The engaged frame has been reworked; its gesso and gilding are modern. It is uncertain whether the engaged mouldings are original or not.

The figures have been incised into the ground prior to painting. The haloes are punched and incised. The paint layer is poorly preserved. Previous cleanings have strongly abraded the surface; the flesh areas are worn down to the *verdaccio* underpainting, and in some areas, especially in the faces of Sts. Ansanus and Anthony to the ground and to the wood. The gold ground is very worn and fragmented, leaving the red bole in sight in large areas. In many areas – especially along the vertical edges of the wings and the upper area of the central panel – it has been renewed with a yellow paint which probably contains bronze powder. With the same paint, the damaged or destroyed punched motifs have been reinforced or reconstructed. Mary’s blue cloak is very worn and damaged; old retouchings are discernible under a modern

<sup>482</sup> Cf. Némethy ed. 1896.

coat of varnish. Over the modern varnish, there are small retouchings in watercolour. A black contour has been added along the inner side of the engaged frame in a modern intervention. The pointed double-contour arch (2.8 mm high), serrated leaf, pentastar (2 mm) punchmarks are common in Giovanni di Paolo's oeuvre (Figs. 11/13-14).

Lajos Nikássy carried out a minor conservation intervention in 1937. He noted that the paint surface was too dry and was in danger of flaking off, and that he stabilized it with several layers of varnish.<sup>483</sup>

#### **Documentation:**

On reverse: "*J.A.Ramboux*" (in red wax seal on the central panel); "*141*" (in blue chalk, three times, on each panel); "*55.182*" (in white paint, three times, on each panel); "*KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM +*" (round stamp on white round label, three times, on each panel); "*55.182*" (handwritten in ink over the round stamp, three times, on each panel); "*ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM*" (stamped, twice, on each wing); "*55.182*" (faintly visible handwriting, twice, on each wing).

This portable triptych for private devotion is among the latest Sieneese examples of the genre, which gradually disappeared in the middle decades of the fifteenth century. The rectangular shape, which is also characteristic of a few other Sieneese triptychs of the period, reflects a move away from the gabled Gothic triptych-form typical of the first half of the fifteenth century.<sup>484</sup>

The central field is occupied by the three-quarter figure of the Virgin, holding the Child in her arms. In the upper left corner, the baptist and patron saint of Siena, St. Ansanus appears clad in a dark robe and a copious red mantle, gazing into the distance towards the left (Fig. 10/7). As usual, he is shown as a young, beardless saint and holds a bi-forked *balzana* that flutters in the air behind his head to the right. Beneath him is the full-length figure of St. Anthony Abbot, shown in three-quarter view and standing on a fictive marble floor whose edge is flush with the pictorial plane (Figs. 10/1, 10/8). He wears a dark greyish habit girded by a leather belt and holds a book, as well as his attribute, the T-shaped staff, from the handle of which another of his attributes, the small bell hangs. With his right hand, he gathers his ample cloak. The hermit's long white beard is in accordance with his traditional physiognomy. The other wing shows the emaciated, tonsured St. Francis in full figure, facing the viewer (Figs. 10/1, 10/9). He holds a book in his right hand, and opens a slit in his tunic

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<sup>483</sup> Archived at CM. Nikássy recorded the inventory or display number of the work between the two world wars as 82.

<sup>484</sup> Giovanni di Paolo executed portable triptychs mostly in the first half of the century and only occasionally afterwards (a later example is the Gothic triptych usually referred to as the *Piccola Maestà*, PNS, inv. 178). Only one other rectangular triptych is known to me by Giovanni di Paolo, of which only the left wing survives, showing the *Stigmatization of St. Francis* (1440s, private coll.). Rectangular portable triptychs are not frequent: some examples include the *Birth of the Virgin* by a painter close to Osservanza Master in the Gemäldegalerie of Berlin, Sano di Pietro's work in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (inv. 64.189.4) and a triptych by Pellegrino di Mariano (repr. Berenson 1930/31<sup>2</sup>). None of these have divided fields in the wings similar to the triptych in Esztergom.

with his left in order to reveal the stigma in his side. He seems lost in thoughts and looks to the side. Above him, the celebrated preacher and founder of the Franciscan Observants, St. Bernardino of Siena is portrayed in half figure and in profile (a rare manner of portrayal in Siena, more common in northern Italy)<sup>485</sup>. He holds the tablet with the *trigramma*, the letters “yhs” enclosed in rays, with which he promoted the glorification of Jesus’ name in front of his audiences.

The presence of the two Franciscans suggests that the triptych was made for a person with a Franciscan affiliation, who very likely still had personal recollections of Bernardino. St. Anthony may allude to a monastic background in general or may have had a special importance to the owner of the work, perhaps as a patron saint.

The triptych received little attention in art historical literature. It was listed as an autograph work by Ramboux (1862, 1867); Van Marle (1927), Gerevich (1928) and Maria Luisa Gengaro (1932), but Elena Berti Toesca (1932) and the painter’s first monographer, John Pope-Hennessy (1937) supposed the intervention of assistants. The catalogues of the Christian Museum accepted it as an autograph work, except for Mucsi (1975), who agreed with Pope-Hennessy in seeing the hand of assistants in the wings. The work is not mentioned by the painter’s other monographer, Cesare Brandi, neither is it included in any of Berenson’s lists. As for dating, Gerevich (1928) believed it to be an early work, but Van Marle correctly noted that the presence of St. Bernardino, canonized in May 1450, provides a *terminus post quem* for the execution.<sup>486</sup>

There is no doubt that the triptych is somewhat lower in quality than Giovanni di Paolo’s best works in his mature period, but I see no reason to see different hands in the central panel and in the wings. The malproportioned figure of St. Anthony, the Christ Child’s awkwardly foreshortened right foot or his head that is too small for his body may indeed substantiate a claim for the intervention of the workshop, even though it is not uncommon to see less carefully executed and sometimes malformed figures in Giovanni di Paolo’s works in his works after the 1450s (cf. the predella of the Sto. Stefano alla Lizza altarpiece). How much of this is due to the aging painter’s failing abilities or to the participation of assistants is an open question, and in any case, the severely damaged condition of the triptych makes a judgment of autography difficult. The figural types and – as noted by Van Marle – the still perceptible Sassettesque influences in the Virgin with bent head suggest that the work was

<sup>485</sup> Cf. *Enciclopedia Bernardiniana...* 1980-1985, *Iconografia*, vol. 2 (1981), esp. figs. 104, 107, 114, 117, 118, etc.

<sup>486</sup> The date “before 1450” proposed in several subsequent publications is based on a misunderstanding of Pope-Hennessy’s text from 1937.

realized within the sixth decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Its closest stylistic analogues are found in the above mentioned Sto. Stefano alla Lizza predella, the *Annunciation* panels in Stuttgart, the St. Nicholas altarpiece in Siena from 1453, and the polyptych dated 1454 in New York and its probable predella in London (Figs. 10/11-12). In decorative splendour and the richness of tooled motifs, the work is notably less elaborate than the master's earlier portable triptychs executed in the late international Gothic tradition under the influence of Gentile da Fabriano.<sup>487</sup>

Pope-Hennessy (1937) considered the Virgin and Child in this triptych as a version of the Madonna in Altenburg (Lindenau Museum, inv. 76), with which, in reality, it has little in common. It has much closer relations with another Madonna-composition, which seems to have been invented by Sassetta (PNS, inv. 235; The Frick Art Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania)<sup>488</sup> and an example of which in Giovanni's oeuvre is a *Madonna of Humility* in Boston (Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 30.772).<sup>489</sup> The Virgin supports the weight of the fragile baby with one hand, while with the other she draws towards herself a kicking little leg. She bends her head gently towards the Child, while he reaches for her neck and chin (Fig. 10/4). The composition was repeated, with minor variations, in the 1450s, in a work sometimes ascribed to Giovanni's workshop but possibly autograph, the *Madonna and Child with Saints Bartholomew and Jerome* in New Haven (Yale University Art Gallery, inv. 1943.25, Fig. 10/6).<sup>490</sup> Here the Child is noticeably bulkier and larger in proportion to the Virgin. The Madonna-group in the Esztergom triptych is a closely related but mirrored version of this group; the slight changes include the turning of the Child's head towards the mother. The child is robed in a red cloak only and with both of his hands grabs the richly folded veil of the Virgin, according to a compositional tradition present in Sieneese art since the Trecento.<sup>491</sup>

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 54, no. 319 (Giovanni di Paolo); [Ramboux] 1867, 54, no. 319 (Giovanni di Paolo); Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 432 (Giovanni di Paolo, after middle of 15th c. because of St. Bernardino's presence, there are "reminiscences of Sassetta"); Gerevich 1928, 224 (Giovanni di Paolo, early phase); Gengaro 1932, 27 (Giovanni di Paolo); Berti Toesca 1932, 946 (Giovanni di Paolo and assistant); Pope-Hennessy 1937, 92 (Giovanni di Paolo, version of the Madonna in Altenburg, wings by an assistant, central part possibly autograph); Gerevich ed. 1948, 73 (Giovanni di Paolo); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 59-60, fig.

<sup>487</sup> As, for example, the triptych in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

<sup>488</sup> On these and related Madonna images, cf. Christiansen 1989, with repr.

<sup>489</sup> Kanter 1994, 180-181.

<sup>490</sup> Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 431, fig. 277; Charles Seymour Jr., in *Italian Primitives...1972*, 39, no. 30 (21 1/8 x 16", ca. 1450). Charles Seymour Jr., attributed the work to the shop of Giovanni di Paolo in *Early Italian Paintings in the Yale University Art Gallery*, New Haven and London, 1970.

<sup>491</sup> Cf., for example, Shorr 1954, 127, type 18/4, 18/5.

III/43 (Giovanni di Paolo); Mucsi 1975, 42, no. 199 (Giovanni di Paolo, probably before 1450, wings by an assistant); Cséfalvay 1989, 104 (reconstruction of the Ipolyi collection); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 586, no. 319, repr. (Giovanni di Paolo or workshop, before 1450); Frinta 1998, 222 (Fda6b), 310 (I11), cf. also 468 (Kc3c, but the Esztergom triptych is not listed) (repertory of punch motifs); Dóra Sallay, “Giovanni di Paolo”, in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 55, 2007, 55-62, esp. 59 (Giovanni di Paolo); Sallay 2008, 16 (Giovanni di Paolo [and workshop?]).

## 11.

### Giovanni di Paolo

*Nativity (Adoration of the Christ Child)*

#### Fig. 11/1

ca. 1470 or early 1470s

tempera and gold on poplar wood

panel: 185.5 x 73 cm, entire dimensions with modern additions: 199.4 x 87 cm; painted surface: main scene: 153.5 x 71.5 cm, height of upper scene with repaired part: 24.5 cm; thickness: 3.5 cm, together with upper part representing God the Father: 7.5 cm

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.183.

#### Provenance:

Acquired by János Simor before 1878.

#### Exhibited:

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest (1971): *A középkor alkonya* (The waning of the Middle Ages), cat. 6.

#### Technical notes:

The support consists of three vertically grained planks of probably poplar wood (a 54-56 cm wide central plank and two, ca. 8-8.5 cm wide planks on the sides) and a 3.5-4 cm wide horizontally grained wood strip attached to the bottom with four hand-beaten nails (Fig. 11/2). The panel conserves its original thickness of 3.5 cm and is slightly warped. The reverse is roughly worked. Woodworms have caused considerable damage and the partial disintegration in the panel, especially along the vertical edges. The top of the panel has broken off. In the wood applied to the main panel above the pointed arch (in which God the Father appears) the original wood appears to be missing above an irregular line located approximately at the height of the Eternal's eyebrows. The top of the underlying main panel was repaired by cutting straight the support and replacing the missing part with modern wood with a horizontal top edge.

On the reverse, there are marks of the one-time presence of two original crosspieces, which were later removed. The crosspieces were originally fixed with nails whose fragments survive in the panel. The nails have the square profile typical of hand-beaten nails. Corresponding to the position of the crosspieces, there are four, ca. 18 cm long and 0.1-0.2 cm deep, oblique saw cuts leading toward the central vertical axis (Figs. 11/2, 11/7). Below the saw cuts, there are marks left by horizontal iron-fittings applied with nails (not all the marks left by them survive due to the disintegration of the panel), and, above them, four rectangular (6-7 x 1.5-2 cm) indents along the vertical sides; their lower edges are located at 11.5 cm and 96-97 cm from the bottom.<sup>492</sup> While the battens were in place, the reverse was treated with an

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<sup>492</sup> Other altarpieces by Giovanni di Paolo in which all of the above marks and some original fittings can be observed suggest that the iron fittings functioned as a pin hinges (altarpiece from 1454, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, repr. Os II, 1990, 50, fig. 24; Staggia altarpiece, 1475, PNS, inv. 324, 186-189; San Galgano altarpiece; PNS, inv. 198, 199, 201, photographs of the reverses of the Staggia and of the San Galgano altarpiece are conserved at the Sopra. PSAE, Staggia altarpiece, photo inv. 96082; San Galgano altarpiece, photo inv. 95871, 95869). The fittings on the central panel had a vertical pin onto which the hinges fixed to the lateral panels were slipped when the altarpiece was assembled. The rectangular indents above the fittings served to make room for inserting the hinges on the pins. It is not clear when the crosspieces were sawn apart; it may have

oleous (?) substance. There is a 20-cm long vertical crack at the bottom, located approximately in the vertical axis of the panel.

The outlines of the stable, the large hills in the background, the halos were incised into the gesso prior to painting. There is underlying gold leaf below the figure of the angel, revealed through incisions for a special light effect. The angel's wings are gilt and modelled with red glaze. The painted surface is generally in good condition and not abraded. The surface is unevenly covered by remnants of darkened varnish (more old varnish survives along the edges) and accumulated dirt. There are minor losses, retouches, cracks, loose and flaking paint. The Child's halo is very damaged and repaired. The upper part containing the figure of God the Father is much restored. The support is cracked obliquely at around the right elbow of the figure. The gilding is entirely renewed; the head of God is reconstructed above the line of damage (Fig. 11/6), and the outlines of his drapery are reinforced. The underside of the pointed arch is inpainted in modern dark grey paint.

Nothing of the original engaged frame of the panel survives. The moulding along the upper part appears to be modern and probably related to the repair of the broken top. A Neo-Gothic frame is now attached to the work and prevents the examination of the edges of the main panel. Partly visible areas suggest that the left side may have been slightly cut whereas on the right the modern frame may cover some fragments of original paint. However, not much can have been lost of the composition. The imprints of the capitals and bases of the original frame are perceptible on both sides; the unpainted wood left after the removal of the frame has been inpainted in oil with an extension of the composition. At the bottom, the modern frame encloses an 11.5 cm high section of the original support, once covered by its engaged frame.

There is no recorded restoration for this piece.

#### **Documentation:**

On reverse: “*Az Esztergomi Hercegségi Képtár tulajdona. Leltári szám: 60*” (printed on white label, inv. no. added in hand, probably written by Maszlaghy in 1878 or shortly after); “55.183” (in black ink, twice); “*KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM +*” (round stamp); “*KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM +*” (round stamp on white round label, twice); “55.183” (handwritten in ink over the round stamps); “*ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM*” (stamped, twice); “*KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / ESZTERGOM*” (stamped); illegible writing in pencil (?) across the bottom (perhaps “*Ado... [razione]?*”).

On front of modern frame: “*60. Giovanni Cimabue. (1240-1302)*” (printed on white paper; cut from p. 11 of Maszlaghy's catalogue from 1878)

In the axis of the monumental composition, the kneeling Virgin towers over the naked Christ Child laid on the edge of her blue gown. According to an old compositional tradition in Italian art, she adores the Child with joined hands. The Child looks back upon her and returns her adoration with a blessing, a gesture that reveals his divine nature, whereas his nakedness is symbolic of his human nature.<sup>493</sup> On the left, the yellow-clad, old St. Joseph sleeps, resting

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happened already in the workshop after the application of the crosspieces in order to facilitate the assembly of the structure on the site. This explains why the oblique saw marks all lead towards the central vertical axis: this was the only way in which the hinges fixed to the side panels could be slipped onto the pins fixed to the central panels. In coming to these conclusions I greatly profited from the acute observations of George Bisacca, for which I would like to express my gratitude.

<sup>493</sup> Schiller 1966-91, I, 86-95, esp. fig. 185 for the kneeling and adoring Virgin and the blessing infant.

his head on his left arm; the ox and the ass peacefully eat behind him. Above them rises a shed that resembles the architectural structure of a basilica; its thatched roof is fixed to the beams with strings. On the steeply rising hillside in the background, two pastors stand among their grazing sheep and watchdog in front of outlandish rock formations and improbably straight rows of bushes. The pair of conversing, ragged pastors is a delightfully intimate, genre-like detail: one of them leans on his stick and looks up with naïve joy to the messenger angel, who holds out an olive branch towards them; his companion reassuringly gestures to him and presses his hand. One of the sheep raises its head, hesitatingly looking for the source of the heavenly sound (Fig. 11/3). The scene is crowned by the odd figure of God the Father, shown with his head turned to the side (a formal solution that avoids the problem of foreshortening) and with symmetrically bent arms and fluttering draperies that adapt to the shape of the top of the panel.

The composition, as Pope-Hennessy noted (1937), probably takes its basic elements (the adoration of the child, the sleeping Joseph at the side, the annunciation to the pastors in the right background) from Gentile da Fabriano's Strozzi altarpiece, which Giovanni di Paolo copied almost *ad litteram* (Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome, inv. 132). Compositions even closer to the Esztergom *Nativity*, with the same emphasized verticality, occur in the Veneto (Fig. 11/9), and a lost work as a common source for all these works seems likely.<sup>494</sup> Giovanni di Paolo himself painted a nearly identical composition around 1455-60 (?) in a predella fragment with the *Nativity* (Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass.; inv. 1943.112, Fig. 11/10),<sup>495</sup> where, however, he stretched the composition horizontally for the sake of the nearly square format (27.9 x 24.1 cm): Joseph sits outside the stable, to the right of Mary. In the next scene of the same predella, which shows the *Adoration of the Magi* (Linsky Coll., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 1982.60.4; 27 x 23.2 cm, Fig. 11/11), the scenery remains the same: a thatch-roofed shed shown in perspective from below, the hill

<sup>494</sup> Miklós Mojzer called attention to the compositional similarities in the *Nativity* in the polyptych by Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni d'Alemagna from 1447, then in Konopišt in Czechoslovakia and now in the National Gallery, Prague, with an earlier provenance from S. Francesco in Padua (in Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 58; cf. Leo Planischig, "Un polittico sconosciuto di Antonio Vivarini e di Giovanni d'Alemagna" in *Bolletino d'Arte*, I, 1921-22, 427-433, esp. fig. 2 on p. 428). Another version of this composition appears in the triptych of the *Nativity* made by the Bellini-workshop for a chapel in Sta. Maria della Carità in Venice between 1460-71 (Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice, inv. no. 621b, cf. Anchise Tempestini, *Giovanni Bellini*, Florence: Cantini, 1992, 26-31). This triptych is an interesting analogy to Giovanni di Paolo's work also in the sudden leap of scale between the figures in the central scene and those depicted in the wings.

<sup>495</sup> The relationship of the Esztergom *Nativity* with this work, then in the Grenville-Winthrop Coll. in New York, was first pointed out by Cesare Brandi, who dated it to the period after 1463 (1947, 91, and 79 n. 58). For the Fogg *Nativity*, cf. also Pope-Hennessy 1988, 31, fig. 39.

bordered with a row of bushes, the sheep and pastors, and two hills in background.<sup>496</sup> According to Carl Strehlke, it was Giovanni di Paolo who introduced in Siense Nativity-scenes the stable instead of the usual “rocky grotto”<sup>497</sup> (in fact, in earlier Siense works, the stable appears combined with the grotto). In his earlier *Nativity* scenes, the Virgin kneels in front of a rocky grotto (the cited predella fragment in the Vatican; an altarpiece panel in Avignon, Fig. 11/8, and a compositionally almost identical *Nativity* decorating St. Nicholas’ dalmatic in the altarpiece dated 1453, PNS, inv. 173).

Laurence Kanter recognized in 1984 that two altarpiece laterals in the Musée de Petit Palais in Avignon representing *St. Victor* and *St. Ansanus* (?)<sup>498</sup> (Figs. 11/12-13), at that time associated with another, earlier *Nativity* by Giovanni di Paolo (Fig. 11/8), must have originally formed the laterals of the *Nativity* in Esztergom.<sup>499</sup> The correctness of this observation, based on the similarity of style, dimensions, and halo forms, can now be demonstrated by technical investigations: in a scaled virtual reconstruction of the reverse, the four oblique saw cuts on the reverse of the Esztergom *Nativity* continue directly on the reverses of the *St. Victor* and the *St. Ansanus* (?). The vertical rectangular indents in the support of the Esztergom panel also precisely correspond in their position with two horizontal joining marks on the inner sides of the Avignon saints. The complex form of the top of the panels appears in other altarpieces of the master (St. James Major triptych in Baschi; a dismembered altarpiece of which only the *Nativity* and a *St. Clement* survive in Avignon). Based on these analogies, it is logical to suppose that the now damaged Esztergom *Nativity* too originally had an inflexed arch-shaped top, which would have included the now missing halo of God the Father as well.

On the basis of style and halo form, it seems very likely that six female figures once decorated the pilasters of the Avignon-Esztergom triptych (Fig. 11/14). Four of these, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, were first hypothetically connected to the Avignon saint by

<sup>496</sup> For this predella, cf. Brandi 1947, 91; Pope-Hennessy 1988, 29-31; Carl B. Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 208-210 (It. ed. 222-24). Keith Christiansen suggested this and other motifs in the Linsky *Adoration of the Magi* are based on Paolo Uccello’s ruined *Nativity* fresco on deposit to the Uffizi from San Martino alla Scala in Florence (cited by Strehlke 1988, 209).

<sup>497</sup> Carl B. Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 209 (It. ed. 223).

<sup>498</sup> The identity of these two saints is uncertain. It seems highly probable that the saint holding the sword is St. Victor: although other Siense saints (Galganus, Ansanus, Crescentius) may appear with the sword, only Victor holds the sword consistently in his hand. This is especially true, as Raffaele Argenziano noted (Argenziano and Bisogni 1990, 94) for the period after 1457, when the saint’s iconography is codified by Antonio Federighi’s powerful sculpture on the Loggia della Mercanzia (repr. Alessandro Angelini, “Antonio Federighi e il mito di Ercole”, in Angelini ed. 2005, 112, fig. 12). For St. Victor, cf. also Kaftal 1952. The identification of the other saint with St. Ansanus is more traditional than based on evidence.

<sup>499</sup> Kanter’s opinion is first cited in Laclotte and Mognetti 1987, 110 (with previous bibl. for the two saints).

Federico Zeri (1976),<sup>500</sup> two further pieces (now Salini Coll., Siena) were noted in a private collection by Pope-Hennessy in 1988.<sup>501</sup> Three of the saints turn to the right, three to the left, and, although all six are slightly cut at the top, their size is perfectly compatible with the reconstructed triptych (Fig. 11/17).<sup>502</sup> The total width of this proposed structure is around 195-200 cm. It probably once had a predella as well, but no surviving pieces can be convincingly associated with it.<sup>503</sup>

The Esztergom *Nativity* was first attributed to Giovanni di Paolo by Van Marle (1927), and extensively discussed by Pope-Hennessy (1937), who judged it “one of Giovanni’s most impressive works”. The dates so far proposed for it and its laterals in Avignon range from the late 1450s to ca. 1470-75. The stylistic characteristics of the panels leave no doubt that the altarpiece dates from the master’s late period. Features typical of the painter’s works in the 1460s, as of the 1463 Pienza altarpiece, such as the soft modelling, strong chiaroscuro, and a still comparatively graceful figural style are not any more present; instead, the panels show the style of Giovanni di Paolo’s latest works, such as the dry handling of paint, the muted palette, the bulky figures with heavy, distorted and oversized limbs, angular and heavily veined hands, schematic rendered, hard locks of hair, and thin, pale complexions for the female figures.

There are no firm points for the chronology of the painter’s production after 1463, apart from the Staggia polyptych formerly dated 1475 (PNS, inv. 324, 186-189). This, however, offers limited help because its careless and decadent forms reveal that it was primarily executed by assistants. The Esztergom-Avignon altarpiece is stylistically close to the San

<sup>500</sup> Laclotte and Mognetti 1976, cat. 90 (mentioning Zeri’s suggestion to associate the four saints in the Metropolitan with the assembled Avignon triptych); Zeri and Gardner 1980, 23-24, Pl. 42-43, inv. 32.100.83 A-D. The dimensions of the saints are: *St. Catherine of Alexandria* (47.6 x 15.3, painted surface 46.4 x 14), *St. Barbara* (47.6 x 15.3, painted surface 46 x 14.2), *St. Agatha* (47.6 x 15.3, painted surface 46.6 x 13.2), *St. Martha* (?) – formerly identified as Margaret – 47.6 x 15.3, painted surface 46.4 x 14.2). Zeri (1980) claims that the pavements in the *St. Barbara* and the *St. Margaret* (that is, perhaps *St. Martha*) have been extended upwards. Victor Schmidt proposed an identity of *St. Martha* for the saint holding flowers and having a dragon at her feet (Schmidt 1997, 203 and at a lecture at the international conference *Sano di Pietro: Qualità, Devozione e Pratica nella Pittura Senese del Quattrocento*, Siena, Accademia dei Fisiocritici di Siena – Asciano, Museo Cassioli, 5-6 December, 2005), in course of publication). I am grateful to Keith Christiansen for his permission to examine these pieces.

<sup>501</sup> Pope-Hennessy 1988, 39, figs. 52-53. The *St. Magdalene* measures 46 x 14.1 cm and has been thinned to 1.1 cm; the *St. Agnes* measures 45.5 x 14 cm and is thinned to 1.4 cm. On its reverse a label reads “Sano di Pietro”. In both pieces bare wood once covered by engaged arches has been revealed by restoration. My heartfelt thanks go to Architetto Pietro Simone Salini for his kind hospitality and for allowing me to study these works.

<sup>502</sup> In the reconstruction the vertical order of the female saints remains uncertain until an examination of their wood structure can be carried out. I thank Esther Moench for sending me the detailed internal measurements of the two panels in Avignon (written communication, 20 January, 2003).

<sup>503</sup> A predella showing Christ and cross-bearing saints in Parma measures 24 x 200 cm and it similarly dates from the artist’s last period (although in some literature it is inexplicably dated to the 1450s), but its execution is somewhat cruder and the halo forms are different. Its association with the Esztergom-Avignon triptych is not likely but neither can it be fully excluded (cf. M. Merlini, in Fornari Schianchi ed. 1997, 72-74).

Galgano polyptych (PNS, inv. 198, 199, 201; cf. Figs. 11/15-16), which is generally considered to date from around 1470 but which may in fact be later, from around the mid 1470s.<sup>504</sup> Our triptych seems to be somewhat earlier than the San Galgano polyptych on account of its higher quality and more confident execution; therefore, a date around 1470 or in the early 1470s seems most likely.

The original provenance of the altarpiece is not known. The inclusion of the female saints on the pilasters remains a hypothesis, but if they truly belonged to this complex, a provenance from a feminine convent may be hypothesized. We have scarce records of the later history of the fragments of the ensemble. The Esztergom *Nativity* cannot be traced back to earlier than 1878, when it is included in the first inventory of the Museum. The *St. Victor* and *St. Ansanus* (?) are first recorded, together with the Avignon *Nativity*, in the Campana catalogue in 1858.<sup>505</sup> The provenance of the four female saints in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931) can be traced back to 1914 only, when they were with Alphonse Kann in Paris.

#### References:

Maszlachy 1878, 11, no. 60 (Giovanni Cimabue); Rényi 1879, 16-17; Z[ádori?] 1885, 674-75, no. 60 (Giovanni Cimabue); Maszlachy 1891, 22, no. 60 (Cimabue); Colasanti 1910<sup>1</sup>, 408 (Sienese, with all probability Pietro di Giovanni [d'Ambrogio]); Colasanti 1910<sup>2</sup>, iii (Sienese, with all probability Pietro di Giovanni [d'Ambrogio]); Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 448 (Giovanni di Paolo, important late work); Gerevich 1928, 225 (Giovanni di Paolo, late work); Benesch 1929, 70 (Giovanni di Paolo); Gengaro 1932, 27 (listed as “Adorazione”, Giovanni di Paolo); Pope-Hennessy 1937, 69-70, Pl. XXVIB (Giovanni di Paolo, late 1450s, “depends in the last resort on Gentile da Fabriano’s familiar design”); Brandi 1941, 337 n. 82 and Brandi 1947, 91 (Giovanni di Paolo, related in composition to the predella fragment in the Grenville-Winthrop Coll. in New York, late work, also halo types indicate the late dating); Gerevich ed. 1948, 73, fig. 81 (Giovanni di Paolo); Czobor 1955, 7 (Giovanni di Paolo);

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<sup>504</sup> Ludwin Paardekooper (2002<sup>3</sup>, esp. p. 112) proposed the years 1474-77, or even as late as 1477, for this altarpiece, based on the hypothesis that the altarpiece was commissioned for the now-destroyed Cistercian church of Sta. Maria Maddalena in Siena in correlation with construction works in these years (for the construction, see also Cioni 2005, 260). The suggestion that the original provenance of the altarpiece may be the church of Sta. Maria Maddalena rather than the Abbey of San Galgano is indeed plausible, although, in my view, the fact that St. Galgano is depicted to the right of the central panel – which presumably depicted the Assumption of the Virgin – and not on the more prestigious left, where Magdalene can be seen, is not enough to definitively exclude the original provenance from the high altar of the Cistercian Abbey in San Galgano. The date of the altarpiece, an enormous undertaking, remains uncertain and may date from the mid-1470s, but must have been finished or turned over to assistants some time before by November 1477, when the painter made a testament *corpore languens* (Bacci 1944, 87-88). In his tax declaration from 1478 (Bacci 1944, 91), the 80-year-old man states that his impaired vision had made it impossible for him work already for some time: “sono vecchio et non posso più lavorare perché la vista mene manchata et non vecho [veggo = vedo] molto”.

<sup>505</sup> Campana 1858. The *Nativity* and the two saints were attributed to “Alegretto Nucci” and were clearly joined into a triptych already at this point, as they are listed under the same number (no. 361) with the comprehensive dimensions of 1.82 x 1.50 cm. The *St. Clement* which must have originally been a side panel to the Avignon *Nativity* and is now also in Avignon is listed as by Giotto, no. 34 (1.83 x 47 cm). There is no trace of the Esztergom *Nativity* in the Campana catalogue.

Mojzer V 1958, 7; Dávid 1962, 34 (Giovanni di Paolo, rare example of a representation an “incomplete” Trinity, with God the Father above); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 58 (Giovanni di Paolo, influenced by Gentile da Fabriano, a related composition by Giovanni d’Alemagna from 1447 is in Konopišt in Bohemia); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1967, 52, no. 16. (Giovanni di Paolo, probably late work); Berenson 1968, 177 (Giovanni di Paolo); Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, nos. 18-19 (Giovanni di Paolo, probably 1460s), Coulonges 1970, 76 and colour pl. detail of the shepherd on p. 77 (Giovanni di Paolo, 1460s); Harasztiné Takács, Mravik, and Szigethy ed. 1971, 9, cat. 6 (Giovanni di Paolo, late work); Mucsi 1975, 42, no. 200, fig. 43 (Giovanni di Paolo, 1460s); Tátrai 1983<sup>1</sup>, 34, colour repr. p. 35 (Giovanni di Paolo, 1460-70); Laclotte and Mognetti 1987, 109-110 (Giovanni di Paolo, ca. 1470; report the communication of Laurence Kanter from 1984 that the *St. Victor* and *St. Ansanus* in Avignon once formed the wings of the *Nativity* in Esztergom); Pope-Hennessy 1988, 39, fig. 54 (Giovanni di Paolo, belongs together with two saints in Avignon, and perhaps also with six small female saints); Moench Scherer ed. (1992), 60 (Giovanni di Paolo’s *St. Victor* and *St. Ansanus* in Avignon are datable to ca. 1470-75 and may have formed the laterals of the Esztergom *Nativity*); Vilmos Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 232-233, no. 94, Pl. 94 (Giovanni di Paolo, ca. 1460); Laclotte and Moench 2005, 112-113 (Giovanni di Paolo, ca. 1470, formed laterals of the Esztergom *Nativity*); Dóra Sallay, “Giovanni di Paolo”, in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 55, 2007, 55-62, esp. 59 (Giovanni di Paolo, ca. 1470 or early 1470s); Sallay 2008, 5, 7, 12 repr., 16 (Giovanni di Paolo, ca. 1470, visual reconstruction of altarpiece).

## 12.

### Giovanni di Paolo

*Saint Matthew*

#### Fig. 12/1

ca. 1475-77

tempera and gold on wood

with partly modern frame: 80.5 x 39.1 cm

painted surface: 70.4 x 33.2 cm

thickness: 1.1-1.3 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 21.

#### Provenance:

Acquired by Johann Anton Ramboux in Italy by 1838; Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 124 (Lorenzo von Siena); sold to Arnold Ipolyi in 1867 at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 124 (Lorenzo von Siena); Arnold Ipolyi, Pest, until 1872; gift of Arnold Ipolyi to the National Picture Gallery in 1872, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts.

#### Technical notes:

The support is a single piece of wood, probably poplar, which has a vertical grain (Fig. 12/2). It has been unevenly thinned, with slightly more wood removed in the rectangular section than in the gable. Of the original engaged frame, only the inner mouldings along the gable survive and the inner parts of the horizontal moulding next to the gable. These parts preserve their original gilding. The outer part of the engaged frame of the gable, with the crockets, is a modern addition in different wood. It has a regilt surface and has become detached from the original moulding in the upper left area. The crockets on the left belong to this modern addition;<sup>506</sup> whereas the ones on the right are yet more recent replacements in pine wood. A painted and moulded modern frame made of pine and likely of the same date as the more recent crockets is permanently attached to the bottom, vertical sides and the outer part of the upper horizontal border. It covers the left, right and bottom edges of the painted surface and prevents their examination, but in some areas where it has become detached (at the lower left and the bottom edge), the paint extends until a straight edge without a *barbe*.

The outlines of Matthew's figure and many straight lines in the book and the lectern have been incised into the gold ground prior to painting. The halos are gilt and tooled. There are two incised lines running in the gold ground parallel to the vertical sides.

The painted surface is in good condition. It is not abraded but heavily soiled, and there are minor losses, scratches, and retouching, as well as filled and retouched patches. An old and heavily retouched large crack starts from the bottom and extends through the figure of the angel. A more recent vertical crack runs to the right of Matthew's head from the top of the panel down to the figure of the angel. There are some paint losses in the areas over gold leaf, especially in the hair of the saint in the lower left side of the halo. Examination with infrared reflectography showed no underdrawing.

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<sup>506</sup> In old photographs, the now missing top part of the uppermost crocket on the left is still visible, already detached by a deep crack.

The painting received minor conservation treatment in 1980.<sup>507</sup>

**Documentation:**

On reverse: “N<sup>o</sup>. 56.” (ink on white label, corresponding to the number of Ramboux’s exportation request from Tuscany, dated 26 June, 1838)<sup>508</sup>; “J.A.Ramboux” (in red wax seal); “925/1” (blue chalk, twice); “ORSZ. KÉPTÁR. A leltár száma 21” (printed on white label); “SZÉPMŰVÉSZETI MÚZEUM, BUDAPEST. Giovanni di Paolo: Szt Máté evangelista. 21. Ipolyi Arnold ajándéka, Budapest, 1872.” (printed on white label); “Giovanni di Paolo” (pencil, handwritten on previous label).

St. Matthew is shown in half figure behind a lectern on which two open books are placed.<sup>509</sup> With a melancholy expression, he props his head on his right arm, while resting his left hand on one of the books. He is clad in a red robe and a green-lined blue mantle. The wood lectern is upheld by two corbels inserted into a marble parapet. In the foreground, the evangelist’s attribute, the angel sits in an orange robe. He looks up to Matthew and points upward with his left hand. In his other hand, he holds a closed book.

The piece belonged to a series of four gabled panels, each of which shows an evangelist. Three of these once belonged to Johann Anton Ramboux: besides the *St. Matthew*, he owned the *St. Luke* (Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, inv. 61.154; panel: 56 x 34.3 cm; Figs. 12/4, 12/14a)<sup>510</sup> and the *St. John* (Stichting Collectie P. en N. de Boer, Amsterdam, dimensions of original wood measured on the back, without the modern frame: 76.3 x 33.7; painted surface: 70.5 x 33.3, thickness: ca. 1.7 cm, Figs. 12/5, 12/14b).<sup>511</sup> Ramboux was aware that the fourth piece in the series was the *St. Mark* in the Galleria dell’Accademia in Siena (now PNS, inv. 195, panel including original parts of frame with crockets at the top: 64 x 34.5 cm; painted

<sup>507</sup> Notes of Ágnes Szigethy, Archives, Old Masters Gallery, MFA. From earlier times, a condition report and a restoration proposal is recorded on 24 April, 1908 (Book of restoration records, Old Masters Department, MFA, p. 29), noting old repairs and some flaking paint.

<sup>508</sup> The work can be identified in Ramboux’s list in his exportation request of 26 June, 1838 (published by Merzenich 1995, 309-310, no. 56): “S. Matteo Evang(elista). id. [in forma piramidale], id. [tavola] / I [braccio]. 7 [soldi]. 6 [denari] / - [braccio]. 12 [soldi]. - [denaro], that is, ca. 80.2 x 35 cm. The previous item, no. 55, in the list is a companion piece showing *St. John the evangelist*, listed as “S. Giovanni Evang(elista) in forma piramidale”. On the reverse of the *St. John*, which precedes the *St. Matthew* in the list from 1838, the corresponding label “No. 55” is preserved (cf. Cecilia van Ghent, in van Os et al. ed. 1989, 83, fig. 32).

<sup>509</sup> The iconographical curiosity why Matthew is shown with two books remains to be explained.

<sup>510</sup> For the *St. Luke*, see Ramboux 1862, 23, no. 125; [Ramboux] 1967, 25, no. 125; John Pope-Hennessy, *National Gallery of Art, Preliminary Catalogue*. 1941, no. 467 (Giovanni di Paolo); Suida 1952, 14-15 and fig. 9 (repr. in 19<sup>th</sup> c. frame, before last restoration); Shapley 1966, 149-150 (repr. without frame); Chiyo Ishikawa, in Kier and Zehnder ed. 1995, 587-88, cat. 203, colour pl. CX (with further bibl.).

<sup>511</sup> On the *St. John*, cf. Ramboux 1862, 23, no. 126; [Ramboux] 1967, 25, no. 126; Schubring 1912<sup>1</sup>, 162; *De Kunst van het verzamelen...* 1966, no. 86, fig. 27; Cecilia van Ghent, in Os et al. ed. 1989, 84 (with provenance and further bibl.); Chiyo Ishikawa, in Kier and Zehnder ed. 1995, 587-88, cat. 203, colour repr. I am greatly indebted to Machtelt Israëls for a condition report on this piece and the Stichting Collectie P. en N. de Boer for their kind cooperation.

surface: 52.8 x 34.5 cm; Figs. 12/7, Fig. 12/14d).<sup>512</sup> He made a drawing of it (Frankfurt, Städel Museum, inv. 2472, Ramboux, vol. VI, p. 70; Fig. 12/8)<sup>513</sup> and, in his catalogue of 1862, associated it with the three pieces in his possession. At the same time, he disagreed or was unfamiliar with the attribution of the *St. Mark* to Giovanni di Paolo in the Sieneese picture gallery from the very beginning, because he ascribed his own pieces to Lorenzo di Siena known as Vecchietta.

Although the four works were already associated by Ramboux, after the dispersal of his collection, it took a while to rediscover the pieces and their association. Five years after the sale, in 1871, Crowe and Cavalcaselle still recorded the three pieces as formerly in Ramboux's collection, ascribed to Vecchietta. In 1897, Berenson listed the Budapest piece only, as a work by Vecchietta; in the second edition from 1909 it is listed, together with the *St. Mark* in Siena, as works by Giovanni di Paolo. The attribution to Giovanni di Paolo appeared in Térey's catalogue of 1906, with reference to the opinions of Paul Schubring and Robert Langton Douglas. The *St. John* was published by Schubring in 1912 as a previously unknown work by Giovanni di Paolo from around 1430, and connected with the *St. Mark* in Siena.<sup>514</sup> The 1914 edition of Crowe and Cavalcaselle (ed. Tancred Borenius) mentioned the *Matthew*, *John* and *Mark* but without connecting them. In 1915, Térey cited all the four pieces together and considered them pinnacles pieces of a large altar from around 1430, still in their original frame; he also pointed out the similar series in Palermo. In 1921 Weigelt cited considered the four pieces Giovanni's early works, even if not as early as 1430, as proposed by Schubring. The common provenance of the four panels has been accepted since then almost unanimously.<sup>515</sup> Most authors considered the pieces autograph works, while Raimond

<sup>512</sup> The *St. Mark* entered the collection of the Sieneese picture gallery before 1842. Its provenance is unfortunately not recorded. Cf. *Catalogo* 1842, 15, no. 28; and subsequent editions in 1852, 53, no. 28; 1872, 47, no. 260; 1895, 66, no. 50; 1903, 66, no. 195; 1909, 68, no. 195 (Giovanni di Paolo, 65 x 40 cm); Jacobsen 1908, 47 Pl. XVI, 2; Torriti 1990, 237; Panders 1997, 87, 108. I am grateful to Anna Maria Guiducci for granting me permission to examine this painting and to Elena Pinzauti for her invaluable assistance in carrying it out. The piece was shown in an exhibition in Ljubljana in 2006. The entry for the exhibition catalogue (Anna Maria Guiducci, in Guiducci, Rotundo, and Smrekar ed. 2006, 86, cat. 15, colour repr.) discusses, in reality, a completely different piece in the PNS: Giovanni di Paolo's *St. James Major* (inv. 213), as not only the the text but the wrong inventory number, dimensions, and bibliography in the entry show.

<sup>513</sup> For Ramboux's drawings in the Städel, cf. Ziemke 1969, esp. 256 and 289 n. 22.

<sup>514</sup> Schubring 1912<sup>1</sup>, 162 (mentioning the *St. John* only as Giovanni di Paolo, repr.); Schubring 1912<sup>2</sup>, 164 (mentioning the *St. John* then as in Collection Schmietgen [sic: Schnütgen] as work by Giovanni di Paolo around 1430, and connecting it to the *St. Mark* in Siena).

<sup>515</sup> Only in the past few decades were some doubts voiced about whether the *St. Mark* belongs to the series. Marjan Reinders' doubt (in Gerson and Os ed. 1969, cat. 9) is probably based on the misunderstanding that the *St. Mark* is larger than the other pieces. Cecilia van Ghent (in Os et al. ed. 1989, 83) reported underdrawing with infrared reflectography in the *St. Mark*, which is not present in the *St. John*. Janneke Panders (1997, 87 n. 174, cf. documentation on p. 108) expressed doubts regarding the *St. Mark* on the same grounds (but see her contrasting remark on pp. 13-14). This is not a valid argument against the association of the pieces, as they could have been – and probably were – executed with the help of assistants who could use different solutions in the

Van Marle (1919, 1924/25, 1927) argued for the authorship of Giacomo del Pisano, reporting (1927) also his rediscovery of the *St. Luke* in a private collection.<sup>516</sup> There is yet to be found any evidence for the historical existence of Giacomo del Pisano, for long believed to be one of the assistants of Giovanni di Paolo during his late activity, but Van Marle seems to have been partly right in separating an assistant's hand in the late workshop of Giovanni di Paolo.<sup>517</sup> However, the *St. Matthew* and its companion pieces do not belong to this group stylistically but neither are they homogeneous between themselves. The *St. Matthew* is highest in quality; it is also the most original in artistic expression and appears to be largely or fully autograph. In the *St. Mark*, *St. Luke*, and especially in the *St. John*, Giovanni di Paolo may well have been assisted in the executive process or his deteriorating eyesight could have been responsible for the somewhat coarser results.

The series dates without doubt from the very end of the painter's career. In fact, Schubring's and Weigelt's proposals for an early date were soon definitively rejected. Brandi (1919-32) first argued for a date around 1460, then (1941, 1947) for a date in the master's last period. Pope-Hennessy (1937) proposed a date around 1470, Suida (1952, 1954), around 1465, and Shapley (1966) around 1475. Since then, all critics proposed dates within the decade 1465-1475. In the 1470s, Giovanni di Paolo and his workshop executed an impressive number of large scale works: the San Galgano altarpiece; the Avignon-Esztergom triptych (cf. Cat. 11), an altarpiece in Trequanda (Ss. Pietro e Andrea), an altarpiece in Baltimore (Walters Art Museum), an altarpiece from Staggia (PNS, inv. 324, 186-89); the so called *Large Maestà* (PNS, inv. 575); a lunette from a large altarpiece now attached to the *Large Maestà*; and a standing *Saint Jerome*<sup>518</sup> (Museo dell'Opera, Siena). The quality of these works varies widely: to meet the demand of his clients, the aged master clearly availed himself to the help of assistants, but stylistic observations suggest that he himself actively participated in the

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individual pieces. The compositional and iconographical unity leaves no doubt that the series belonged together; it is only the details of the execution process that can be discussed.

<sup>516</sup> Van Marle 1919, 20 (referring to *St. Mark* as a work by Giacomo del Pisano); Van Marle 1924-25, 540 (refers to the *Mark*, *John* (repr.) and *Matthew* as by Giacomo del Pisano and remarks on the superior quality of Budapest piece); Van Marle 1923-38, vol. IX (1927), 458 (ascribes all four works to Giacomo del Pisano). Pope-Hennessy (1937, 125) considered the *St. Mark* "in every respect markedly inferior to the other three panels".

<sup>517</sup> The name "Iacomo del Pisano" is inscribed on a triptych in the National Gallery in Dublin. Recent technical examinations have shown it to be original (written communication from Sergio Benedetti, 17 September, 2007). No reference to a painter called Iacomo del Pisano has so far been found in written documents, but the observation that the Dublin triptych and some other works associated with it show a hand different from that of Giovanni di Paolo seems to me correct.

<sup>518</sup> Recently, this panel was absurdly dated to around 1440 (Tavolari 2007, 92-93, colour repr.).

execution of most of them, even if with increasingly failing abilities due to his growing blindness.<sup>519</sup>

Because of their coarse execution, the Evangelists must be among the latest works of the master and his workshop. They are closest in style to the so called *Large Maestà*, in which Giovanni di Paolo was clearly assisted (Figs. 12/9-12). This work is generally considered as one of the last works of the master. It is not dated or documented but an important detail in it, noted by Ludwin Paardekooper,<sup>520</sup> may perhaps furnish a chronological indication. On the right pilaster, St. Galgano appears holding the famous thirteenth-century reliquary in which his head was preserved and for which the Abbot of San Galgano was having a tabernacle made in April 1477 in the church of Sta. Maria Maddalena in Siena.<sup>521</sup> It is just conceivable that the *Large Maestà* was being painted in 1477 (and perhaps finished by the workshop after 19 November, 1477, when the painter is documented ill in his last will) and that a reference to the reliquary was inserted in it because of its importance to the Cistercians. Giovanni di Paolo's close relation with the Cistercians in his declining years is well attested by the San Galgano altarpiece (which may come from Sta. Maria Maddalena)<sup>522</sup> and the artist's bequest to the Cistercians in his will from 1477.<sup>523</sup> This suggestion remains hypothetical but a date around 1475-77 seems in any case likely for the Evangelist series in question.

The many slight differences between the pieces suggest that they were prepared separately and different hands worked on them. Infrared examination detected underdrawing in the *Mark* but not in the *Matthew* and the *John*, although in the latter, paint samples revealed the presence of some kind of a preparatory drawing.<sup>524</sup> The *Matthew* has not yet been examined from this point of view. The punched pattern in the *Matthew* and *Luke* is identical but slightly different in the *John* and *Mark*.<sup>525</sup>

In his portrayal of the four gospel writers, Giovanni di Paolo relied on a well-established iconographical tradition in Sieneese art since the first half of the Trecento, which showed the evangelists in half-figure above a book and often also a lectern, with their respective symbols below. Such compositions survive by Pietro Lorenzetti (pinnacle pieces,

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<sup>519</sup> See note 504 above.

<sup>520</sup> Verbal communication, 2003.

<sup>521</sup> Cf. Elisabetta Cioni, in Bagnoli, Bartalini, Bellosi, and Laclotte ed. 2003<sup>1</sup>, 438-445; Cioni 2005, 43-44, 81-82, colour repr.; 260-261; Paardekooper 2002<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>522</sup> See note 504 above.

<sup>523</sup> Other works from his last period may come from a Cistercian ambience too: the triptych in Baltimore prominently features San Galgano in the right lateral compartment.

<sup>524</sup> Cecilia van Gent, in Os et al. ed. 1989, 83.

<sup>525</sup> In the *St. John* the order of the penta-star and the double concentric punches is reversed; in the *Mark*, there are circles instead of the double concentric.

altarpiece of the Beata Umiltà, Uffizi, Florence), attributed to Niccolò di Segna (fields between saints, *Resurrection* altarpiece in Sansepolcro, Cathedral); Luca di Tommè (pinnacle pieces, *Sant'Anna Metterza* altarpiece from 1367, PNS, inv. 109), Andrea Vanni (upper part of laterals, *Santo Stefano alla Lizza* altarpiece), Bartolo di Fredi and workshop (frescos, Sala dei Nove, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena; *Sant'Agostino*, Montalcino), Spinello Aretino (frescos under the arch, Sala di Balìa, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena), workshop of Taddeo di Bartolo (pinnacle pieces?<sup>526</sup>), Gregorio di Cecco, gable fields of altarpiece laterals (Museo dell'Opera, Siena); Andrea di Bartolo (pinnacle pieces, private collection<sup>527</sup>), Martino di Bartolomeo (four separate panels, PNS, inv. 110); Martino di Bartolomeo (pinnacle pieces?)<sup>528</sup>; Paolo di Giovanni Fei (pinnacle pieces, later reduced in shape, Asciano, Museo d'Arte Sacra), among others.<sup>529</sup> Giovanni di Paolo himself frescoed the four evangelists with their symbols in quatrefoils in the borders of his fragmented *Crucifixion* fresco in San Leonardo al Lago,<sup>530</sup> and, later, he painted a similar series of panels (*Blessing Christ and the Four Evangelists*, Chiamonte Bordonaro Coll., Palermo, reportedly 86 or 98 x 145 cm,<sup>531</sup> Fig. 12/13).

Since many precedents of this type of composition are pinnacle pieces, nearly all scholars regarded the Seattle-Amsterdam-Budapest-Siena series as freestanding pinnacles in the upper register of an altarpiece. The low viewpoint indeed speaks for this idea. Cesare Brandi alone regarded it as a now dismembered polyptych in its own right, in analogy to the Palermo series.<sup>532</sup> The Palermo series has been inaccessible for examination for a very long time, but it is clear from photographs that the frame which unites the five panels is mostly modern, and the four evangelists are cut and completed above the haloes. Yet, until a technical examination can be carried out it remains open if these panels were originally separate or conjoined. Martino di Bartolomeo's series in the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Siena (PNS, inv. 110) suggests that it was possible for panels of this type to be directly adjacent to one another.

<sup>526</sup> The *St. Mark* and the *St. John* were formerly in the formerly Oldenburg, Landesmuseum (cf. Berenson 1930-31<sup>1</sup>, 279, repr.); the *St. Matthew* and the *St. Luke* were formerly in the Serristori coll., Florence, cf. Solberg 1994, figs. 14-15)

<sup>527</sup> Gaudenz Freuler, in Caioni ed. 2007, 84-89.

<sup>528</sup> Repr. Ada Labriola, in Boskovits and Tripps ed. 2008, 98, 100.

<sup>529</sup> The composition occurs in Florentine art as well; see Taddeo Gaddi's works (Chiodo 2001, 252, figs. 6-7).

<sup>530</sup> Cecilia Alessi, "La Crocifissione di Giovanni di Paolo", in *Lecceto...* 1990, 309-314, esp. fig. 1 on p. 310.

<sup>531</sup> It is not known but presumable that these dimensions include the modern frame, crockets, and base.

<sup>532</sup> Cesare Brandi (1919-32, 444; 1941, 337 n. 82). In 1933, however, Brandi described the *Mark* as "cuspidi di un grande polittico". Besides Brandi, Berenson (1932, 247; 1936, 212) considered the Palermo series as a polyptych (but in the posthumous edition [1968, 179] the pieces were called "Five upper panels of a polyptych"). Other authors regarded the Palermo series as pinnacle pieces conceived to stand separately. Pope-Hennessy (1988, 17) associated them with the altarpiece from 1454 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

There is no conclusive evidence as to the original context of Seattle-Amsterdam-Budapest-Siena series. Unlike the Palermo panels, these panels are unequal in height: The *Luke* and *Mark* are significantly shorter (the painted surface of the *St. Mark* is 52.8 x 34.5 cm; that of the *St. Luke* is similar) than the *John* and *Matthew* (painted surfaces 71.5 x 33.5 cm, 70.4 x 33.2 cm, respectively). The *Luke* and *Mark* are slightly wider than the other two. The unequal height is very likely due to the intention to insert the structure under an arch, with the shorter figures on the outside. Considering the postures of the figures, the original sequence of the panels from the left was thus: Luke, John, Matthew, Mark (Fig. 12/14). The series must have had a central panel which has not been identified, perhaps showing the Blessing Christ, as in Palermo.<sup>533</sup>

To decide whether these panels originally stood independently or framed together, more in-depth examinations involving all the panels are necessary; here only preliminary observations can be made. Before painting, all four panels were fitted with an engaged moulding along their gables and on the inner part of the horizontal border next to the gable.<sup>534</sup> In the *Mark*, *John* and *Matthew* (and possibly in the *Luke* as well)<sup>535</sup>, incised lines in the gold ground run parallel to the vertical edges, delineating the area to be gilt. In the *Mark* (the only one whose original painted surface is now fully visible), the craftsman laying the gold leaves went beyond the lines but stopped short of the edge in several places.<sup>536</sup> The unfinished gilding and the vertical incised lines along the edges make sense only if these areas were meant to be covered with framing elements after the painting was finished.<sup>537</sup>

This leaves us with two broad theoretical possibilities. One is that the panels were independent pinnacle elements with engaged frames along their gables, but their vertical framing was added later and not permanently attached to the painted surfaces – this would be a highly unusual procedure and it is unclear how it would have been done. The surface of the *St. Mark* (the only one whose sides can be examined) is gessoed to its edges, and its vertical

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<sup>533</sup> Pope-Hennessy's suggestion that the series was completed in the centre by the *Blessing Christ* (PNS, inv. 208) has been unanimously rejected because of its earlier date.

<sup>534</sup> All the four mouldings had the same profile, with very minor differences in proportions. The inner parts of these mouldings along the gable and all of the small horizontal mouldings survive in the *Matthew* and the *John*. In the *Mark*, the horizontal pieces have been removed (*barbes* testify to their former presence) but all of the mouldings and most of the crockets along the gable are original. As old photos prove, the inner parts of the *original* moulding by the gable and the small horizontal section on the left survived in the *Luke*, too (Fig. 12/5), before all framing was unfortunately removed during its last restoration.

<sup>535</sup> The *Luke* appears to be repaired and regilt in this area now. In pre-restoration photographs, the vertical edges are in shadow but in some parts the incised lines seem to be discernible.

<sup>536</sup> Whether the same happened in the other three pieces is not possible to tell since the *Luke* is restored and the vertical edges of the *Matthew* and *John* are covered by a permanently attached modern frame.

<sup>537</sup> Otherwise there would have been no need to mark the border of the gilt area, as it would have extended on the frame.

sides are straight and appear to be uncut. There just seems to be no rational way of how a vertical frame could have been attached to its sides. The other possibility is that the panels were painted individually (and possibly contemporarily, with the help of various assistants of the master) but in the end received a common vertical dividers and were thus originally contiguous – this is technically possible and conceivable, even if unusual. The area beyond the incised lines would thus have been covered by the dividers. It is hoped that further examinations will shed light on these structural problems.

In my view, even if the panels were separate pinnacle pieces, their association with the San Galgano altarpiece is unlikely for stylistic reasons (Cf. Fig. 11/16), and not for the differences in dimensions.<sup>538</sup> The Evangelists are simply significantly lower in quality than the San Galgano panels, and compare best to the *Large Maestà*, as noted above. However strange this proposal may seem, I wonder if the joined series of the Evangelists in question could not form the now missing top register of this altarpiece (the *Annunciation* lunette now placed on top of the altarpiece does not belong to it). Together with a unifying framing and a proportionately wider central panel, their combined width would match that of the central panel (ca. 210 cm). In Siena this was a time of transition between Gothic and Renaissance altarpiece structures, and many highly unusual, mixed structures were made. A somewhat similar case may be Benvenuto di Giovanni's – unfortunately rather restored – altarpiece from Montepertuso, in which three gables crown an altarpiece, apparently above a straight, Renaissance cornice.<sup>539</sup>

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 23, no. 124 and [Ramboux] 1867, 25, no. 124 (cites the *St. Matthew* together with *St. Luke* and *St. John*, nos. 125-26, attributes them to Lorenzo von Siena [Vecchietta] and notes that the fourth piece showing *St. Mark* is in the Accademia in Siena); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1869-76, vol. IV/1 (1871), 71 n. 40 (report *Matthew* together with the *John* and *Luke* as ascribed to Vecchietta in the Ramboux collection); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1873, 5, no. 46 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1876,

<sup>538</sup> An association was first suggested by Pope-Hennessy (1937, 125) and rejected by Brandi (1941, 337, n. 82; 1947, 92, with no reasons given), Torriti (1978, 333; 1990, 231, 238), and many others, usually on the basis difference in style and/or dimensions. The top edges of the four side panels of the San Galgano altarpiece measure 32.5-33 cm (I am grateful to Elena Pinzauti for her description and measurement of these panels) which is very slightly less than the width of the Evangelists. Pinnacle pieces can be as wide as or even wider than the panels below them, and are placed on a widening and connecting pedestal (a few examples: Lippo Vanni's fictive frescoed polyptych and Taddeo di Bartolo's altarpiece in Montepulciano, both repr. in Chelazzi Dini, Angelini, and Sani 1997, 192, 205 respectively; Taddeo di Bartolo's polyptych in the Pinacoteca of Volterra, repr. Os II, 1990, 70 fig. 53; Sano di Pietro's Gesuati altarpiece; PNS, inv. 246 or his altarpiece in Montemerano, repr. Gnoni Mavarelli, Sebregondi, and Tramonti ed. 2000, 80; Matteo di Giovanni's altarpiece from San Pietro a Ovile in the Museo Diocesano in Siena).

<sup>539</sup> Bandera 1999, repr. p. 89. I have never examined this altarpiece and cannot say how much of the structure is original but this arrangement seems to reflect the original in general lines.

6, no. 91 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Országos Képtár* 1878, 6, 91 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Országos Képtár* 1879, 6, 91 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pulszky 1881, 4, no. 8. (Sienese, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pulszky 1888, 3, no. 21 (“Lorenzo di Pietro-il Vecchietta, a follower of this master”); Berenson 1897, 187 (attributed to Lorenzo Vecchietta, cites the *St. Matthew* erroneously as *St. Luke*); *Az Országos Képtár...* 1897, 13-14, no. 21 (follower of Lorenzo di Pietro da Siena) *Verzeichniss* 1897, 7, no. 21 (manner of Lorenzo di Pietro Vecchietta); Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 141, no. 21 (Lorenzo di Pietro); *Catalogue* 1898, 7, no. 21 (manner of Lorenzo di Pietro Vecchietta); *Az Országos Képtár...* 1901, 10, no. 21 (follower of Lorenzo di Pietro Vecchietta); Destrée 1903, 43 (Lorenzo di Pietro called Vecchietta, cites the *St. Matthew* erroneously as *St. Luke*); Térey 1906<sup>1</sup>, 12, no. 49 (21) (Giovanni di Paolo di Grazia); Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>, 23 (Giovanni di Paolo di Grazia, mentions that earlier catalogues and Berenson cite it as Vecchietta while Schubring, Langton Douglas, and Térey as Giovanni di Paolo); Berenson 1909, 177 (Giovanni di Paolo); Térey 1913, 82, no. 49 (21) (Giovanni di Paolo); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1903-15, V, ed. T. Borenius (1914), 177 n. 1 (cites the *St. Matthew* in Budapest and *St. John* in Cologne as works by Giovanni di Paolo), 176 n. 5 (lists *St. Mark* in Siena by its inv. only); Térey 1915 (mentions all four works as works by Giovanni di Paolo from ca. 1430, considers them pinnacles of a large altarpiece, with Christ in the centre); Térey 1916, 51-52, repr. (Giovanni di Paolo); Van Marle 1919, 20 (refers to *St. Mark* as work by Giacomo del Pisano); C. H. Weigelt, “Giovanni di Paolo” in Thieme and Becker 1907-50, vol. XIV (1921), 134 (Giovanni di Paolo, with the other three fragments formed part of large altarpiece from the early period of the painter, even if not already 1430 as Schubring claimed); Térey 1924, 59 (Giovanni di Paolo); Van Marle 1924/25, 540 (refers to *Mark, John* (repr.) and *Matthew* as works by Giacomo del Pisano; remarks on superior quality of Budapest piece); Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 458 (refers to all four works as by Giacomo del Pisano, reports his own recent discovery of *St. Luke* in a private collection); Brandi 1919-32 [1931], 444 n. 1. (Giovanni di Paolo, *St. Matthew* seems to be a companion piece to *St. Mark* in the PNS, dating from ca. 1460; both form part of a series of four panels; lists earlier iconographical analogues) [all subsequent authors refer to the piece as by Giovanni di Paolo]; Gengaro 1932, 23-27, esp. 26 (lists the *Mark, Matthew, and John*); Berenson 1932, 245; Brandi 1933, 91, no. 195 (cites the *St. Mark* as probably “cuspide di un grande polittico”, refers to *Matthew* and *John* as part of the same series; wrongly states that the frame is original); Petrovics 1935, 8, no. 25; Berenson 1936, 211 (lists the *Matthew, John* and *Mark*); Pope-Hennessy 1937, 125, nn. on p. 143, Pl. XIX (ca. 1470); Pigler 1937, I, 116-17, no. 21 (49), II, pl. 12 (refers to all four pieces but is unaware of the location of the *St. Luke*); Brandi 1941, 337 n. 82 and Brandi 1947, 91-92, n. 82 (considers the four pieces late works and fragments of a dismembered polyptych similar to the work in Palermo); Suida 1952, 14 (cites all four pieces, ca. 1465); Pigler 1954, 237-238 (cites all four pieces); Suida, *European Paintings* 1954, 34 (cites all four pieces, ca. 1465); Coor 1959, 86 (late work; the size, carpentry of the original parts of the frame and the halo decoration would allow for an association with the Staggia altarpiece but the more careful execution speaks against this; the very different halo decorations are against an association with the S. Galgano altarpiece as well); Shapley 1966, 149-150, (ca. 1475, refuses association with the S. Galgano and with the Staggia altarpiece); Pigler 1967, I, 271-272, II, fig. 21 (late work); Berenson 1968, 176; Marjan Reinders, in Gerson and Os ed. 1969, cat. 9 (around 1470); Torriti 1977, 331 (rejects the association of the four evangelists with the S. Galgano altarpiece); Cecilia van Gent, in Os et al. ed. 1989, 83 (1465-70, stylistic similarities with San Galgano altarpiece); Torriti 1990, 231, 237-38 (ca. 1465-70, refuses association with the *Blessing Christ* and the S. Galgano altarpiece). Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 50 (ca. 1470); Panders 1997, 87, n. 174 (association of *St. Mark* with the rest of the series is doubtful); Chiyo Ishikawa, in Kier and Zehnder ed. 1995, 587-88, cat. 203 (original arrangement of four pieces is unclear); Kier and

Zehnder ed. 1998, 561, no. 124 (ca. 1465-75); Paardekooper 2002<sup>3</sup>, 231 n. 6 (the association of the *St. Mark* with the S. Galgano polyptych seems unlikely to this author on the basis of somewhat imprecisely calculated measurements); Dóra Sallay, “Giovanni di Paolo”, in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 55, 2007, 55-62, esp. 59 (pinnacle piece); Sallay 2008, 14.

**Pellegrino di Mariano**  
(**Pellegrino di Mariano di Jacopo**)<sup>540</sup>  
(doc. Siena, 1449 – Siena, 1492)

Pellegrino di Mariano is best known today for his miniatures, especially those executed for the choir books of the Pienza cathedral in the early 1460s and for the Sieneese cathedral and the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala between 1464 and 1481. He is documented as a panel and fresco painter, and, as usual for painters in his time, for minor works such as painting banners, a tabernacle, and a ceiling. The full assessment of Pellegrino di Mariano's *oeuvre* has not yet been done and is the subject of a monographic study by the present author.

Like most painters, Pellegrino lived, with his large family, in the *terzo* of Camollia in Siena. The touchstones for assessing Pellegrino's artistic activity are, besides his many documented miniatures, two signed paintings. The first of these is a *Madonna and Child with Sts. John the Baptist and Bernardino* in the Brooks Museum of Art in Memphis, dated 1450, the year of Bernardino's canonization, which shows the determining influence of Giovanni di Paolo. His other signed but undated work is a large portable triptych (*Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints and the Annunciation*) in private collection, which must postdate the panel from 1450, as the artist's style shows more autonomy and is more like his early miniatures from the first half of the 1460s. I recently proposed a further work that may serve as a fix point for the chronology, the Gabella cover showing the *Annunciation with St. Bernard, Pope Callixtus III, and worshippers* from 1456 (ASS, Siena). Pellegrino's later works show a strong influence of Sano di Pietro, with whom he collaborated on the liturgical book illumination project for the cathedral of Pienza.

Pellegrino was a painter of modest talents, yet not without a certain grace. His unpretentious, naïve style is markedly linear and characterized by with a variegated, bright palette. Lacking anatomical understanding, Pellegrino used an easily identifiable, stylized stock of motifs for his figures, which in his early phase appear as large-headed, fragile mannequins, gesticulating with long fingers. The typical features of his physiognomies include small eyes with pinched corners, pronounced, schematic wrinkles on the ridge of the nose and in the corners of the eyes, ears with thick, semicircular tips, and the symmetrically arranged hair and beards which often forms stylized locks or curls. His textiles are often adorned by evenly spaced, small floral patterns, which are applied evenly across the whole surface, ignoring the folds of the garment. His landscapes, punctuated by conical hills and

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<sup>540</sup> Pellegrino di Mariano's often quoted name form, "Pellegrino di Mariano Rossini" is the result of a misunderstanding. The painter never used the name Rossini, which was in fact a nickname of his grandfather (see Sallay, forthcoming).

evenly spaced bunches of grass, derive from the art of Giovanni di Paolo. Pellegrino's work on larger scale is more static and repetitive. His drawing is rigid, his brushwork rather coarse, his forms often flattened and with stiff contours.

Besides a very large number of Madonnas for private devotion, Pellegrino's hitherto unrecognized, important works include an *Assumption of the Virgin* altarpiece in Cagliari (Fig. 2/9), a large fresco over the altar in the crypt of the Cathedral of Massa Marittima, a large panel showing the *Virgin Annunciate* in the church of San Giorgio in Montemerano, an altarpiece lateral with *St. Bernardino of Siena* (now Sacristy, San Domenico, Siena), a pair of *cassone* frontals in private collection (*Triumph of Love*, formerly H. Kisters Coll., Kreuzlingen; *Triumph of Chastity*, formerly Cook Coll., Richmond, Surrey), and the panel originally painted on both sides and now bisected into the *Virgin and Child* (Collegiata, San Quirico d'Orcia) and the *St. Bartholomew* (Private Coll., sold Porro & C., Milan, 9 May, 2007), which, as Alessandro Bagnoli suggested to me, is the first surviving Sienese *cataletto* panel.

**Select bibliography:**

Romagnoli, *ante* 1835 (1976), V, 27-34; Pope-Hennessy 1937, 159-160; Pope-Hennessy, 1939<sup>1</sup>, 172, 211-12, 214; Pope-Hennessy, 1939<sup>2</sup>, 212-18; Brandi 1947, 103-104; Brandi 1949, 227-28 n. 109; Cecilia Alessi, in Zeri ed. 1987, II, 730; G. Chelazzi Dini, "Pittura senese dal 1250 al 1450", in Chelazzi Dini, Angelini, and Sani 1997, 248-249; Ciardi Dupré 1972, *passim*; Carl B. Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 243-48 (It. ed. 257-62); Milvia Bollati, "Pellegrino di Mariano Rossini", in *ead.* ed. 2004, s.v.; Sallay 2004; Sallay, forthcoming (bibl., doc., a biographical profile and a reassessment of the painter's panel and fresco painting activity).

### 13. Pellegrino di Mariano

*St. Catherine of Siena*

**Fig. 13/1**

ca. 1480-90 (?)

tempera and gold on wood

panel and painted surface (without added strips of wood): 14 x 13.8 cm

thickness: 1.6 – ca. 3 cm (including *pastiglia* decoration)

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.173.

**Provenance:** Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, before 1842-1866, no. 165 (as Vecchietta); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 165 (as Vecchietta); Arnold Ipolyi in Pest, Barsszentkereszt/Besztercebánya, and Várad until 1886; deposited at the Episcopate of Várad until 1919 (no. 38: “Holy nun” or no. 41: “A nun”<sup>541</sup>); deposited at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, 1919-1920; acquired through Ipolyi’s bequest in 1920.

#### **Technical notes:**

The support consists of a single piece of horizontally grained wood and conserves its original thickness (Fig. 13/2). The surface of the reverse is very uneven and deformed by knots in the lower right area (as viewed from the back). The panel is irregularly bevelled at the top and the bottom. There are a few intact worm exit holes on the reverse except for an approximately 2-3 cm high strip at the bottom, where it shows extensive woodworm damage. This area also shows traces of dark reddish brown resin.

The panel is cut on both vertical sides. At the bottom, the open wormhole channels suggest that has been slightly planed. Also, no lip survives along the bottom of the painted surface, which is heavily repaired, but the paint surface itself has not been reduced. The upper edge is intact and the painted surface is bordered by a *barbe* that runs along its full width. The upper side of the support is also intact (Fig. 13/3), indicating that the panel did not extend beyond the painted surface and that the *barbe* originally joined a separate element.

There are two 6 mm-wide, modern unpainted wooden strips glued to the vertical sides and a 4 mm-wide, modern gilt strip nailed to the bottom.

The painted surface is in fair condition. The border of the medallion is made up in *pastiglia*. The surfaces in white paint are rather fragmented. There are minor losses to the right of Catherine’s cheek and under her chin, around her right hand and above her left thumb. Other losses of paint particles are evenly scattered. There are some minor damages and inpaints on the top of the white veil and on Catherine’s left temple, and a few minor scratches, cracks, and inpainted worm exit holes in the gilt areas. The whitish paint in the upper and lower right corners are worn and allow the underlying red bole and gilding to show through. The outlines of the figure have been incised into the gesso prior to painting. An incised line to the left of the saint’s neck, running under the lily and the punched halo, is a *pentimento*; it was probably meant to mark the border of the never executed left part of the black mantle pulled over the saint’s head.

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<sup>541</sup> Cf. Némethy ed. 1896.

The gold is original and well-preserved except on the *pastiglia* where it is abraded. The punches include a simple arch (2 x 3 mm), pointed double contour arch (6 x 6.3 mm), hexa-circle (diam.: 5.5 mm) (Fig. 13/14).

The panel is enclosed in a moulded and partly gilt modern (19<sup>th</sup> c.) frame. There is no documented restoration for this piece.

#### **Documentation:**

On the upper side: “LOR: IL VECCHIETTA” (in black ink, 19<sup>th</sup> c.?) (Fig. 13/3);

On reverse: “S. Caterina da Siena” (in black ink, 19<sup>th</sup> c. handwriting, probably Ramboux’s); “132” (blue chalk), “J.A.Ramboux” (in red wax seal); “218” (in pencil); “165” (in pencil); “ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM” (stamped, twice), “55.173” (in blank ink).

On modern frame: “Vecchietta” (in pencil, 20<sup>th</sup> c.) “ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM” (stamped, three times); “55.173” (in black ink); “55.173” (in blue ink); “+ KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM” (round stamp).

St. Catherine of Siena wears the white tunic and black mantle of the Dominicans, while her white veil indicates her status as a tertiary member of that order. Unusually, her black mantle is partly pulled over her head to show her as a *mantellata*. She turns to the left and holds her customary attributes in Sienese painting: the lily, symbolic of her purity, and the book, which refers to her writings.<sup>542</sup> Her figure is enclosed in a medallion executed in *pastiglia* and bordered by rich punchwork. In the corners of the composition, between further gilt and punched strips, fragments of green and white marble imitation appears. The black and white lines bordering these fields testify to the painter’s ambition to create an illusion of depth and shadow, as if the marble panels projected forward from the pictorial plane. The painter must have copied this widespread feature in contemporary Sienese art from other paintings but applied illogically: it is the upper edges of the fictive marble panels that are painted black and the lower ones white, as if light came from below. But the dimensions, typology, iconography, the horizontal grain of the wood, and the fragmented marble decoration itself indicate that the panel was part of a small predella, in which case the opposite of this lighting scheme would be logical.

In 1862, Ramboux recorded this *St. Catherine* in his collection together with another fragment from the same predella, which had the same dimensions and was listed consecutively with the same attribution to Vecchietta. According the description, the companion piece represented a half-length male saint in a medallion, holding the “sun” and a lily in his hands. Ramboux believed him to be Saint Nicolas of Tolentino, but noted that Saint

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<sup>542</sup> For extensive sources of Catherinian iconography, see Bianchi and Giunta 1988, with further bibl. (see esp. pp. 76-81 for Catherine’s attributes in Sienese art); Trenti and Klange Addabo ed. 1999; for sources on the cult of St. Catherine: Fawtier 1921; on the genesis of Catherine’s cult: Sofia Boesch Gajano and Odile Redon, “La Legenda Maior di Raimondo da Capua, costruzione di una santa”, in Maffei and Nardi ed. 1982, 15-36.

Thomas Aquinas also had these attributes.<sup>543</sup> This documented companion piece was long believed to be lost and is indicated as such in the reconstruction of the Ramboux collection in 1998.<sup>544</sup> It can now be identified with a work in the collection of the Huis Bergh Foundation, 's Heerenberg (inv. 31) – which contains other works from the Ramboux collection (cf. Cat. 18) – thanks to a revision of the holdings of the collection by Victor Schmidt and Andrea De Marchi, during which Victor Schmidt was kind enough to send me a photo of it, raising the possibility of Pellegrino di Mariano's authorship.<sup>545</sup> The saint, identifiable now as Saint Nicholas of Tolentino (Figs. 13/4, 13/5), turns to the right and the colours of the marble decoration are reversed, so it must have been originally situated on the left side of the predella, which, according to custom, probably showed Christ in the central medallion.

Although in early Italian art St. Nicholas of Tolentino – similarly to St. Thomas Aquinas – often has the “sun” (or a radiant star with a face in the centre) not in his hand but on his chest, in fifteenth-century Sieneese art the more firmly established visual tradition showed the saint holding the sun and the lily (usually together with a book). Examples for this type of representation are found especially in the art of Giovanni di Paolo, Pellegrino's probable master and model for several of his compositions, and by whose works also the *St. Nicholas* in 's Heerenberg seems to be inspired.<sup>546</sup>

The identification of the surviving two saints from the predella does not provide enough information for a hypothesis on the provenance of the predella. St. Catherine's cult was so fervent in her native city that her presence can be expected in virtually any Sieneese work of

<sup>543</sup> As Ramboux did not comment on the colour of the habit of the saint (black habit with a leather belt for Augustinians and black habit over white tunic for Dominicans), the identity of the male saint remained uncertain. Ramboux 1862, 28, no. 164: “*Der. heil. Nicolaus von Tolentin mit Sonne un Lilie in der Hand. (Der. h. Thomas von Aquino hat dasselbe Attribut.) In halber Figur, von Lorenzo di Pietro detto il Vecchietta.*” The dimensions for both pieces are given as 5” 6” by 5” 6”, that is, ca. 14.38 by 14.38 cm, which very nearly corresponds to their actual size.

<sup>544</sup> Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 568, no. 164.

<sup>545</sup> I am most grateful to Victor Schmidt for calling my attention to this work, which was not included in the catalogues of the Sieneese paintings in Holland (Gerson and Os ed. 1969; Os et al. ed., 1989) because it was ascribed to the Bolognese Michele di Matteo in the collection (cf. Heek 1987, 140, fig. 147, repr. on p. 147; Kutsch Lojenga-Rietberg 2001, 85, fig. 72 on p. 183). The piece is enclosed in a 19<sup>th</sup>-century frame that is identical to that of the *St. Catherine* in Esztergom. I thank Victor Schmidt for informing me of the precise dimensions of the *St. Nicholas*: width on the top 14.3 cm; width at the bottom 14.5; height on the left and right 14 cm; thickness uneven. On the verso, Ramboux's seal is conserved.

<sup>546</sup> See the *Exaltation of St. Nicholas of Tolentino* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Lehman Coll., inv. 1975.I.35, cf. Pope-Hennessy, assisted by L. Kanter, 1987, 140-141), the polyptych from 1454 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 32.100.76, cf. Pope-Hennessy 1988, fig. 20 on p. 18), and the life-size image of the saint in the church of Sant'Agostino in Montepulciano from 1457 (Strehlke 2004, 177-182, fig. 33.3 on p. 180). In the Lehman *Exaltation* and the Montepulciano image, the saint holds in his other hand a lily together with a book. For recent iconographical studies on St. Nicholas, see Tollo and Bisacci ed. 1999; Giannatiempo López ed. 2005, and the extensive iconographical corpus, *San Nicola da Tolentino...* 2005, none of which include Pellegrino's work. The attribute of the “sun” or radiant star results from the conflation of several biographical episodes, for which see Roberto Tollo, “Nota introduttiva”, in Tollo and Bisacci ed. 1999, 40-41.

art created after 1461, the year of her canonization. The presence of St. Nicholas of Tolentino might indicate an Augustinian context – a question that could be answered only by the recovery of further fragments from the same predella.<sup>547</sup>

Sieneſe predellas had been decorated with roundels ſince the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>548</sup> The number of medallions ranged from three to as many as nine;<sup>549</sup> the diſtance between the predella medallions, too, varied greatly from contiguous roundels to roundels placed apart ſeveral times their own width. Pellegrino’s only ſurviving, intact predella (PNS, inv. 331) contains nine contiguous fields (Fig. 13/6),<sup>550</sup> and our predella may alſo have contained originally a large number of fields. Four of theſe could poſſibly be the four “formelle” which Ceſare Brandi mentioned as late works by Pellegrino in the Liechtenſtein collection in Vienna. Brandi, whoſe attributions regarding Pellegrino are uſually reliable, remarked that theſe paintings (it is not clear whether the reference is to one fragment with four painted fields or to more fragments) were very ſimilar to the above mentioned predella in Siena.<sup>551</sup> CM 55.173 indeed is quite ſimilar to the Sieneſe predella in its general aſpect, thus Brandi’s indication is of great intereſt, but the pieces mentioned by him are not included in any of the old guides and catalogues of the Liechtenſtein collection, nor could they be traced among the muſeum’s preſent holdings or in its archives.<sup>552</sup>

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<sup>547</sup> Pellegrino, in any caſe, had comiſſions from the Auguſtinian order: around the late 1450s or early 1460s he executed nearly all the miniatures in a gradual that has been identified as part of the choir book ſeries of the Auguſtinian community at Lecceto (BCS, H.I.2, cf. Gino Garoſi and Giulietta Chelazzi Dini, in Chelazzi Dini ed. 1982, 368-371; Grazia Vailati Schoenburg Waldenburg, *La Libreria di Coro di Lecceto*, in *Lecceto e gli eremi agostiniani ...*, 1990, 399-401, 515-23). Pellegrino was probably introduced to his Auguſtinian patrons by Giovanni di Paolo, who executed three hitoriated miniatures in this codex himſelf.

<sup>548</sup> See Cat. 16 and Cat. 18. There are ſeveral examples in Sieneſe painting alſo for enclosing a half-length ſaint in a *pastiglia* border.

<sup>549</sup> An important example of a predella with nine contiguous roundels is by Sano di Pietro in his altarpiece painted for the church of San Giorgio in Montemerano in 1458. Pellegrino, who from around 1460 was ſtrongly influenced by the art of Sano and collaborated with him on the miniatures for the Pienza choir books, may well have known this work, and it is even poſſible that he received comiſſions from the ſame church (where two of his works ſurvive, cf. Sallay, in course of publication) through his contact with Sano di Pietro.

<sup>550</sup> Torriti 1990, 243, and fig. 304 on p. 244. This predella was firſt attributed to Pellegrino di Mariano by Ceſare Brandi (1947, 98, 106 n. 12, 124). Piero Torriti (1977, 340 and 1990, 243) accepted this attribution with a queſtion mark only. At preſent, the Muſeum attributes the work to Pellegrino.

<sup>551</sup> Brandi 1949, 228.

<sup>552</sup> Kronfeld 1927; Strohmer 1943. The muſeum ſtaff of the collection has not been able to furniſh any information on the former or actual preſence of theſe works in the Liechtenſtein collection (written communication of Andrea Stockhammer, 15 July, 2004). It may be hoped that during the ongoing catalogization of Ceſare Brandi’s photo archives reproductions of theſe pieces may come to light (communication of Anna Maria Guiducci, 2004). Formerly I ſuſpected another companion piece in the “ſmall half-length figure of St. Bernardine and a holy nun, medallion from a predella” mentioned by Raimond Van Marle in the Lanckoroſki collection in Vienna (1923-38, IX (1927), 532), in a liſt of paintings brought together on a ſtyliſtic baſis, in which many of Pellegrino’s actual works can be identified. Van Marle’s deſcription of this piece is ambiguous, as the uſe of the ſingular ſuggeſts one medallion with two figures. The rich Lanckoroſki collection has been diſperſed and partly deſtroyed (Miziolek 1995), and I am grateful to Jerzy Miziolek for ſending me two photographs of theſe pieces, which clarify that we are dealing with two ſeparate roundels, and not by Pellegrino.

The composition of CM 55.173 and the nearly identical but mirrored representation of the same saint in the predella in Siena (Figs. 13/6-7, 13/9) are based on a well-established Sieneese iconographical tradition of the saint. The first surviving representation of Caterina di Jacopo di Benincasa (ca. 1347-1380) is a fresco in San Domenico, Siena, painted in the last quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century by a devout follower of hers, Andrea di Vanni.<sup>553</sup> In this image, Catherine appears slightly turned to the side, with her head bowed and shown in three-quarter profile, and holding the lily elegantly from above, with her fingertips. In the fifteenth century, Sieneese artists drew upon this prototypical image, except that they placed a red book in the other hand of the saint (which in the 14<sup>th</sup>-century fresco is extended for the kiss of a devotee).<sup>554</sup> This composition became the codified Sieneese representation of Catherine, appearing in the official civic cult images created in the years around her canonization in the Palazzo Pubblico, the most influential of which was painted in the Sala del Consiglio by Lorenzo di Pietro called Vecchietta (Fig. 13/11).<sup>555</sup> These prototypes were followed by a large number of compositionally very similar images, including an originally full length, now mutilated image of the saint by Giovanni di Paolo, painted probably soon after Catherine's canonization (Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass., inv. 1921.13, Fig. 13/12). Pellegrino himself relied closely both on Vecchietta's and Giovanni di Paolo's representation, when he depicted St. Catherine in his Benedictine altarpiece now in Cagliari (Fig. 13/13).<sup>556</sup> CM 55.173, which probably postdates the Cagliari altarpiece, has been likened especially to the composition of a predella fragment in the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht painted by Sano di Pietro (Fig. 13/8),<sup>557</sup> under whose influence Pellegrino worked in the later decades of his life.

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I still wonder whether Brandi in his reference possibly referred to these two (and two other lost?) medallions, giving the location erroneously as in the Liechtenstein, not the Lanckoronski, collection, both in Vienna.

<sup>553</sup> Bähr 1984.

<sup>554</sup> The images of Catherine before her canonization are discussed by Diega Giunta, "Dal transito ai primi decenni del XV secolo: origini del culto, sua diffusione e prime immagini della Beata Caterina da Siena", in Bianchi and Giunta, 1988, 65-75, and by Moerer, 2003, esp. pp. 113-126.

<sup>555</sup> For Vecchietta's fresco, see Brandi ed. 1983, fig. 344 on p. 260; Paola Pugliesi, in Bianchi and Giunta 1988, 252-253; Moerer 2003, 124. Further frescos probably created at this time include one of disputed attribution in the former Camera del Capitano on the first floor (Francesco di Lorenzo di Bartolomeo Migliore or Sano di Pietro), for which see Southard, 1978, 197; Brandi (ed.), 1983, 163, fig. 183 on p. 160; Maurizio Giammarioli in Bianchi and Giunta 1988, 249; Moerer 2003, 125-126, with previous bibl.

<sup>556</sup> This *Assumption* altarpiece is currently attributed to the Sieneese Carlo di Giovanni (cf. Gallavotti Cavallero, 1974/75-1975/76; Segni Pulvirenti and Serreli 1992, 8, fig. 3). I proposed its attribution to Pellegrino di Mariano and its provenance from a Benedictine ambience in the conference paper "Pellegrino di Mariano: The Panel Paintings Revisited" (Archivio di Stato, Siena, *Papa Pio II Piccolomini*, 5-7 May, 2005), cf. Sallay, forthcoming. Pellegrino showed the saint according to this prototype in his many pictures of the Madonna and Child with saints (e.g. *Madonna and Child with Sts. Sebastian and Catherine of Siena, and the Crucifixion*, priv. coll., cf. Andrea G. De Marchi, in Mannini ed. 1999, 124-127).

<sup>557</sup> Stineke Dirkzwager, in Os et al. ed. 1989, pp. 114-116; colour pl. on p.14 in Os 1984 and 1990, vol. 2. The very close similarity in function, format, and composition between this work and Pellegrino's *St. Catherine* in

CM 55.173 was first attributed to Pellegrino di Mariano by Federico Zeri in an oral communication before 1964. Zeri's opinion was cited but not followed in the catalogue of 1964, where the piece is mentioned as a Siene work from the second half of the fifteenth century. The attribution to Pellegrino was confirmed by Andrea De Marchi (1993) and by the present writer (2004 and forthcoming). Further support for Pellegrino's authorship was provided by Mojmír Frinta's examination of the punchmarks, which led the scholar to ascribe the piece to the Ego Sum Master, a conventional name he created to cover a group of paintings by the same hand. This hand however, as I proposed in a lecture, appears to be Pellegrino's own.<sup>558</sup>

A comparison with Pellegrino's miniatures and panel paintings confirm the attribution (Figs. 13/8-9), but the dating remains a difficult issue, since the chronology of Pellegrino's panel paintings has not yet been clarified. The artist's two dated panels were both executed in his early period (1450, 1456). Although these are followed by many documented miniatures until 1481, the illuminations give evidence of a limited stylistic development only and lend scarce aid to the reconstruction of the chronology of the artist's large-scale work. Until newly discovered documentary evidence makes the latter possible, only hypothetical statements can be made. Along these general lines, it is probable that Andrea de Marchi (1993) was right when he assigned CM 55.173 to the late phase of Pellegrino's activity. The work must certainly postdate the better known early phase of the artist. The presence of the halo alone strongly suggests a date after Catherine's canonization. I am inclined to think that the Siene predella (Figs. 13/6-8) was created in the middle phase of the artist, in the time of his early maturity. This work has a freshness and grace which is absent in the *St. Catherine of Siena* in Esztergom and the *St. Nicholas of Tolentino* in 's Heerenberg, whose forms are more rigid and lax in their execution; the handling of paint is dry and rough, the palette pale and dull greyish. Even when compared to the last datable miniatures of the artist from 1481 (Cod. 9.I and Cod. 11.M, Libreria Piccolomini, Siena),<sup>559</sup> these fragments give the impression of being later

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Esztergom has been pointed out by Maurizio Giammarioli (in Bianchi and Giunta 1988, 245, cat. 131). Sano's predella medallion conserves its original horizontal grain but has been cut down and inserted into a rectangular panel with vertical grain (DeJong-Janssen 1995, 114). A similar predella-medallion image of Catherine appears in a predella by Andrea di Niccolò, albeit with an open book (sold Sotheby's, New York, 17 January, 1985, lot 39; repr. Cinotti ed. 1985, 79).

<sup>558</sup> Sallay, forthcoming.

<sup>559</sup> Ciardi Dupré, 1972, 88-97. Pellegrino delivered all the miniatures for these codices in four rates between 16 April and 4 September, 1481 (written communication by Hans-Joachim Eberhardt, 29 May, 2006, whom I thank for generously sharing with me the results of his yet unpublished research).

pieces, executed by a more weary and stiffened hand. A tentative date for our piece may therefore be approximately in the last decade of the master's activity.<sup>560</sup>

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 28, no. 165 (Lorenzo di Pietro called Vecchietta); [Ramboux] 1867, 30, no. 165 (Lorenzo di Pietro called Vecchietta); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1869-76, Vol. IV/1, (1871), 71 n. 40 (report it together with the *Nicholas of Tolentino* as ascribed to Vecchietta formerly in the Ramboux collection but weaker than Vecchietta's works, "aber die Stücke können nur geringen Werth beanspruchen"); Gerevich 1928, 225 (Vecchietta); Gerevich 1948, 101 (Vecchietta); Federico Zeri, oral communication before 1964 (Pellegrino di Mariano); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 64, fig. III/48 (Siene painter, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c., under influence of Giovanni di Paolo, predella fragment); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1967; Mucsi 1975, 42, no. 201 (Siene painter, second half of 15<sup>th</sup> c., predella fragment, a companion piece showing St. Nicholas of Tolentino is at an unknown location); Vanni 1975, 218, Pl. IV on p. 219 [colour repr. in frame] (Siene school, beginning of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Paola Puglisi, in Bianchi and Giunta 1988, 245, 258, no. 150, repr., (unknown Siene, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Cséfalvay and Ugrin 1989, 104, fig. 8. (Siene painter, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Andrea De Marchi, written communication, 1993 (Pellegrino di Mariano, late work); Frinta 1998, pp. 231, 478 (Ego Sum Master); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 568, no. 165, repr. (Siene, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of fifteenth century); Sallay 2004, 11 (Pellegrino di Mariano); Sallay 2008, 11, 16 (Pellegrino di Mariano, the companion piece showing *St. Nicholas of Tolentino* is in Huis Bergh); Sallay, forthcoming (Pellegrino di Mariano, late work).

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<sup>560</sup> The absence of the wounds on the well-preserved surface of Catherine's hands could also indicate that the piece dates from after 1472, when Pope Sixtus IV prohibited the representation of Catherine's stigmata (the papal prohibition was repeated under varying conditions in 1475, 1478, and 1490, and lifted only in 1492), were it not documented that Siene artists openly disobeyed the papal bull in a number of representations (cf. Diega Giunta, "La questione delle stimmate alle origini della iconografia cateriniana e la fortuna del tema nel corso dei secoli", in Trenti and Klange Addabo ed. 1999, 319-347; Klaniczay 2002; Susan E. Wegner, "Saint Catherine of Siena as Intercessor for the Siene" in Jenkins ed. 2005, 174-75, with previous bibl.).

## 14. Pellegrino di Mariano

*Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist and Anthony Abbot*  
**Fig. 14/1**

ca. 1475-90  
tempera and gold on wood  
panel: 43 x 34.7 cm, painted surface: 40.6 x 33.7 cm, thickness: 2.3-2.8 cm

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.179.

### Provenance:

Probably Arnold Ipolyi in Várad by 1886; deposited at the Episcopate of Várad until 1919 (not identifiable); deposited at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, 1919-1920; acquired through Ipolyi's bequest in 1920.

### Inscriptions:

On scroll held by Child: "EGO·SUM"

On scroll held by St. John the Baptist: "ECCE · AGNVS · DEI · Q[ui]"

### Technical notes:

The support consists of a vertically grained poplar panel and conserves its original thickness. Its reverse is painted to imitate marble in brownish-yellow paint streaked with ochre and red (Fig. 14/2). The paint on the reverse is scratched and damaged, and significant areas have been lost. There are two short horizontal grooves in the vertical sides near the upper left and the lower right corners, which are damages related to the fixing of an earlier, modern frame.

The painted surface is in good condition, apart from slight abrasions and some worm tunnelling (Fig. 14/3). A *barbe* and extensions of bare wood along all four edges prove that the composition has not been reduced in size. The original engaged frame is lost, and the unpainted wood may have been slightly trimmed. The gold-leaf ground in the haloes, the mordant-gilt decoration along the hem of the Virgin's dress and in the star on her shoulder, and the embroidered red stripes on the white veil are abraded.

Punches: circle (2 mm); circle (7.3 mm); round cusped arch with double contour (5.7 x 7.7 mm); double concentric; pointed tre-lobe (ca. 4.5 mm?) (Fig. 14/4 a, b).<sup>561</sup>

The painting is enclosed in a modern carved and gilt frame of simple moulding.

Zsuzsanna Bodrogi restored the work in 1996-97 in Budapest.

### Documentation:

On reverse: "*Organia 1350*" (in old paint, probably 19<sup>th</sup> c., probably standing for "Orcagna 1350").

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<sup>561</sup> Frinta (1998) reproduced some punches of 55.179 under an attribution to the Ego Sum Master, cf. the round cusped arch with double contour on p. 247 (which the author considered the hallmark punch of this painter in Chapter 10 of unpublished pt. II of his *Punched Decoration*, kindly forwarded to me in a written communication on September 18, 2002), or the pointed tre-lobe in the hem of the Virgin dress which is listed twice, on p. 262 under punch no. Gb14 (4.7 mm) and on p. 267 under punch no. Gc22b (4.3 x 5.3 cm). The latter photograph was taken from 55.179 as was the photograph for punch no. Dh12 on p. 181, which is erroneously listed as a multi-bar star (7.3 mm) but is in fact a circle.

On modern frame: “*ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM*” (stamped, twice); “17” (in pencil); “15” (in felt pen, recent, related to the location of the work at the exhibition).

The bust-length figures of the Virgin and Child almost completely fill this tightly framed composition. The Virgin turns to the right, inclines her head towards the Child and gazes into the distance with unfocussed eyes. She is clad in a red dress, over which she wears a blue mantle lined with green and decorated with a geometric pattern along the hem. Her head is covered by a long and thick white veil. The infant is dressed in a white tunic and a pale rose garment modelled with red lake. He looks directly at the viewer, raises his right in blessing and holds a scroll in his left hand with the words “*EGO SUM*”.

The lateral figures are significantly smaller in scale, and their figures are cut by the composition into which they fit awkwardly. The Baptist’s peaks in from the left and points out the central group to the viewer. In his left hand, he holds a red cross around the base of which the inscribed scroll had been twisted. Over the camel-hair shirt, he wears a mantle of similar rose colour as the Child’s garment. His unkempt hair – alluding to his eremitic life in the desert – unusually intrudes into the halo of the Virgin. The other lateral saint, Anthony Abbot, is dressed, as usual, in a black robe and a brown cloak, and holds a book and a small white bell hanging from his left index finger. The four figures are pushed close against to the surface of the picture plane and do not take up a realistic space.

The work has been traditionally ascribed to the school or to a follower of Sano di Pietro. Even though it has never been attributed to Sano himself, Marion Knauf (1998) has excluded it from Sano di Pietro’s Madonna panels, stating correctly at the same time that it was “painted by another painter, in another workshop”. In my recent studies on Pellegrino di Mariano (2004; forthcoming), I proposed an attribution to this painter. As in the case of the *St. Catherine of Siena* (Cat. 13), Mojmír Frinta (1998) ascribed the piece on the basis of its punchmarks to the Ego Sum Master, an anonymous painter who, in my view, is identical with Pellegrino in the middle and late phases of his activity.

A comparison with Pellegrino’s miniatures bears out the present attribution proposal. Pellegrino painted a large number of illuminations for the Sienese Cathedral and the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, for which continuous documentation exists between 1464 and 1481.<sup>562</sup> To these certain works, critics have added many further miniatures on grounds of their unquestionable stylistic homogeneity, including those for the choir books of the Pienza

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<sup>562</sup> Ciardi Dupré 1972; Eberhardt (1972) 1983; Carl B. Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 243-48 (It. ed. 257-62). For a general overview of Pellegrino’s miniatures: Milvia Bollati, in Bollati ed. 2004, with previous bibl.

Cathedral dating from the early 1460s.<sup>563</sup> The lateral figures in CM 55.179 have many analogues in these miniatures. A suggestive comparison can be made, for example, between the St. Anthony in the Esztergom Madonna and the *St. John the Evangelist* in f. 67v of the Gradual G.I in Pienza (Figs. 14/5-6). The heads are virtually identical: both have small eyes with pinched corners, strongly highlighted cheekbones and marked, schematic wrinkles in the forehead, in the ridge of the nose, and in the corners of the eyes and by the nose. The white hair and the beard are rendered in loose, parallel strokes; the similarly painted, thick eyebrows are placed too high over the eyes; the moustache and the beard are arranged into the same symmetric pattern around the downturned mouth.<sup>564</sup> The St. John in CM 55.179 is also comparable to many middle-aged male figures in Pellegrino's miniatures. His attributes too – the long and decoratively carved red cross and the stiff scroll with the letters typical of the painter – have precise analogies in the illuminations, for example, in the initial on f. 72v in the Cod. 107-1 in the Libreria Piccolomini in Siena (Figs. 14/7-8)<sup>565</sup>. In this miniature, another omnipresent feature in the illuminations and also in CM 55.179 can be observed: the natural sky background rendered in coarsely streaked gradations from blue to white.

In contrast to the lateral figures, in which Pellegrino's highly idiosyncratic style is easily recognizable, the central group of Madonna and Child is conceived with more archaism: especially the Virgin's face appears flattened and iconic. As I have proposed elsewhere (in course of publication), this seems explainable by the use of cartoons ultimately deriving from fourteenth-century prototypes (especially Simone Martini and his followers) and transmitted to Pellegrino by intermediary models, on the basis of which at least a dozen Madonnas were created in his workshop.

One group of works among these – perhaps deriving from Simone Martini's Madonna in the Lehman Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art<sup>566</sup> or a similar work – shows the

<sup>563</sup> On the Pienza miniatures, see Carli 1999 (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1966), 118, 138-40 nn. 56-59; Martini ed. 1998, 118-126, 137-140; Laura Martini, "Le opere, gli ambienti: "tabulae pictae" e altri ornamenti per la Cattedrale di Pienza", in Angelini ed. 2005, 250-279, with previous bibl. A particularly useful research tool is the CD-Rom publication edited by Michela Becchis, *Codici miniati di Pienza e Montalcino*, CD del Sistema dei Musei Senesi, Provincia di Siena, 2000. Despite of repeated claims in scholarly literature for the contrary, no payments have been so far recovered to Pellegrino for the Pienza miniatures.

<sup>564</sup> Figures by Pellegrino similar to the St. Anthony Abbot in the Esztergom picture appear in the scene *Vision of Isiah* in a Gradual from 1470 (Cod. 25.10, fol. 50r, Libreria Piccolomini, Duomo, Siena); others are the St. Peter in the Antiphonary from ca. 1480-81 (Cod. 11.M, fol. 4r, Libreria Piccolomini, Duomo, Siena) and the bishop to the left of a *Madonna and Child with saints* formerly in the Ryerson Coll. in Chicago.

<sup>565</sup> Ciardi Duprè 1972, 68-69 figs. 28-29. This particular cross also appears in a *Madonna and Child with the Young St. John the Baptist* in the Museo dell'Opera in Siena (Tavolari 2007, 110-112, attributed to Pellegrino on the basis of my written communication requested by the museum).

<sup>566</sup> Pope-Hennessy and Kanter 1987, 18-21, fig. No. 8 (inv. 1975.I.12). The most complete surviving example of this composition by Pellegrino is a delicately coloured work in private collection (Sotheby's sale, New York, May 18, 2006, lot 39); while its somewhat more tightly framed, mirrored version is a *Madonna and Child with*

child turning his head slightly away from the Virgin, pulling her veil with one hand and placing the other on the stretched edge of the cloth. The Esztergom Madonna forms part of another series of paintings (Fig. 14/9-12), which is a variant of this composition: the figures of the Virgin and the Child are essentially the same but instead of the veil-pulling gesture the blessing and the inscribed scroll appears (both of which were widespread motifs in fourteenth- and fifteenth century Sieneese painting).<sup>567</sup>

Interior measurements prove that the central group in all of these Madonnas is related.<sup>568</sup> The cartoon and its variants used in Pellegrino's workshop must have shown the Virgin at about three-quarter length and the Child in full figure; for smaller works, however, only their central sections were utilized, also *en reverse* and often with the due adaptation of hands, resulting in many works in bust-length or half-length format. To the central group of the Virgin and Child, often lateral figures were added in imitation of Sano di Pietro's devotional Madonnas, which were immensely popular at the time. The results have the awkwardness typical of compositions which bring together elements from various sources, and, for this reason, have sometimes raised the suspect of being forgeries.<sup>569</sup>

The composition of CM 55.179 is the result of such a workshop procedure: it is the central section of the prototypical composition with the subsequent – and therefore awkwardly fitting – addition of two lateral figures. The most complete surviving example of its prototype is preserved in the Museo d'Arte Sacra in Asciano (Fig. 14/10)<sup>570</sup>, while further half- and bust-length versions include a *Madonna and Child with St. Nicholas and another Bishop Saint*, with a small predella (Musée de Tessé, Le Mans, inv. 10.18), and two homeless works: a *Madonna and Child with Sts. Jerome and Bernardino*, whose bottom section is a

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*two angels* in the Museo Diocesano in Siena. At least four further versions of this composition exist in half- and bust-length format, a *Madonna and Child with Sts. Bernardino and Catherine of Siena* and a *Madonna and Child with Sts. Sebastian and Catherine of Siena* and the *Crucifixion* in private collection, and two homeless panels showing the *Madonna and Child* (cf. Sallay, forthcoming).

<sup>567</sup> The blessing Child holding a *cartellino* (often with the words EGO SUM) is very frequently shown in Sieneese art. Perhaps ultimately going back to Byzantine prototypes, the iconography derives from Simone Martini's *Maestà*, popularized also by small-scale works by his followers, such as the Madonnas by Lippo Memmi in Altenburg or by the Master of Palazzo Venezia in the Berenson Collection, Florence. For early examples, see Shorr 1954, Type 3 Siena 1, 4.

<sup>568</sup> The height of the Virgin's head in the Lehman Madonna, measured from the tip of the chin to the top of the head is 16.8 cm, while the respective measurements in Pellegrino's Madonnas are as follows: Asciano: 17 cm; Museo dell'Opera, Siena: 17.5 cm; Esztergom: 17.7 cm; formerly private coll. Genova: 18 cm; Madonna from San Giusto, now Museo Diocesano, Siena: 18.2 cm; Sotheby's, New York, May 18, 2006, lot 39: 18.4 cm.

<sup>569</sup> Cf. note 570.

<sup>570</sup> 91.5 x 58 cm, cf. Alessi ed. 2002, 141-142, 145, fig. 47 (attributed to Carolino da Viterbo); Sallay 2004 and in course of publication (Pellegrino di Mariano). As often happens with Pellegrino's works, the piece was believed to be a forgery in the nineteenth century, cf. Mazzoni ed. 2004, 108.

modern addition (formerly Kleinberger Galleries, New York)<sup>571</sup> and the closest version of CM 55.179, a heavily restored, originally rectangular *Madonna and Child* cut down to an arched shape and inserted into a modern tabernacle.<sup>572</sup> In the versions where the Virgin faces to our right, iconographic requirements to show Christ blessing with his right hand constrained the painter to turn the cartoon over for the figure of the child and recombine the elements within the composition, so that the *cartellino* – and, in CM 55.179, also the head of the Child – is turned towards to centre of the composition.<sup>573</sup>

The close dependence of the physiognomy of the Virgin on Trecento models – popularized also by Sano di Pietro himself in this period – is so striking as to suggest, as already noted, a work by Simone Martini or his circle as a prototype. Although probably transmitted to Pellegrino by intermediary models, many Trecentesque features are preserved in the Madonnas under discussion, such as the facial type of the Virgin, the veil with a red strip of embroidery over the forehead and three folds on the side which leaves only the tip of the earlobe visible, or the prominent central fold in the Child’s garments. In many other features too (the wide gilt and punched bands along the neckline and cuffs of the robes; the fully dressed Child), this group of paintings reverts to Trecento and early Quattrocento prototypes, for which reason they were often believed in the past to be earlier than their real date. In fact, the inscription “Organia 1350” on the reverse of the CM 55.179 may be perhaps deciphered as the opinion of someone who thought the work was by Orcagna painted at the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century.

Despite the salient archaisms, the characteristics of Pellegrino’s hand can be clearly discerned also in the figures of the Virgin and Child. They include Mary’s thin and finely arched eyebrows, her long and pointed nose, the narrow and incisively drawn eyes with perfectly circular light brown irises and swollen lower eyelids, a small but full and brightly coloured mouth, the large punched circles in the hem of her dress which are painted white to resemble pearls; in the Christ Child, the brownish yellow hair arranged into rigid, schematic curls and highlighted with progressively lighter streaks, the ear with a characteristically thick,

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<sup>571</sup> Formerly Coll. M. G. Denis, Paris, sold *The F. Kleinberger Galleries Collection. A Highly Important Collection of Ancient Paintings...* American Art Association, New York, 1918, Jan 23, lot 8, repr. (as Sano di Pietro). The work was attributed to the San Martino Master by Coor (1961, 120), and to Pellegrino by Everett Fahy (annotation on a photograph at FARL).

<sup>572</sup> KHI, photograph no. 22073 (Reali, no. 715) filed with Sano di Pietro.

<sup>573</sup> A series of a slightly different version of this “Ego Sum Madonna” also exist, in which the Child is turned to the side instead of being shown frontally, cf. *Madonna and Child with the Young St. John the Baptist* in the Museo dell’Opera in Siena (Narcisa Fagnoli and Anna Maria Guiducci, in Guerrini ed. 1994, 106; Tavolari 2007, 110-111); Sallay 2004 and forthcoming (Pellegrino di Mariano).

semicircular tip (visible also in the figure of St. Anthony); the cruciform halo formed from large double concentric punches; the swollen and clumsy hand with blocky fingers. Further proofs for Pellegrino's authorship are provided by the typical letters of the EGO SUM inscription, which appear in many other of his Madonnas<sup>574</sup>, or the punchmarks that are consistent with his repertoire.<sup>575</sup>

Pellegrino's essentially retrospective and derivative style and the absence of signed or dated works after his earliest period (ca. 1450-60) make the chronological placement of CM 55.179 difficult. All that can be said with relative certainty is that a wide chronological gap separates it from the early works; therefore its date probably falls approximately in the last two decades of the artist's activity. An indication for the relatively late date is furnished also by the natural sky background (which appears also in his works in Asciano and formerly with Kleinberger, Figs. 14/10, 14/12). Though no more than a mechanical replacement of the gold ground, this feature betrays the artist's attempt to update his pictures according to the more recent standards of Sieneese devotional Madonnas, in which a natural sky background becomes generally used only in the 1470s, especially from the second half of the decade.

#### References:

Van Marle 1923-38, IX (1927), 531 (School of Sano di Pietro); Gerevich 1928, 225 (Disciple of Sano di Pietro); Gerevich ed. 1948, 95 (Follower of Sano di Pietro, identifies the saint on the left mistakenly as St. Jerome); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 65, no. 51 (Follower of Sano di Pietro); Mucsi 1975, 41, no. 193 (Follower of Sano di Pietro); Cséfalvay 1989, 108 (Follower of Sano di Pietro); Frinta 1998, 181, 247, 261-2, 267 (Ego Sum Master); Sallay 2004, 14, n. 6 (Pellegrino di Mariano); Knauf 1998, 400, cat. C6 (not Sano di Pietro, erroneously indicates the provenance of the work from the Ramboux collection); Sallay 2008, 10-11, 16 (Pellegrino di Mariano); Sallay, forthcoming (Pellegrino di Mariano).

<sup>574</sup> Cf. *Madonna and Child*, Santuaria della Madonna delle Grazie, Arcidosso; *Madonna and Child* (formerly Mocenni Coll., Siena, then Casa d'Arte Bruschi, Florence); *Madonna and Child with the Young St. John the Baptist*, Museo dell'Opera, Siena; *Madonna and Child with Saints*, f. 17v in Cod. 102.8, Libreria Piccolomini, Siena, after 1477; *Madonna and Child with two Angels*, Museo d'Arte Sacra, Asciano (Fig. 14/10); *Madonna and Child* (overpainted), location unknown (photograph filed with Pellegrino di Mariano at the Fondazione Longhi, Florence). The inscription in all these works differs in the character "U" written as SVM. The U and V are however interchangeable, as appears also from 55.179, where in St. John's scroll the word "AGNVS" appears.

<sup>575</sup> The round cusped arch with double contour appears in a large number of Pellegrino's works, to cite only a few: *San Bernardino* and *Virgin Annunciate*, altarpiece lateral in San Domenico, Siena; *Madonna and Child with two Angels*, Museo d'Arte Sacra, Asciano (Fig. 14/10);

**Francesco di Giorgio Martini**  
(**Francesco Maurizio di Giorgio di Martino**)  
(Siena, 1439 – Volta a Fighille (?), 1501)

Francesco di Giorgio was the most versatile and ingenious Siennese artist in the fifteenth century. He was probably a student of Vecchietta, from whom he took over a universal interest of working in a very wide range of media. Besides being a painter, sculptor and illuminator, Francesco di Giorgio also left a corpus a drawings (unusual for Siena), and he was a celebrated architect as well as a military and hydraulic engineer. He wrote a treatise on architecture and engineering, and even engaged in diplomatic services for the Duke of Montefeltro. He worked much outside Siena, especially in Urbino and the surrounding Marche region (from 1477), in Milan (1490), Florence (1491) and Naples (1491-95). His most outstanding artistic achievements were in sculpture, architecture and engineering, whereas he engaged in painting especially early in his career. Francesco di Giorgio's talents were widely acknowledged in his lifetime and by posterity; Giorgio Vasari considered him in both of his editions of the *Lives of the Artists* (1550, 1568).

The first document on the artist is probably one from 1460 which mentions a "Francesco" working with Vecchietta and a "Benvenuto" (Benvenuto di Giovanni) for the Opera del Duomo (Bellosi ed. 1993, 530). In 1464, Francesco made a polychrome wood statue of *St. John the Baptist* for the confraternity of San Giovanni Battista della Morte (Museo dell'Opera, Siena), the powerful, prophetic expression of which was inspired by Donatello's *St. John* statue made in 1457 for the Siennese Cathedral. From 1467 or shortly after dates the bronze tomb effigy of Mariano Sozzini (Bargello, Florence), attributed to Francesco. Francesco di Giorgio also created a series of bronze cast reliefs and medals that attest to his outstanding creative power and his interest in antique art and in human anatomy.

From Francesco's early period, some miniatures (*Nativity*; Museo Diocesano in Chiusi; Fig. 15/11); frontispiece of the codex *De Animalibus*; Museo Aurelio Castelli, Basilica dell'Osservanza, Siena, inv. 3, f. 1r) and many small-scale paintings survive. Among the latter are *cassone* paintings (a genre that Francesco seems to have introduced in Siena), a *biccherna* cover from 1467, an extraordinary predella scene of *St. Bernardino preaching* (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, inv. 2852), which was executed in collaboration with Vecchietta and Benvenuto and shows Vecchietta's influence in the rendering of a spacious complex architectural space in perspective and coherent, all-pervading light. The chronology of Francesco's early paintings and miniatures is problematic, and there has been much debate about the authorship of most of his paintings. Few of them are unanimously regarded as

autograph, and many, though not all, scholars feel that a large part of his painterly production was executed or completed, on the basis of the master's drawings, by the members of his large workshop (a hypothetical chief assistant has been baptized "Fiduciario di Francesco").

Francesco's services as an engineer were required as early as 1469, when the Sieneese commune employed him supervise the city's always problematic water supply. The same year he married Agnesa d'Antonio di Benedetto di Neroccio, probably a cousin of the painter and sculptor Neroccio de' Landi, to whom Francesco became thus related by marriage. In 1470-71 Francesco and his business partner, the painter Lotto di Domenico decorated the church of the Annunziata in the Ospedale with a coffered ceiling and with a now lost fresco of the Coronation of the Virgin in the apse. Francesco painted the same subject, the *Coronation of the Virgin* for the chapel of St. Sebastian and St. Catherine of Siena in the Abbey of Monteoliveto Maggiore near Siena between 1472-74 (PNS, inv. 440). His partnership with Lotto di Domenico was probably soon dissolved, since he is documented in a "*societas in arte pictorum*" with Neroccio de' Landi before 1475, when the latter partnership too broke up, in discord. Just in 1475, Francesco received a commission for a *Nativity* (PNS, inv. 437), whose main figures he himself executed. This is his only signed painting; yet his workshop probably took over the execution of the painting, which was completed in 1480 only. A fragmented fresco cycle by the artist and his workshop, dated by an inscription to 1476, has recently been discovered in the chapel of the Madonna delle Grazie in the church of Santa Maria in Campagnatico.

In 1477, Francesco left Siena and moved to Urbino, where he became Duke Federico da Montefeltro's architect. There he also executed a medal portrait of Federico da Montefeltro. During his stay that lasted nearly a decade, several Sieneese artists joined him, among them the painter and sculptor Giacomo Cozzarelli, the sculptor Stefano di Giovanni, and possibly Pietro Orioli, Matteo di Giovanni's most talented student, who seems to have entered Francesco di Giorgio's orbit after completing his training with Matteo. While in Urbino, Francesco di Giorgio Francesco di Giorgio maintained contacts with Siena, especially for tasks of engineering.

Before 1487, Francesco moved back to Siena, invited by the city's officials, but frequently travelled to other large centres. In the late 1480s, one of his major projects in Siena was the direction of the decoration of the Bichi chapel in Sant'Agostino, began by Luca Signorelli but completed by Francesco and his workshop, including Pietro Orioli. The decoration consisted of a complex altarpiece with panels painted by Signorelli and a polychrome wood statue of *St. Christopher* by Francesco di Giorgio (Louvre, Paris, inv. RF

2384), and walls frescoed with two sibyls by Signorelli and monochrome scenes of the *Nativity of the Virgin* and the *Nativity of Christ* by Francesco and his workshop. Between 1489-92, he executed a pair of bronze angels for the main altar of the Sienese Cathedral (*in situ*).

Around 1493-94, Francesco seems to have been initially responsible for the execution of the series of famous men and women intended for the decoration of a noble residence of the Piccolomini or Spannocchi families. Matteo di Giovanni, Neroccio, Orioli and the mysterious Griselda Master participated in the project; the latter eventually taking over and completing the series (Cf. Cat. 30, Figs. 30/11-12). A problematic painting from around 1495 is the central panel (*Adoration of the Pastors*) of the Tancredi altarpiece in the church of San Domenico in Siena, which seems to have been designed by Francesco but executed by his assistants. Documents related to this altar but not necessarily to this panel name a certain Lodovico Scotti as the painter.

The Sienese polymath died in 1501 and is buried in the church of the Osservanza near Siena.

#### **Select Bibliography:**

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## 15. Follower of Francesco di Giorgio

*Madonna and Child with Two Angels*

**Fig. 15/1**

ca. 1470-80

tempera and gold on poplar wood

largest extension of the irregular panel: 59.4 x 35.1 cm

thickness: ca. 0.22 cm (of which the original panel, ca. 0.1-0.13 cm)

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 42.

### **Provenance:**

Acquired by Johann Anton Ramboux in Italy before 1842; J. A. Ramboux, Cologne until 1866, no. 172 (as Francesco di Giorgio); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 172 (as Francesco di Giorgio); Arnold Ipolyi, Pest, 1867-1872; donated 1872 by Ipolyi to the National Picture Gallery, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts (1906).

### **Technical notes:**

The support consists of three vertical planks, in which three deep cracks developed. One crack runs the whole length of the panel along a junction, passing through the Child's right leg, the angel's left arm, to the left of the tree, and then, with slight curve to the right, through the sky to the upper edge. Two further cracks are visible in the upper left and the lower right areas, as viewed from the front (cf. Fig. 15/2). During undocumented interventions before 1986, the warped and severely worm-tunnelled panel was thinned; the cracks were reinforced with pieces of wood glued onto the back, and the reverse was coated with white paint that contained lead (Fig. 15/3).

During a restoration executed by Ágnes Berta (1986-87) and Ildikó Jeszeniczky (1988), the support was thinned to about 0.1-0.13 cm, straightened, and applied to a new support consisting of balsa wood between two layers of Okoumé wood. A condition report preceding this restoration (by Tünde Réti, 21 February, 1985) states that the panel had a strong convex warp and had been thinned after warping with the result that its thickness was about 0.8 cm along the vertical edges and 1.5 cm in the centre. This report is partly contradicted by one written by Ildikó Jeszenszky in 1988, in which the thickness of the panel prior to the latest thinning is given as 0.5 on the sides and 3 cm in the centre.

The paint surface is in a fragmented and abraded condition, and has developed a prominent craquelure with losses between the isles of paint. The folds of the Virgin's blue mantle are incised into the ground. The haloes and the gold decoration of the dress of the Virgin, now very abraded, were executed in mordant gilding. In some areas, the underpainting is visible to the naked eye, for instance, under the lips and the chin of Virgin and in the white dress of angel in front. In respect to the underpainting, the latter was somewhat simplified during the execution. The sky is so severely abraded that the ground shows through. Minor retouching is scattered in the flesh areas, and there is some inpainting in the blue mantle of the Virgin as well. There are large retouchings in watercolour in *tratteggio* technique along all four sides (the width of these retouched strips ranges at the bottom ca. 0.4-1.2 cm, at the left side ca. 0-3.1 cm, at the right side ca. 0.5-1.5 cm, and at the top ca. 0.2-0.4 cm) and is most extensive in the upper left area in the massive rock, whose left edge is entirely reconstructed.

Larger repairs can also be found in the red strips (deacon's stole) and on the white dress of the angel in front.

Thin, natural wood strips are attached to the modern support of the painting.

### **Documentation:**

On reverse before the restoration of 1986-88: "904/15" (handwritten, in chalk?); "Leg. II. 51 / 1918" (handwritten on white label); "ORSZÁGOS KÉPTÁR. KÉPTÁR. Az 1888. évi leltározás. 42" (printed on white label); "904" (handwritten on previous label).

This brightly coloured, fragmentary work shows the Virgin in adoration and casting her glance down at her son. The Child sits with his back to the mother on a part of her robe – one end of which is oddly tucked behind her left arm – and appears in the role of Christ, the teacher, as he looks at the pages of the open book on his knee and lifts his right hand with a blessing gesture. Two boyish angels dressed in white and red balance the composition on the left. One tilts his head to the left and holds a plate full with leaves and fruits or flowers, lifting with his other hand a bunch of them. His red deacon's stoles evoke a sacred atmosphere and his melancholy gaze fixed on the viewer seems to reveal a foreknowledge of the Passion to which the red fruits of flowers allude.<sup>576</sup> The other angel peaks over his shoulder down at the Child. A noteworthy detail is his gold-speckled, transparent halo that tilts forward in perspective together with the head (Fig. 15/7). In the background, barren rocks, a pebbly road winding between trees, a town fortified with high rectangular towers, and a range of mountains appear.

The work was first documented in the collection of Ramboux, who published a print-reproduction of it in 1865 (Fig. 15/3). Ramboux (1862, 1867) believed it to be an autograph work by Francesco di Giorgio from about 1460. After its acquisition by the Budapest Museum, it was catalogued (1873, 1876, 1878) as a Sienese work. Pulszky first thought it was Umbrian (1881), then, presumably considering Ramboux's earlier attribution, attributed it to a follower of Francesco di Giorgio (1888). Apart from two early alternative attributions to other students of Vecchietta – to Neroccio by Fabriczy (cited in Térey 1906), and to Benvenuto di Giovanni by Berenson (1897, 1909)<sup>577</sup> –, subsequent literature concurred in ascribing the piece to the school or a follower of Francesco di Giorgio. Despite its regular appearance in the museum catalogues, the work is very little known; it is not listed among the workshop or

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<sup>576</sup> The round red motifs are too abraded to be identified as flowers or fruits. They may have been already unidentifiable in Ramboux's time, who described the detail as "zwei Engel welche Körbchen mit Blumen und Kirschen halten" (1862, 30). In the print from 1865 they are interpreted as roses (Fig. 15/3). Whether cherries, strawberries, or roses, the motif is symbolic of Christ's passion.

<sup>577</sup> In his later lists (1932, 1936, 1968), Berenson does not mention the work under Benvenuto or any other artist.

school products or among the incorrectly attributed works in Allen Weller's, Ralph Toledano's, and Frank Arthur Iorio's monographs on the artist.<sup>578</sup>

The consensual opinion of relating the work to Francesco di Giorgio's style is well founded. The physiognomic type of the Virgin (Fig. 15/5) has close relations with the female figures painted in Francesco's workshop in the late 1460s and 1470s. They correspond to a new ideal of beauty introduced precisely by Francesco in the 1460s<sup>579</sup> and popularized through the works of his shop which he shared with Neroccio de' Landi in the first half of the 1470s. These depict young, fair-haired, fragile women with thin, pointed faces, lean and fresh rose-pink cheeks, a protruding chin, very thin and barely arched eyebrows ("i sopraccigli a lapis", as described by Carlo del Bravo<sup>580</sup>), eyes contoured by calligraphic, undulating dark lines, and very small mouths placed close to the nose. The centrally parted hair arranged into large, loose, regular locks above the ears and covered with a transparent veil appears in several figures painted by Francesco or his shop (*Annunciation*, PNS, inv. 277; *Virgin and Child with Sts. Peter and Paul* [?], PNS, inv. 291) and by Neroccio (cf. Cat. 17, Fig. 17/5). The naked Child showed with a large, bald, spherical head owes much to Francesco di Giorgio, too, whose interest in infants' anatomy is manifest in several works from this period<sup>581</sup> (the recomposed *Nativity* in New York and Washington, Madonnas in the PNS, inv. 288, Fig. 15/8,<sup>582</sup> in Avignon, and in Boston, Fig. 15/9). In MFA 42, the idea to enliven the chromatic scheme by scattered bright red patches – the angel's stoles, the fruits or flowers, the book and the slightly darker red draperies – recalls such early works of Francesco di Giorgio and his workshop as the above mentioned *Annunciation* in Siena or the monumental *Coronation of the Virgin* from 1472-74 (PNS, inv. 440).

The limited talent of the anonymous master is evident in the faulty drawing and the inadequate understanding of anatomy. The Virgin's bosom inexplicably slips to one side, and her extremely long, narrow, and boneless hands appear as unarticulated extensions of her arms. The angel's hand under the plate is similarly malformed. At the same time, the landscape is painted with remarkable ambition: the winding road leads the eye to the far

<sup>578</sup> Cf. Weller 1943, 293-311, 402-403; Toledano 1987, 153-154; Iorio 1993, 96-219.

<sup>579</sup> Luciano Bellosi, "Il 'vero' Francesco di Giorgio e l'arte a Siena nella seconda metà del Quattrocento", in Bellosi ed. 1993, 27. For an early example, see the *Maiden with the unicorn* in the title page of Albertus Magnus' *De Animalibus* (Museo Aurelio Castelli, Basilica dell'Osservanza, Siena, inv. 3, f. 1r), which is variously dated between 1463, the date of the completion of the manuscript, and about 1470. Cf. Laurence Kanter, in Christiansen, Kanter and Stehke 1988, 322 (It. ed. 336); Alessandro Angelini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 142-45; Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 180-181 (with further bibl.).

<sup>580</sup> Del Bravo 1962, 72.

<sup>581</sup> See also Coor 1961, 92.

<sup>582</sup> Torriti 1990, 287-88; Andrea De Marchi, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 298-99.

distance where the mountains recede into boundless space with convincing atmospheric effects. In the details, the artist took great care to make the work appealing. His attempt to create a sophisticated effect with the complicatedly twisted, embroidered cloth around the Child's body fails because of its artificiality, but the angel's richly pleated white dress and the beautiful brocaded motif in Egyptian blue on his sleeve are very pleasing.

MFA 24 is fragmented all around but probably not much of the original composition is missing. If it was the fragment of a much larger work, the artist would have had to resolve the spatial relation of the figures much better than he did. Since the posture of the Virgin and the Child's relation to her is ambiguous, it seems impossible to mentally extend to composition in a sensible way. These two figures give the impression of being copied from other compositions and pasted together in a pleasing but patchwork fashion. The derivative nature is most evident in the unique solution of placing the child with his back to his mother. The child, engrossed in the book precariously balanced on his right thigh, remains strangely isolated in the scene, despite the gazes that Mary and the angel direct at him. The only contact with the world around him is his right hand raised in a blessing gesture, which however, remains ambiguous. It may be meant for the mother in a constrained effort to meet iconographic requirements (the mother's adoration is often answered by the child's benediction, cf. Cat. 11, Fig. 11/1; 11/10) but more probably, for the viewer of the work.

The work was thus probably intended for private devotion, and its off-centred composition takes its cue from Francesco di Giorgio again. In contemporary Sienese painting, where Sano di Pietro's symmetrically composed works determined the public taste for devotional images of the Virgin and Child, the placement of the Virgin to the right and the accompanying figures to the left is an unusual solution often found in works by Francesco di Giorgio and his shop (Figs. 15/6, 15/7). The grouping of the two angels is based the same master's original and sometimes eccentric ideas. As Gertrude Coor noted in another context,<sup>583</sup> the overlapping placement of two figures whose heads lean in different directions is a frequent compositional pattern in the works of Francesco and his shop.<sup>584</sup>

The theme of the Virgin adoring the Child shown in close-up in a landscape is very rare in Quattrocento Sienese painting. The master of MFA 24 appears to have taken the idea to place his figures in a landscape, and even the arrangement of the landscape elements, from some full-figure Adoration of the Child-compositions by Francesco di Giorgio and his shop:

<sup>583</sup> Coor 1961, 56.

<sup>584</sup> Such a pair of angels appears in the already cited *Coronation of the Virgin* in Siena, in the signed *Nativity* from 1475-76 (PNS, inv. 437), in the *Adoration of the Child* of the Tancredi Altarpiece (San Domenico, Siena), and in the *Madonna and Child with Four Angels* (PNS, inv. 290).

the recomposed *Nativity* of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 41.100.2 and the National Gallery, Washington, miniature in the Museo Diocesano in Chiusi (Fig. 15/11), and a painting in the High Museum of Art, Atlanta (Fig. 15/10).<sup>585</sup> In these scenes, the background is structured in an analogous way: towering, vertically layered rocks frame the composition on the left and a winding road (in Washington/New York, a winding river) leads to a row of mountains on the horizon, aligned on a diagonal axis to the picture plane.

There is little indication for the dating of the work other than an approximate *terminus post quem*. As noted above, the physiognomies reflect types first popularized in the late 1460s and in the first half of the 1470s. The landscape is unthinkable before Francesco di Giorgio himself introduced landscapes in his Madonna paintings (cf. PNS, inv. 288; Avignon, Petit Palais), and especially without the landscapes in the background of the Nativity scenes in Chiusi and in Atlanta. MFA 24 could then hardly have been painted before ca. 1470. Less certain is when exactly the anonymous follower was active, but this style and female ideal went out of fashion in the late 1470s. In 1475, the workshop association between Francesco di Giorgio and Neroccio was dissolved, and Francesco's local painterly production, to which – as Alessandro Angelini suggests<sup>586</sup> – the master must have dedicated less attention already in the first half of the decade, could have continued, with decreasing importance, only by the workshop when the master left Siena about 1477 for nearly a decade. Neroccio, who propagated this type of naive, fragile and abstract female beauty the longest, abandoned it around 1480, when his interests turned to more life-like and better proportioned figures. It is thus unlikely that this minor master, whose hand has not been traced in other works and who gives the impression of closely depending on his models, worked in this style after the time when the artistic context on which he depended ceased to exist. The most probable date for MFA 24 remains therefore the eight decade of the fifteenth century.

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 30, no. 172 (Francesco di Giorgio, ca. 1460); Ramboux 1865, fig. 24 (“forse Francesco di Giorgio, scuola senese del 1480”); [Ramboux] 1867, 32, no. 172 (Francesco di Giorgio, ca. 1460); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1869-76, vol. IV/1 (1871), 74 (report the work as ascribed to Francesco di Giorgio formerly in the Ramboux collection); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1873, 4, no. 33 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1876, 6, no. 87 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Országos Képtár...* 1878, 6, no. 87 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup>); *Országos Képtár...* 1879, 6, no. 87 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.), Pulszky 1881, 8, no. 34 (Umbrian, 15<sup>th</sup>, Virgin with the Infant Christ, gift of Ipolyi); Pulszky 1888, 6, no. 42

<sup>585</sup> There is no general agreement about the dating and relationship between these Nativity scenes, created some time between about 1460 and 1472. For a summary, see Laurence Kanter in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 320-324 (It. ed. 335-38).

<sup>586</sup> In Bellosi ed. 1993, 284-89.

(follower of Francesco di Giorgio Martini); *Országos Képtár...* 1897, 25, no. 42 (follower of Francesco di Giorgio Martini); *Verzeichniss* 1897, 12, no. 42 (imitator of Francesco di Giorgio); Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 142, no. 42 (follower of Francesco di Giorgio); Berenson 1897, 134 (Benvenuto di Giovanni); *Catalogue* 1898, 12, no. 42 (manner of Francesco di Giorgio, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Az Országos Képtár...* 1901, 19, no. 42 (follower of Francesco di Giorgio); Destrée 1903, 79 (Benvenuto di Giovanni); Térey 1906<sup>1</sup>, 29, no. 62 (42) (imitator of Francesco di Giorgio); Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>, 14, no. 62 (42) (imitator of Francesco di Giorgio; cites Cornelius von Fabriczy's attribution to Neroccio de' Landi and Robert Langton Douglas's attribution to the school of Francesco di Giorgio); Berenson 1909, 147 (Benvenuto di Giovanni); Térey 1913<sup>1</sup>, 298, no. 42. (follower of Francesco di Giorgio, second half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Petrovics 1935, 14, no. 55 (follower of Francesco di Giorgio, second half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pigler 1937, I, 101 (follower of Francesco di Giorgio); Pigler 1954, 209-10 (follower of Francesco di Giorgio); Pigler 1967, I, 240 (follower of Francesco di Giorgio); Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 43 (follower of Francesco di Giorgio); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 569, no. 172 (follower of Francesco di Giorgio); Sallay 2008, 15 (follower of Francesco di Giorgio).

## Neruccio de' Landi

(Neruccio di Bartolomeo di Benedetto di Neruccio de' Landi)

(Siena, 1447 – Siena, 1500)

The sculptor and painter Neruccio must have spent his apprenticeship in Vecchietta's workshop located in the vicinity of the Cathedral of Siena. He is first documented in 1461 working for the Opera del Duomo in Siena. His participation in a number of projects by Vecchietta (Pienza altarpiece, Spedaletto altarpiece) has been often but inconclusively suggested.

At an unknown time early in his career,<sup>587</sup> Neruccio entered into a working partnership with Francesco di Giorgio, his senior fellow student in Vecchietta's shop, who became related to Neruccio by marriage in 1469. The early works generally attributed to Neruccio, but unconfirmed by any certain work from this time, are populated by doll-like figures, and show uncertainties in the rendering of human proportions and foreshortening; the delicate pastel colours are hardly shadowed, and are revived by bright hues. The execution is meticulous; the handling of paint dry (*Vision of St. Catherine of Siena*, Berenson Coll., Florence; *Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine of Siena*; Waddington Galleries, London; *St. Bernardino scenes*, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena; *Sts. Christine, Catherine, Jerome, Galganus*, Johnson Coll. Philadelphia). The style has strong affinities with the paintings by Francesco di Giorgio and his workshop, but has also been informed by Vecchietta's figural types and complex spatial renderings, by Sano di Pietro's palette, and by Liberale da Verona's elegant and energetically moving characters.

Neruccio received independent commissions already in 1468, when he made a painting and a polychrome terracotta bust of St. Jerome for the confraternity of San Girolamo (both lost). From the time of his partnership with Francesco di Giorgio, some outstanding polychrome wooden statues are known. In his celebrated *St. Catherine of Siena* made for the Oratorio di Santa Caterina in Fontebranda in 1474, the deeply undercut, nervous Vecchiettesque draperies heighten the emotive power of the statue that portrays the young saint with a transfigured expression. The *Archangel Gabriel* (Salini coll., Siena), which is said to have stood in apse of the church of the Annunciation of the hospital, is also from 1474.

On 6 July, 1475, his partnership with Francesco di Giorgio was dissolved in discord; the arbitrators in the dispute were Vecchietta for Francesco di Giorgio and Sano di Pietro for Neruccio – a choice symptomatic of the differing artistic approach of the two younger artists.

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<sup>587</sup> Possibly in or after 1471, when Francesco di Giorgio concluded a previous partnership with Lotto di Domenico, an artist known from documents only.

From the following year, 1476, dates Neroccio's first surviving monumental work, a key work for the understanding of his art. The figures appear in front of a traditional gold background but are firmly placed on their feet and conceived with statuesque solidity; the supple figure of the Virgin is defined by confident, freely-flowing contours. The work is captivating because of its resplendent decoration and highly refined craftsmanship that vies with a goldsmiths' product in the armour of the Archangel Michael (PNS, inv. 282, Fig. 16/21).

Shortly before 1477 Francesco di Giorgio left Siena. Neroccio married and, in 1480, he inherited Vecchietta's workshop. He completed his master's unfinished polychrome wooden altarpiece (of which fragments showing the *Dormition* and the *Assumption of the Virgin* survive). His tax declarations from 1481 and 1488 state that he lived with his carpenter brother Pietro, their mother and their families in the parish of St. Mark. Neroccio's art quickly matured and acquired independence in this decade. His colour scheme became more reserved, his figures more lifelike, elegant, pensive, and characterized by the pale, diaphanous skin tone that became the hallmark of Neroccio's style.

The artist received his most prestigious commissions in this time period: a Gabella cover from 1480, the only dated painting from this decade, in which the *Virgin Recommends the City of Siena to Christ* (ASS). In the early 1480s he worked for Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, and in 1483, he submitted a design of the *Hellespontine Sybil* for the pavement of the Cathedral. From the early 1480s dates an exquisitely painted and well-preserved predella (probably executed on a Benedictine commission given in 1481, Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890.1602, Figs. 16/4, 16/8). In 1484 he received a commission for a monumental altarpiece for the high altar of convent church Sta. Maria Maddalena outside Porta Tufi (lost or not executed?); in 1485, for the tomb for Tommaso del Testa Piccolomini, Bishop of Pienza (Cathedral, Siena). The latter testifies to Neroccio's interest in Renaissance tomb forms and *all'antica* decoration, while it keeps the sensitive treatment of the surface and the careful attention to the execution of the details. His last known major commission was for the openly classicizing white marble statue of *St. Catherine of Alexandria* (Chapel of St. John the Baptist, Cathedral, Siena), began in 1487 and probably finished around 1490.

Neroccio made a very large number of Madonnas for private devotion, both paintings and reliefs. Some motifs recur in them but the works show great compositional variety and never become dull serial products. Their quality varies at times, as the artist must have been helped by his assistants, several of whom are named by documents.

Like Francesco di Giorgio and perhaps under his influence, Neroccio created many works with a profane subject matter. Already a year after the break-up of the *societas*, a document records two cassoni painted with scenes,<sup>588</sup> a bedstead and a chair, as well as a “tabernacholo chon una Madona”. In the 1480s, he painted one of the very few surviving portraits of Renaissance Siense painting, probably representing a daughter of Bandino Bandini (National Gallery of Art, Washington, inv. 1942.9.47). A painted and gilt papier-mâché mirror frame with an idealized female portrait is a unique object from the period (Victoria and Albert Museum, London). Around 1493-94, he contributed to the series of famous men and women (cf. Cat. 30) and his workshop produced a series of panels showing antique heroes (Musée du Petit Palais, Avignon; Isabella Gardner Museum, Boston).

Luca Signorelli’s presence in Siena at the end of the 1480s induced important changes in Neroccio’s style. After 1490, he used a cooler palette for the incarnate, darker and warmer hues for the draperies, and strove for marked tonal contrasts, greater plasticity, and vivacious compositions. Yet the changed artistic environment of Siena in the last decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century pushed him to the periphery: his last important works are traditional altarpieces for rural towns in the Siense territory. The altarpieces formerly in the hospital of San Bartolomeo in Rapolano (ca. 1490-95, National Gallery of Art, Washington) and in Montepescini (signed and dated 1492, PNS, inv. 278) are among the latest Siense altarpieces with gold grounds, a feature possibly used at the commissioners request. Neroccio’s last signed and dated work is a Renaissance altarpiece with a lunette, still *in situ* in the church of the tiny hill town of Montisi.

The artist, who had been widowed in 1483 and married for a second time in 1493, was working on many commissions when death struck him in 1500, at the age of only 54. A detailed inventory of his shop was drawn up, containing 270 items, many of them artist’s equipment.

### Select bibliography:

Romagnoli, *ante* 1835 (1976), V, 75-103; Berenson 1897, 156-157; Berenson 1909, 205-207; Damini 1913; Logan Berenson 1913; Berenson 1932, 389-91; Berenson 1936, 335-336; Coor 1961; Del Bravo 1962; Berenson 1968; Laurence Kanter, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 328-334 (It. ed. 342-48); Seidel 1989<sup>1</sup> (republ. 2005); Torriti 1990, 270-278; Seidel 1993 (republ. 2005); Alessandro Bagnoli in Bellosi ed. 1993, 388-389; Roberto Bartalini in Bellosi ed. 1993, 462-68; Michele Maccherini in Bellosi ed. 1993, 318-30, 452-

<sup>588</sup> Cf. Coor 1961, 142. Luke Syson connected this document with the two cassone frontals in the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh (in Syson et al. 2007, 218-219). The identification is plausible as the two panels indeed appear to be pendants for size, subject matter, and function. Yet the *Meeting of Antony and Cleopatra* seems to show a slightly more advanced stylistic moment of the painter, precisely around 1476, which could indicate that the execution of the *cassoni* began earlier with the other piece, and protracted over some time.

54; Genetta Gardner, "Neroccio de' Landi" in Turned ed. 1996, 18, 697-98; Miklós Boskovits in Boskovits and Brown 2003, 530-543; Martini 2003; Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 102-105; 114-115, 122-23, 174-77, 208-12, 218-19, 234-44; Gabriele Fattorini, in Syson et al., 355.

## 16. Neroccio de' Landi

*St. Francis of Assisi*

**Fig. 16/1**

ca. 1475-80

tempera and gold on wood

panel and painted surface: diam. 17 cm (dimensions of modern support: 20.7 x 20.5 cm)

thickness: ca. 1 cm (thickness of modern support: 1.9-2 cm) (cf. Fig. 16/10)

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.171.

### **Provenance:**

Acquired by Johann Anton Ramboux in Italy by 1838<sup>589</sup>; Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 161 (as Neroccio or possibly Vecchietta); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 161 (as Neroccio or possibly Vecchietta); Arnold Ipolyi, Pest, Barsszentkereszt/Besztercebánya and Várád until 1886; deposited at the Episcopate of Várád until 1919, no. 39 ("St. Francis"); deposited at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, 1919-1920; acquired through Ipolyi's bequest in 1920.

### **Exhibited:**

Minoritenkirche, Krems-Stein (15 May – 17 October, 1982): *Niederösterreichische Landesausstellung 800 Jahre Franz von Assisi: Franziskanische Kunst und Kultur des Mittelalters*, cat. 10.06.

### **Technical notes:**

The support is a single piece of horizontally grained wood (Fig. 16/9). It has been cut all around in a slightly irregular manner and embedded into a new, square-shaped panel with a vertical grain. The four diagonal incisions on the front surface of the modern support were probably used to calculate this intervention. The reverse of the modern support (Fig. 16/2) is covered in white paint.

The paint surface is abraded, especially in the flesh areas, where it is in some places worn down to the *verdaccio* underpainting (Fig. 16/15). The surface is also extensively damaged by scratches, especially in the gold background, but in the mantle and the marble architectural frame as well. Apart from the scratches, the original gold background is well preserved. Dirt and remnants of darkened varnish are evenly scattered over the figure. There are minor losses of paint in the red book, which was executed with minium pigment. During a restoration intervention, the saint's side wound has been painted out in blue paint, but the red paint of this stigma and remnants of gold rays that emanate from it are still discernible under the retouching. Remnants of the red stigma and gold rays are detectable on the right hand too. The cross held in the right hand in a backward tilting position and executed in shell gold is now almost completely abraded. The outlines of the figure and the architecture were incised into the gesso ground prior to painting and gilding, except the segment that defines the perspective view at the bottom of the oculus, which was incised into the gilding. Observation under the microscope suggests that the mantle of Saint Francis was executed in a mixture of lead white, blue ash (*biadetto di oltremare*) and probably a small amount of charcoal black. The haloes are punched with the alternating motifs of a circle surrounded with eight dots,

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<sup>589</sup> See note 591 below.

executed in free hand (diam. varying between ca. 3.5-4 mm), and a single composite punch motif consisting of a penta-bar-star within a pentaprong (diam: ca. 4.2 mm). The area above the head, within the innermost circle of the halos, is filled with punched arch motifs (height: ca. 2 mm). At the bottom and top centre of the panel, there are two circular (diam. ca. 6 mm) filled and retouched holes. These repairs probably conceal damage caused by nails with which a previous owner affixed the work in his collection. All along the edges of the fictive oculus, there is a thin gold-coloured layer above the original paint surface, and probably related to the 19th-century grainy gold decoration of the surface of the modern support, which is still visible in the companion piece and which was removed from this piece during the restoration of 1956. In all four corners of the front of the modern support there are tiny nail holes that do not pierce the entire panel. The modern support is enclosed in a simple unpainted modern wooden frame. Dezső Varga carried out a minor restoration in 1956. After this, an undocumented restoration was carried out probably before the work left for the exhibition in 1982. It was probably on this occasion that the gold-imitation on the surface of the modern support (identical to the one still present in the companion piece, CM 55.172, which was not present at the exhibition) was removed.<sup>590</sup>

### Documentation:

On reverse of modern support: “*J.A.Ramboux*” (in red wax seal); “162” (in pencil, corresponding to the number of the piece in the Ramboux collection); “158” (in blue chalk); “*ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM*” (stamped); “+ *KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM*” (round stamp); “55.171” (in ink); “*átmérő: 16-cm*” [Hung.: “diameter: 16 cm”] (in pencil).

*The Mourning Saint John the Evangelist*

### Fig. 16/5

ca. 1475-80

tempera and gold on wood

panel and painted surface: 16.5 x 12.8 cm (dimensions of modern support: 20.5 x 16 cm)

thickness: ca. 1 cm (thickness of modern support: 2.2 cm) (Fig. 16/10)

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.172.

### Provenance:

Acquired by Johann Anton Ramboux in Italy by 1838<sup>591</sup>; Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 162 (as Neroccio) sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 162 (as Neroccio); Arnold Ipolyi in Pest, Barsszentkereszt/Besztercebánya and Várad until 1886; deposited at the Episcopate of Várad until 1919, no. 44 (“St. John”); deposited at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, 1919-1920; acquired through Ipolyi’s bequest in 1920.

### Technical notes:

<sup>590</sup> In the reproduction of the exhibition catalogue of 1982 (Gründler ed. 1982, 539, fig. 75), the work still has the modern gold-imitation on the modern support, and it was not Dezső Varga, the restorer of the museum since 1955, who removed it (Dezső Varga, verbal communication, 14 March 2008).

<sup>591</sup> The two pieces appear each as one of two paired paintings in the list of Ramboux’s exportation request handed in to the Director of the *Real Galleria* on 26 June, 1838 (published by Merzenich 1995, 310, nos. 26/7 and 28/9): “*Un crocifisso e un S. Francesco in due Tondi / id. [tavola] / - [braccia]. 5 [soldi]. 11 [denari]*”, that is, of a diameter of ca. 17.2 cm, and “*Un S. Giov(anni). Ev(angelista). e un S. Antonio da Padov(a). in due ovali / id. [tavola] / - [braccio]. 5 [soldi]. 8 [denari] / - [braccio]. 4 [soldi]. 4 [denari]*”, which equals ca. 16.5 x 12.6 cm.

The horizontally grained panel (Fig. 16/9), was cut all around into an oval shape and embedded into a new, oblong-shaped panel. The reverse of the modern support (Fig. 16/6) is unpainted and is not marked by Ramboux's seal.

The painted surface of the small oval panel has suffered from severe abrasions, especially in the flesh areas, where it is in most places worn down to the foundation (Fig. 16/16). It was also extensively damaged by scratches, especially in the gold background. There are numerous discoloured retouches in the face and in the red mantle. There are minor paint losses in the hair, flesh areas, the red mantle and the painted architecture. Along the bottom edge of the panel, some paint has fallen away, leaving the gesso preparation in sight. The original gold background is well preserved but damaged by scratches. The outlines of the figure and the architecture were incised into the gesso ground prior to painting and gilding, except the segment that defines the perspective view at the bottom of the oculus, which was incised into the gilding. The hem of St. John's blue tunic around the neck and the sleeves is decorated in shell (?) gold, now largely abraded. Observation under the stereomicroscope suggests that the tunic was executed in ultramarine blue. The haloes are punched with the alternating motifs of a circle surrounded with eight dots, executed in free hand (diam. varying between ca. 3.5-4 mm), and a single, irregular composite punch motif consisting of a pentabar-star within a pentaprong (diam: ca. 4.2 mm). The area above the head, within the innermost circle of the halos, is filled with punched arch motifs (height: ca. 2 mm).

The surface of the modern support panel was made up in grainy gold imitation that originally extended as far as an earlier modern frame. It is worth noting that this decoration is found in other pictures once in Ramboux's possession (see Taddeo di Bartolo's *St. John the Evangelist*; MFA inv. 27) and might have been executed by the painter-restorer himself. As noted above, the companion piece was once similarly decorated. The modern support of the present panel is enclosed in a moulded and partly gilt modern frame. There is no documented restoration for this piece.

### Documentation:

On reverse of modern support: "*Lorenzo del Vecchietta del 1461 / da Siene*" (in pencil); "161" (in pencil, corresponding to the number of the piece in the Ramboux collection); "155" (in blue chalk); "*ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM*" (stamped, twice); "*KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN ESZTERGOM*" (round stamp); "55.172" (in ink); "55.172" (in pencil);

The fragment with *St. Francis of Assisi* shows the founder of the Franciscans in the habit of the order, with the cord tied around his waist (Figs. 16/1, 16/3). He turns his upper body to the right, while his head tilts and turns slightly to the left in a somewhat mannered counterpoint with his torso. He looks directly at the observer. In his left hand he holds a book, whereas in his right a golden cross can be made out.<sup>592</sup> The stigmata on his right hand and in his side leave no doubt about his identity.<sup>593</sup> The mourning *St. John the Evangelist* turns to

<sup>592</sup> Ramboux (1862, 28, no. 161) describes the piece as "*S. Franziskus mit Kreuz und Buch in den Händen*".

<sup>593</sup> The presence of the stigmata—and the fact, to be noted below, that the work belonged to a series which showed *St. Anthony of Padua* in another medallion—exclude the possibility of identifying this figure with St. Anthony of Padua as proposed by Michele Maccherini (in Bellosi ed. 1993, 322). In Quattrocento Sienese art both St. Francis and St. Anthony of Padua were frequently represented, but while the book is an attribute common to both, the cross is distinctive to St. Francis, as is the flame, heart, or flaming heart to St. Anthony.

the left; his bowed head, open lips, and clasped hands express his sorrow (Figs. 16/5, 16/7).<sup>594</sup> He wears a blue cloak with a loose, richly folded bright red mantle above it. His youthful face is framed by abundant, blonde, curled hair. Both figures are lit from the left, shown against a gold background, and enclosed in a painted frame imitating red marble architecture.

The similar dimensions, composition, iconography, and style of these two fragments indicate that they once formed part of the same work. Numerous analogies from contemporary Sieneese painting suggest that originally they belonged to a series of five – or perhaps seven or nine – medallions decorating a predella, and that they must have been excised from the single horizontal plank on which the series was painted. Of the two, only the *St. Francis* retains its roundel shape defined by the fictive marble architectural frame painted around the figure, which is shown from above in accordance with the idea of the predella as a pedestal to the altarpiece. The *Saint John* has been cut down to an oval shape, by which intervention a part of the fictive frame was destroyed.

Ramboux owned two further fragments of the predella: one showing the *Crucifixion*,<sup>595</sup> the other, *St. Anthony of Padua*.<sup>596</sup> As the auction catalogue of 1867 inform us, the *Crucifixion* was also cut into a circular shape, whereas the *St. Anthony* had an oval shape similar to the *St. John* in Esztergom.<sup>597</sup> After the auction, traces of the other two fragments were lost. The differing nineteenth-century shapes of the four pieces – two roundels and two ovals – suggest that they had a different fate after the mutilation of the predella, and that Ramboux perhaps acquired them in pairs from two different sources.<sup>598</sup> This happened before 1838, when all the four pieces can be identified in the list of the collector's exportation requests.

The iconographical convention of Sieneese predellas decorated – not independently from the ancient tradition of the *imago clipeata* – with figures in medallions makes the theoretical

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<sup>594</sup> On the clasped hands expressive of mourning, see recently Silvia Colucci, "L'iconografia del Crocifisso con il Dolenti in umiltà: una questione aperta", in Bagnoli, Colucci, Randon 2005, 35-48, esp. p. 43, referring to Settis 1975, esp. 9, where it is claimed, in Colucci's interpretation, that "le mani intrecciate ricorrono già nell'arte antica e sempre in connessione con situazioni di dolore, precipuamente in ambito funerario".

<sup>595</sup> Ramboux 1862, 28, no. 160; [Ramboux], 1867, 30, no. 160.

<sup>596</sup> Ramboux 1862, 28, no. 163; [Ramboux], 1867, 30, no. 163.

<sup>597</sup> [Ramboux], 1867, 30.

<sup>598</sup> Since it is the two figures to the right of the centre that were cut into an oval shape, it may be that a large section of right part of the predella was cut off as a plank and given away separately, and the oval pieces were only subsequently excised from it. The *Saint Anthony* is described as "Oval. Holz. 6" 3""h., 4" 9"" b.", that is, its dimensions (16.34 x 12.42) were nearly identical to the *Saint John*-fragment (16.5 x 12.8 cm). The *Saint John* discussed here is mentioned as "Oval. Holz. 6" 6""h., 6" 6" [sic, for 6"" ] b.", i.e., 17 x 17 cm. Strangely, these dimensions do not correspond to the actual ones, nor to the description of the text of 1867 as "Oval", and are probably a mistake that repeats the dimensions of the two medallions. These latter – the *Saint Francis* and the *Crucifixion* – are both described as "Medaillon. Holz. 6" 6""h., 6" 6"" " (17 x 17 cm). See [Ramboux], 1867, 30, nos. 160-163.

reconstruction of the predella possible. As already Gertrude Coor recognized,<sup>599</sup> the *Crucifixion* mentioned by Ramboux must have appeared in the middle,<sup>600</sup> flanked by the mourning *St. John* on the right and an undocumented, fifth piece representing the *Mater Dolorosa* on the left. The two Franciscan saints occupied the two ends: the upper body of *St. Francis of Assisi*, turning to the right, indicates his position on the left, whereas *St. Anthony* must have been shown on the right.<sup>601</sup> Since the distance between predella medallions greatly varies from case to case in Sieneese art, it is not possible to estimate the original width of this cut-up predella. All that can be established is that it was well over one meter wide, which excludes it could have belonged to a single Madonna-image such as a work enclosed, for example, in a tabernacle. As an original location, the placement under an altarpiece is the most likely.

The reconstruction (Fig. 16/22) allows regaining, at least mentally, certain visual effects lost with the dismemberment: the red heart described by Ramboux as held by *St. Anthony*, for example, must have echoed the bright red spot of the book of *St. Francis*. It also becomes clear that the surviving parts of the architecture probably constitute only the innermost circle of the originally more articulated oculus, being the only element that makes an integral circle around the figure. The outer mouldings must have merged with the horizontal structure of the complex architectural framework, as in Vecchietta's and Neroccio's similar pieces (Figs. 16/10-11, 16/13-14), and were probably discarded at the time of the mutilation precisely because of their incompleteness.

<sup>599</sup> Coor 1961, 55 n. 183, 199.

<sup>600</sup> A representation of the *Crucifixion* in the central roundel of a predella – which nearly always features the *Vir Dolorum* or, occasionally, the blessing Christ – is very rare in Sieneese art, but it is not without example. The *Crucified Christ* appears in the middle of the predella of Matteo di Giovanni's altarpiece of *San Matteo* in the Cathedral of Pienza. Since Neroccio's predella, as it will be claimed here, takes as a model Vecchietta's predella in the same church, it seems reasonable to suppose that Neroccio knew this representation of Matteo di Giovanni and perhaps took inspiration from it. It seems also certain that the lost central roundel of Neroccio's dismembered predella must have been a single-figure representation like Matteo's, since *St. John* – and, although undocumented, certainly also the *Virgin* – appeared in the roundels adjacent to it. For a slightly later Sieneese predella with a well-comparable arrangement (five medallions with the *Man of Sorrows* standing in the tomb with crossed arms, flanked by the *Mater Dolorosa* on the left and *St. John the Evangelist* in the right, with two further saints on each end), see Pietro Orioli's altarpiece executed after 1486 for the chapel in Castel Rosi (now *Capitolo del Duomo*, Siena, cf. Gabriele Fattorini, in Bellosi, Fattorini, and Paolucci, 2005, 29 fig. 2).

<sup>601</sup> If the number of the medallions was originally seven or nine, for which there are also examples in Sieneese painting (for an example of seven medallions, see Benvenuto di Giovanni's predella, *Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria*, Perugia, inv. 78, ca. 1470; for nine medallions, Sano di Pietro's predella in Montemerano, 1458), the placement of *St. Francis of Assisi* could be either to the left of the *Mater Dolorosa* or at the extreme left. There are some rare cases whose typology differs from the above outlined reconstruction, for example, when extra medallions are introduced between the figures with heraldic elements (cf. Andrea di Niccolò's fresco of 1514 in *Sta. Maria Assunta*, Casciano in Vescovado (Murlo) with crescents in the medallions between the *Virgin*,

Scholars have attributed the pieces to many different artists, only to return recently to the master proposed first, by Ramboux, who thought they were Neroccio's works (albeit with the remark that Vecchietta's authorship cannot be excluded).<sup>602</sup> Initially, the advanced alternative attributions did not distance themselves far from this first suggestion. Tibor Gerevich (1928) and, hypothetically, also Raimond Van Marle (1937) each attributed one of the pieces (omitting reference to the other) to Vecchietta,<sup>603</sup> while in the museum catalogue of 1948 both are given to Francesco di Giorgio.<sup>604</sup> As is well known, the latter artist was Neroccio's companion in a "*societas in arte pictoris*" before 1475, and Vecchietta is traditionally held to be the master of both. In 1961, Enzo Carli suggested the authorship of a third probable Vecchietta student,<sup>605</sup> Andrea di Niccolò.<sup>606</sup> This attribution was followed in the 1964 catalogue of the Christian Museum,<sup>607</sup> but justly refused in 1989 by the painter's monographer, Diane Vatne.<sup>608</sup> Pietro Zampetti's proposal, in which he rejected even the Sienese provenance of the fragments and ascribed them to the Marchigian Giovanni Boccati,<sup>609</sup> was followed by a number of publications, none of which, however, was written with a critical intention. Most recently, Michele Maccherini suggested restituting the two saints to Neroccio de' Landi on the basis of Andrea De Marchi's suggestion.<sup>610</sup>

The reattribution to Neroccio de' Landi is fully justifiable, as the fragile figural types, pale flesh tones, and the lyrical mood of presentation are typical of the young Neroccio at the moment when – after his formative period spent in the workshop of Vecchietta in the 1460s and the experience of mutual influences with Francesco di Giorgio in the early 1470s – his artistic expression reached full autonomy. The heads of squat proportions still hark back to Vecchiettesque models, but are painted with Neroccio's sensitivity and love of delicate, refined forms. *St. John's* gentle face is characterized by deep-set, narrow eyes, a fine, sharp nose with a high ridge, rather thin lips and characteristic indentations at the corners of the mouth. The short tresses of his curly hair, accumulating in a cluster over the forehead, are

<sup>602</sup> Ramboux 1862, 28; [Ramboux] 1867, 1867, 30.

<sup>603</sup> Gerevich 1928, 225; Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 246.

<sup>604</sup> Gerevich ed. 1948, 70.

<sup>605</sup> See Vatne 1989, vii, in whose opinion also Andrea di Niccolò probably trained with Vecchietta. This view is shared by M. Torriti, "Andrea di Niccolò di Giacomo", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 3 (1992), 546.

<sup>606</sup> Written communication based on a photograph, 20 November, 1961.

<sup>607</sup> Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 65-66.

<sup>608</sup> Vatne 1989, 333. Indeed, the figures in Andrea di Niccolò's predella in Casole d'Elsa, to which Enzo Carli referred as an analogy, have a far more provincial character and do not approach in quality the fragments in Esztergom.

<sup>609</sup> Zampetti 1969, 86; Idem 1988, 397. In Zampetti's lists, the two fragments appear, without precise identification, as "*Due tondi con teste di Santi*" but they undoubtedly refer to the works in question. At the CM I found no confirmation of Zampetti's remark that the Museum attributes them to Domenico Veneziano.

<sup>610</sup> Michele Maccherini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 322.

painted with serpentine highlights in a loose technique that frequently recurs in coiffures in the artist's other works (cf. Fig. 16/8). In the treatment of the hair, as well as in the voluminous drapery folded over the left arm, Liberale's influence is perceivable. In the *St. Francis*, the head type with the elongated back part of the skull has close relations with other small-scale figures attributed to Neroccio, such as a friar in the predella fragment with scenes from the life of San Bernardino (Museo Civico, Siena) or a monk in the predella of the Uffizi representing *Stories of Saint Benedict* (inv. 1890.1602), where, besides the head form, also the proportions of the neck and the curved, languid hand recur (Figs. 16/2, 16/4).<sup>611</sup> The somewhat mannered turn of the head, often combined with eyes fixed on the viewer, is a Nerocciesque idiom itself, found also in large-scale figures such as the St. Michael in the triptych of 1476 (PNS, inv. 282, Fig. 21) or the St. Anthony of Padua in the Madonna in the Berenson Collection in Settignano.

In the facial types, the barely modelled, bloodless flesh tones with extensive use of pink on the cheeks,<sup>612</sup> the compactness of form, and the application of dry paint in tightly placed brushstrokes, the pieces have close relations with Neroccio's works from the period between the mid-1470s and ca. 1480 (*Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist and a Female Saint* (PNS, inv. 295, cf. Fig. 16/18), the signed and dated triptych from 1476 (Fig. 21), *The Meeting of Antony and Cleopatra* probably from 1476 (North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh), the *Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome and Bernardino* (PNS, inv. 281), and the Gabella cover dated 1480. Especially in the triptych of 1476 and in the slightly later (ca. 1482) predella in the Uffizi,<sup>613</sup> several closely related figural types appear (Figs. 16/3-4, 16/7-8). They have similar narrow, widely placed eyes with thin eyebrows; a black line along the inside of upper eyelids contours the eye, which is framed by strong parallel highlights above and below. The noses are high and short, and sometimes slightly turned up; the chins wide; the ears narrow and closely adhering to the head. The corners of the mouth are deeply indented. The heads are volumetric and well defined. The hands with elongated fingers are elegantly languid; the thin draperies form ample rings around the wrist, and are arranged into

<sup>611</sup> The head type compares very well to Neroccio's recently rediscovered statue of *St. Albert of Sicily* in San Niccolò al Carmine, too, which, if indeed commissioned on the occasion of the confirmation of the saint's cult in 1476, may be exactly contemporary with the fragments discussed here (see Martini 2003, esp. p. 78 and text below for the dating).

<sup>612</sup> Carlo Del Bravo's comment (1962, 72) about the determining influence of Sano di Pietro on this chromatic scheme seems to me very much to the point and would merit more consideration in the appraisal of the pictorial production of Neroccio and Francesco di Giorgio's workshop.

<sup>613</sup> For this predella and the various proposals in regard to its date, see Michele Maccherini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 330, with previous bibl.; Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 532; Simona Di Nepi, in Syson et al. 2007, 174-77.

deeply shadowed, parallel folds or into a rich pattern of soft zigzag folds that are gathered into a bunch over the arm. The greater plasticity and somewhat fuller heads in the Uffizi predella at the same time indicate that it slightly postdate the fragments in Esztergom. These relationships seem to establish the date of the Esztergom pieces between ca. 1475 and 1480.

A remarkable aspect of the Esztergom fragments is the precise definition of the forms in space. Despite the shallowness of the pictorial space, the volumes of the figures are clearly perceivable, due to the placement of the bodies at a slight angle to the pictorial plane, as well as to the rendering of the frame in perspective and to the *trompe l'oeil* effect of St. Francis's foreshortened hand that reaches before the architectural frame.

There can be little doubt that the determining influence on the concept of this predella came from Neroccio's master Vecchietta; and, specifically, from his predella of the altarpiece of the *Assumption of the Virgin* in the Cathedral of Pienza (completed 1462, Figs. 16/11-13).<sup>614</sup> Though medallions had been used for Sienese predella decorations since the Trecento,<sup>615</sup> their borders were traditionally defined either by gilt *pastiglia* borders,<sup>616</sup> a circle of motifs punched in the gold ground,<sup>617</sup> simple painted strips,<sup>618</sup> or a combination of these elements. The red marble architectural frame shown in perspective was introduced precisely by Vecchietta in his contribution to this famous altarpieces series executed for Pius II in Pienza in the early 1460s, where the predella decoration with roundels was part of the pre-established program. Vecchietta's colleagues in the Pienza project adhered, for the most part, to the conservative modes of definition of their roundels.<sup>619</sup> Vecchietta, equally attentive to tradition and innovation, in his turn combined the resplendent gold background with an illusionistically foreshortened, fashionable red marble frame. In all likelihood, the adolescent Neroccio was already Vecchietta's apprentice at the time when the Pienza predella was being painted. In the Esztergom fragments, he adopted Vecchietta's ideas;<sup>620</sup> moreover, he further

<sup>614</sup> The inscription in pencil "Lorenzo del Vecchietta del 1461" on the back of the *Saint John* – note especially the date in the inscription – may indicate that an early owner or curator of the fragment already noted the relationship of the fragments with Vecchietta's Pienza altarpiece.

<sup>615</sup> See, for example, the now dismembered altarpiece of the *Beata Umiltà* by Pietro Lorenzetti(?) in the Uffizi (inv. 8347, 6129-31, 6120-26) or Naddo Ceccarelli's predella in the Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton (inv. 62.57), both with seven medallions.

<sup>616</sup> See Cat. 13, for Pellegrino di Mariano's fragment (Fig. 13/1).

<sup>617</sup> Cf. Benvenuto di Giovanni's cited predella in Perugia, combined with painted strips. In a dismembered predella by Benvenuto di Giovanni the round *pastiglia* border consists of foliate patterns (see Bandera 1999, 104-105).

<sup>618</sup> See Cat. 18, for Benvenuto di Giovanni's predella fragment (Fig. 18/1).

<sup>619</sup> Apart from Vecchietta, only Sano di Pietro created a sort of marble architectural frame, a much less sophisticated one that lacks the illusionistic foreshortening and is combined with a traditional punched gilt border.

<sup>620</sup> Although the Vecchiettesque model can hardly be doubted as the source of inspiration here, it should be observed that the illusionistically shown bottom part of the oculus may not have been planned by Neroccio from

enhanced their illusionistic effect by placing his figures not only behind but also partially in front of the red marble “oculus” shown in perspective.<sup>621</sup> It is interesting to note that Neroccio copied the odd clasped hands of St. John, with the seemingly innumerable interlocking fingers, from Vecchietta’s Virgin in Pienza (cf. Figs. 16/7, 16/12). A further link underlining the analogies between Vecchietta’s predella and the dismembered piece by Neroccio is a hitherto unobserved feature in the former work: although in its final state the decoration consists of three medallions with two rhomboid fields in between, originally also Vecchietta imagined his predella with five medallions: the incised concentric circles are still well discernible under both rhombuses (depicting the *Archangel Gabriel* and the *Virgin of the Annunciation*).

There is another work by Neroccio in which medallions with comparable iconography and similar compositional ideas occur: the predella of the tabernacle in a private collection in Siena (Figs. 16/14).<sup>622</sup> Here the Virgin, the Man of Sorrows, and St. John the Evangelist are shown in the same foreshortened roundels; the Evangelist’s left hand – holding a book, like St. Francis does – and Christ’s lifeless hands are prominently shown before the *trompe l’oeil* frame. The stylistic features of the figures in this predella, whose paternity is generally accepted by scholarship,<sup>623</sup> are significant also for the confirmation of the authorship of the Esztergom fragments. Noteworthy are the similarities between the coiffures of the two St. Johns (Figs. 16/7, 16/14), as well as the identical representation of the folded hands of the Virgin in the tabernacle and the *St. John* in Esztergom (borrowed, as noted above, from Vecchietta). The predella of the tabernacle is, however, executed in a more spontaneous technique and with less concern for a finished surface; the faces are fuller and well-defined, and the gold background has disappeared. These features seem to indicate a more advanced phase of Neroccio’s activity.<sup>624</sup>

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the very first stages of the design of the predella. In fact the incised outlines of the two figures continue till the exterior of the oculus, and the segment defining the inside of the oculus seems to have been incised posteriorly into the gilding, with the help of a circular sample instead of a compass used for the other circles. These technical features may indicate that the idea of showing the architecture in perspective was a result of an afterthought, but they may just as well be simply different phases of the process of execution.

<sup>621</sup> The inclusion of figures in illusionistically painted red architectural frames was also followed by other students of Vecchietta. In the 1480s, Benvenuto di Giovanni used it in his *St. Benedict* now in the Museo Bardini in Florence (cf. Bandera 1999, 148) and in the frescos imitating altarpieces in the monastery of Sant’Eugenio, Siena (cf. *ibid.*, 150-51). Neroccio may have been inspired to show his figures before the roundel from Francesco di Giorgio’s medallions on the title page of *De Animalibus*, where the roundels themselves are not shown illusionistically, but Hercules’ extremities come forward the frame.

<sup>622</sup> The predella forms part of a tabernacle of unclear origin, which encloses a Madonna by Sano di Pietro in the centre (see Coor 1961, 41, 188, figs. 18-20).

<sup>623</sup> Coor 1961, 188 (with previous bibl.); Michele Maccherini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 330.

<sup>624</sup> Coor (1961, 41) dated the predella of this tabernacle to about 1473 (with a possible earlier dating for its lunette), but its stylistic features make it difficult to insert it in this period of the artist. As far as I can judge from

Although Neroccio's authorship of the Esztergom fragments seems well sustainable on the basis of stylistic comparisons only, there are further, more objective indications that support this claim. For this, an interesting aspect of Neroccio's paintings needs to be addressed: the great variety of ways he used to decorate his halos. Among them, there are disks set off by simple painted strips from the background, disks decorated with rays scratched into the gold or with punched motifs, shown bi-dimensionally or in foreshortening. On a tempera ground, also haloes painted in gold in perspective appear. For the Esztergom fragments, the halo type with punched motifs has outstanding relevance. It is curious that no one before Michele Maccherini (1993) remarked about one of the most original aspects of Neroccio's art: his unusual way of decorating his punched haloes, which appear in the majority of his works.<sup>625</sup> Diverging from the tradition of decorating haloes with a combination of punched motifs, Neroccio decorated his haloes – or, more precisely, their central strip – using of a single small dot-punch to form foliate motifs, palmettes, in a free-hand design.<sup>626</sup> This occurs also in works on a small scale, like the Gabella cover of 1480.

The fragments in Esztergom, with their halo decoration executed in the traditional technique were not executed with this technique; thus are exceptional but not unique from this point of view. There is at least one other work, pointed out by Maccherini – but without a reference to the analogy with the Esztergom fragments – , in which the haloes of the lateral saints are decorated in the traditional way: the *Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist and a Female Saint* (PNS, inv. 295, Fig. 16/18). One of the punches appears in this work and the two fragments in Esztergom: a penta-bar-star within a pentaprong or pentalobe – to borrow Mojmir Frinta's useful, though not always consistent, terminology (Figs. 16/19-20). Standing to Frinta, this is a unique punch in Italy, used by Neroccio only, thus it offers an objective confirmation of the attribution of the Esztergom fragments.<sup>627</sup> As the two works are

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reproductions, the piece postdates the artistic phase suggested by Coor by at least a decade. Such a later dating was suggested also by Michele Maccherini – at least for the lunette, to which the scholar refers – as close to about 1482 (in Bellosi ed. 1993, 330).

<sup>625</sup> Michele Maccherini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 322.

<sup>626</sup> This technique revives one of the most ancient methods of halo decoration in Sieneese art: similar solutions can be seen in some haloes in Guido da Siena's retables (PNS, inv. 6 and 7).

<sup>627</sup> Mojmir Frinta's (1998) vast repertory of punches has proved immensely valuable for these aspects of my study; yet his results need to be slightly corrected here. The author included the splendid photograph (cf. Fig. 16/20) of the punch in question in the *Madonna* in Siena (inv. 295) among the simple penta-prongs (Frinta 1998, 122, no. Da25, 4.2 mm). Nonetheless, it is possible to assert that this motif is not a simple penta-prong into which a penta-bar-star was punched separately, but a single, slightly irregular punch of a penta-bar-star within the penta-prong/pentalobe – as in the pictures in Esztergom. In other words, the motif in both cases was created with the use of a single punch rather than with two superimposed ones, as can be ascertained from the fact that the star always points to the same direction in relation to the pentaprong. Therefore, the punch no. Da25 taken from the *Madonna* in Siena should have been listed together with the punched motif in the work of Esztergom, which appears in Frinta's repertoire – correctly, though with a slightly different size – among the complex,

close also stylistically, they seem to testify to a period when Neroccio was momentarily attracted by this traditional form of decoration.

Another interesting use of punches observable in the Esztergom fragments is the row of arches that fills the narrow area between the saints' head and the innermost circle of the halo. This too, is a feature typical of Neroccio's works only, especially in the 1470s (Madonnas in Bergamo and PNS, invv. 281, 295).

In summary, CM 55.171-172 are closest in style, technique, and punchwork to Neroccio's works executed around 1475-80, Maccherini thus rightly associated them in stylistic terms with the signed and dated triptych of 1476 (Fig. 16/21). The two lost but recorded fragments from the same predella were not mentioned in this context, but in view of the iconography, one wonders whether the connection of the Esztergom fragments and the triptych of 1476 may not be closer than just a stylistic one. It seems not impossible, indeed, that Coor's intuition about these fragments – known to her from Ramboux's documents only – was correct, and the predella, whose Franciscan context Coor noted on the basis of their description, originally belonged to the altarpiece from 1476. Since St. Francis of Assisi and St. Anthony of Padua, the two most venerated Franciscan saints appear in the predella, a representation of San Bernardino may be expected in the main tier – as happens in the 1476 altarpiece. The lighting scheme is compatible in the triptych and in the predella, as both parts are lit from the left, and though the pattern of the punchwork is different, it should be remembered again that in this period Neroccio used different methods of punch decoration even within a same small panel (cf. PNS, inv. 295). If the roundels did belong to the triptych of 1476, the overall arrangement was similar to Vecchietta's Pienza altarpiece-triptych, whose predella roundels were the models, as noted above, for Neroccio's medallions (cf. Figs. 16/21-22).<sup>628</sup> At the same time, the appearance of Saint Bernardino in the main tier of Sienese altarpieces of this time is certainly not rare, thus the fragments may have belonged to another altarpiece by Neroccio from about the same time, which also showed Saint Bernardino in the main register. Another, but less likely, possibility is that our fragments once belonged to an altarpiece executed for the Poor Clares, in which case one or more Franciscan female saint could have appeared in the main register.

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“penta-lobe” punches (*ibid.*, 448, Ka40, 4.3 mm, listed with the attribution to Andrea di Niccolò. The photograph illustrating punch Ka40 was taken from the *Saint John* of Esztergom, and not the South French piece also listed with this punch). That the same tool was used in the Madonna in Siena and the fragments in Esztergom is evident also from the same irregularities that appeal in the lobes in all three pieces.

<sup>628</sup> A similarly composed Florentine Franciscan triptych-altarpiece with a five-medallion predella from the second half of the 15th century is in the Museo Diocesano di Cortona (Mori 1995, 47, with colour repr.).

**References:**

Ramboux 1862, 28, nos. 161-162 (Neroccio or possibly Vecchietta); [Ramboux] 1867, 30, nos. 161-162 (Neroccio or possibly Vecchietta); Gerevich 1928, 225 (Vecchietta, does not mention the *St. Francis*); Van Marle, 1923-38, XVI (1937): 246 (possibly Vecchietta, “half length figure of St. Francis in a tondo?”), does not mention the *St. John*); Gerevich ed. 1948, 70 (Francesco di Giorgio Martini); Enzo Carli, written communication of November 20, 1961 (Andrea di Niccolò, a relatively early work under the influence of Vecchietta, close to the predella of the altarpiece of 1498 in the Museo d’Arte Sacra in Casole d’Elsa,); Coor 1961, 55 n. 183, 133, 199 (remarks that the pieces, unknown to her but recorded by Ramboux, may have formed the predella of Neroccio’s triptych of 1476); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 65-66, figs. 52-53/III (Andrea di Niccolò, attributed on the basis of Enzo Carli’s opinion); Berenson 1968, I, 10 (added to the list by Louisa Vertova as works by Andrea di Niccolò); Zampetti 1969, 86 (Giovanni Boccati); Mucsi 1975, 43-44, nos. 208-9 (Giovanni Boccati, last quarter of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); E. Vavra, in Gründler ed. 1982, 539-540, fig. 75 (Giovanni Boccati, repr. before restoration; Zampetti 1988, 1: 397 (Giovanni Boccati); Cséfalvay 1989, 104 (Giovanni Boccati); Miklós Boskovits, verbal communication, 1989 (Andrea di Niccolò); Vatne 1989, 333 (not by Andrea di Niccolò); Michele Maccherini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 322, figs. 1-2 (Neroccio de’ Landi, attribution based on oral communication from Andrea De Marchi, close in date to the altarpiece of 1476, identifies *St. Francis* as St. Anthony of Padua); Merzenich 1995, 310 (publishes Ramboux’s exportation request); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 567-568, nos. 161-162 (Giovanni Boccati); Frinta 1998, 448, punch no. Ka40 (refers to the *St. John the Evangelist* as by Andrea di Niccolò); Sallay 2008, 8, 10 colour repr. of *St. Francis*, 16 (Neroccio de’ Landi, ca. 1475-80, perhaps belonged to the triptych dated 1476).

## 17.

### Neruccio de' Landi

*Virgin and Child with Saints Sebastian and Catherine of Alexandria*

#### Fig. 17/1

ca. 1485

tempera and gold on wood

painted surface and panel: 72.5 x 49.7 cm; thickness: 1.8 cm

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.200.

#### Provenance:

Canon Raffaele Bertinelli, Rome, no. 4 (School of Fra Angelico); purchased 1878 by János Simor for his private collection, from where it passed to the Christian Museum.

#### Technical notes:

The support is composed of two, vertically-grained pieces of wood, a large board and a 4.5 cm wide strip added on the left (as viewed from the back, Fig. 17/2). It has a slight warp, shows extensive worm tunnelling, and has been thinned. The panel appears to have been cut down at the bottom and along the curve at the top.

The first existing reproduction of the work shows it in a heavily repainted condition (Fig. 17/3).<sup>629</sup> A ruinous restoration in the past, perhaps preceding this repainting, has reduced the paint surface in most of the flesh areas to the *verdaccio* layers. The gilt haloes, originally executed in mordant gilding are abraded but perceptible. The sky is also strongly abraded and perhaps repainted. There are many small, darkened retouchings especially in the sky and the flesh areas (Fig. 17/4). The draperies are completely and crudely repainted, and seem not to reflect the original arrangement of the garments. The original green lining of the Virgin's mantle is visible under the coarse brown overpainting that now covers it. Some original parts seem to survive also in the mordant-gilt decoration along the hem and cuff of the Virgin's red dress. The throne covered with a brownish textile is difficult to interpret: it is foreign to Neruccio's style: his Madonnas usually sit on a chair with a voluted armrest. Further examinations are necessary to establish if the throne in CM 55.200 could cover such a volute.

Infrared reflectogram has revealed a confident, hatched underdrawing. The faint tones, especially the hatchings, were probably executed in silverpoint, whereas other parts are in chalk. The outlines of the underdrawing were reinforced with a brush with diluted paint containing some amount of organic black pigment.

Close to the edges, there are remnants of modern raised *gesso* and traces of gilding, which testify to the former presence of a modern gilt and engaged frame applied in a way that it covered the original edges of the painted surface. In recent times (approximately 1950s), 0.6 cm wide and 3 cm deep strips of wood were screwed to the panel. At the back, a crosspiece has been inserted with screws between the strips of wood in order to carry the weight of the panel at hanging. It is not attached to the panel itself.

According to Gerevich, the work was restored in Sebestyén Endrődi in 1917.<sup>630</sup>

<sup>629</sup> Recorded in a postcard by Rudolf Balogh, copies of which are archived at CM and at KHI; repr. in Berti Toesca 1932, 947; Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 311, fig. 172. In 1928, Gerevich published a photograph in which the repainting was not any more present (Gerevich 1928, repr. on p. 225).

<sup>630</sup> Gerevich ed. 1948, 81. The reliability of this information is somewhat doubtful, cf. note 256 above.

**Documentation:**

On reverse of panel: “104” (in pencil); “55.200” (in blue ink, twice); “ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM” (stamped, five times).

On crosspiece of modern wooden strips: “Neroccio” (in ballpoint pen); “55.200” (in pencil)

The Virgin appears in three-quarter length in front of a natural, clouded sky; her monumental figure entirely fills the foreground. As often happens in Neroccio’s Madonna compositions, she sits at an angle to the pictorial plane on a seat.<sup>631</sup> Her mantle is clasped with a brooch over the chest and falls loosely in a large fold that frames the legs of the Christ Child. The infant lies on his back across his mother’s lap and looks up to her as he reaches with both hands for her right hand.

The two saints are lit behind the Virgin as if they occupied an independent stratum of space. Sebastian looks directly at the viewer with slightly parted lips, and raises his attribute, the arrow, with an elegant gesture. In his left, he holds the crown of martyrdom, his frequent attribute in Quattrocento Sienese painting. Unlike the self-aware Sebastian, Catherine appears to be lost in thoughts, according to a scheme of contrast often used by the artist. She, too, holds her attributes: a fragment of the spiked wheel in her left, and the palm branch of martyrs in her right hand. The latter fits somewhat uncomfortably in the composition.

The painting is partly overpainted and it has suffered extensively from aggressive cleaning which removed a great part of the flesh tones; some parts of it are therefore difficult to judge.<sup>632</sup> Gertude Coor (1961), Goodison and Robertson (1967), and Hiller von Gaertringen (2004) assigned it the workshop of Neroccio de’ Landi, but the self-confident preparatory drawing (Fig. 17/10), the delicacy of the female faces, and the compact, volumetric, marble-like forms support those scholars who considered the work autograph (Berenson 1968; Boskovits 1968 and 2003, Tátrai 1983 and 1993).

Gertrude Coor noted that the composition of CM 55.200 is related to a Madonna in Siena (PNS, inv. 294, Fig. 17/13) and to a workshop piece in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, and she judged both the Esztergom and Cambridge Madonnas to be shop products derived from the Madonna in Siena and painted in the mid-1490s.<sup>633</sup> The Madonna no. 294, however, postdates CM 55.200: its animated style is characteristic of the last decade

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<sup>631</sup> The originality of the throne covered with a textile is dubious, as Neroccio’s Madonnas usually sit on a stool with an elaborate armrest ending in a volute or a throne equally equipped with a voluted armrest and back (cf. Figs. 17/12-13). See Technical notes.

<sup>632</sup> Some less successful parts, like the right hand of Sebastian, are more precise in the underdrawing (Fig. 17/9).

<sup>633</sup> Coor 1961, 87, who reproduced the three paintings together as figs. 64-66. For the Madonna in Cambridge, see also Goodison and Robertson 1967, 108.

of the artist's activity, showing clear signs of Luca Signorelli's influence, who worked in Siena at the end of the 1480s.

Whereas in the Madonna no. 294, the Child's kicking leg, his effort to pull his mother's hand, and his eager expression creates a vivacious effect and is comparable to Neroccio's work from the last decade of his life, the tranquil Bambino in CM 55.200 is an object of contemplation in a work that imparts calm, transcendental harmony to the beholder. The pallid flesh tones, the contemplative mood, and the lack of movement or vivacity indicate that CM 55.200 was painted before the last decade of the century. Yet it is a mature work: the naiveté, the rigid forms, and the dry, traditional handling of paint characteristic of the early works and still perceptible in the book cover from 1480 have disappeared. Although the lack of dated works makes it difficult to date Neroccio's works in this decade, the natural facial types, the formal elegance, the serene, pensive expression of the female figures, the solid forms, the freely flowing contours, and the natural sky background indicate, to my mind, the middle of the ninth decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century as the most probable date for CM 55.200. A date in the mid-1480s was favoured also by Miklós Boskovits (1968, 2003), while Mucsi (1975) leaned toward a dating in the late 1480s. A dating in the 1480s was not excluded by Tátrai (1993) either, who nonetheless thought the 1490s as more likely.

Scholars have related CM 55.200 to many other works of Neroccio. Coor (1961) noted some stylistic similarities with the Madonna formerly at Duveen's in New York and now in the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, and thought that the same assistant participated in the execution of that work and of CM 55.200.<sup>634</sup> Boskovits (1968) associated CM 55.200 with the Madonnas in the Johnson Collection in Philadelphia and in the Catharijneconvent in Utrecht, then, in 2003, with the Madonnas formerly in the Stoclet Coll. in Brussels (Fig. 17/11) and formerly in the Czartoryski Museum in Cracow, and with the *Virgin Annunciate* in Boston.<sup>635</sup> As the heterogeneous style of these works shows, there is much uncertainty about the chronology of, and relation between, Neroccio's works executed in the time range between his dated altarpieces from 1476 and 1492.<sup>636</sup>

In my view, closest to 55.200 among Neroccio's Madonnas are the ex-Stoclet Madonna and the one in the Salini Coll. in Siena (Fig. 17/8, 17/14), in which the female saints are twin

<sup>634</sup> Coor 1961, 78, and fig. 58 for the Pasadena Madonna. I cannot agree with Coor's opinion. For the Pasadena Madonna, see also Laurence Kanter, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 329-330 (It. ed. 343-44), with previous bibl., where it is considered an autograph work from shortly after 1476.

<sup>635</sup> Boskovits 2003, 532.

<sup>636</sup> For the Madonna in Philadelphia, see Coor 1961, fig. 34; for the one in Utrecht, Coor 1961, fig. 40 and Os et al. ed. 1989, 91-94. Boskovits (2003, 540) assigned a later date to the Madonna in Utrecht, to the first half of the 1490s. For the ex-Stoclet Madonna, see Coor 1961, fig. 43.

sisters of the St. Catherine in Esztergom and the Virgin's heads are based on the same design.<sup>637</sup> Neroccio used this design earlier in the Yale *Annunciation*,<sup>638</sup> and it appeared, approximately contemporary with 55.200, in a shop product, the *Virgin and Child with Saints Peter and Paul* in the Städelsches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt (inv. 980, Figs. 17/7, 17/14). In the latter, the proportions of the face and the neck, framed by the blue hood and the neckline of the dress, are almost identical, yet the overall quality falls below the level of Neroccio's works.<sup>639</sup>

As several Sieneese Madonnas similar in format and size, CM 55.200 may have been originally enclosed in a tabernacle, between pilasters, a base, an entablature and possibly a lunette or pediment.<sup>640</sup>

### References:

Maszlaghy 1878, 15, no. 104 ("School of Fiesole, 1450"); Maszlaghy 1891, 31, no. 104 ("School of Fiesole, 1510"); Colasanti 1910<sup>1</sup>, 408 (Neroccio); Colasanti 1910<sup>2</sup>, iii (Neroccio); Gerevich 1928, 225, repr. in cleaned condition (Neroccio); Benesch 1929, 70 (Neroccio); Berenson 1932, 390 (Neroccio); Berti Tosca 1932, 947, repr. still in repainted condition (Neroccio); Berenson 1936, 335 (Neroccio); Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 310, fig. 172 (Neroccio, close to the altarpiece from 1496, bases his judgment on the pre-restoration photograph); Gerevich ed. 1948, 81, repr. p. 84 (Neroccio); Coor 1961, 87-88, 106, 165, cat. no. 11 (workshop of Neroccio, probably mid-1490s); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 62, fig. 47/III (Neroccio, late work); Goodison and Robertson 1967, 108 (studio of Neroccio, shows similarities with the Madonna in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge); Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, no. 20 (Neroccio, end of 1480s because of elements that indicate the proximity of Francesco di Giorgio's influence); Berenson 1968, 291 (Neroccio), Mucsi 1975, 43, no. 206 (Neroccio de' Landi, end of 1480s); Tátrai 1983<sup>1</sup>, 35, colour repr. p. 34 (Neroccio de' Landi, ca. 1490); Mucsi 1990, 11, no. 26, fig. 26 (Neroccio, ca. 1490); Vilmos Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 240-241, no. 110 (Neroccio, probably 1490s, but a dating to the 1480s is

<sup>637</sup> For the Salini Madonna, earlier in the Serristori Coll. in Florence, cf. Logan Berenson 1913, 74, fig. 3; Coor 1961, 61-62, 168, no. 18 (with previous bibl.); Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 122-123, where the work is dated to ca. 1492-94. This seems too late to me, as the introvert mood, calm composition, and diaphanous skin tones suggest a date before the Montepescini altarpiece from 1492. Syson's suggestion to date the painting after 1487 on the basis of the inclusion of Mary Magdalene, whose cult spread after the return of the Nove, is possible, but even in that case, the late 1480s seem more probable as a date. It may also be noted that Neroccio's documented important commission for the convent of Sta. Maria Maddalena outside Porta Tufi in 1484 shows that he could easily have had other occasions to paint devotional paintings with the figure Mary Magdalene also before 1487.

<sup>638</sup> Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 134-139.

<sup>639</sup> The autograph nature of this work has been debated by many scholars: Coor (1961, 84), Sander and Brinkmann (1997, 32) and Hiller von Gaertingen (2004, 308-16) all judged the picture to be a workshop product. Gaertingen (2004, 315) dated the picture to about 1485. Del Bravo (1962, 73), the catalogue *Städelsches Kunstinstitut...* (1987, 80), and Freuler (1991, 102), on the other hand, considered it by Neroccio.

<sup>640</sup> It is noted here for the sake of record that the Hungarian caption in the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century photograph of the work (Fig. 17/3) reads: "*Neroccio 1483: Madonna with Sts. Sebastian and Catherine*". The year mentioned here is close to the likely date of execution, but Madonnas for private devotion were seldom dated and this information is of course highly unreliable. It cannot be completely excluded, however, that information deriving from an original inscription survived on the work in a copy (copied, for example, from the original frame of a tabernacle), and was then removed in the course of a restoration precisely for being a later addition.

not excluded); Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits and Brown 2003, 532 (Neroccio de' Landi, mid-1480s); Hiller von Gaertringen 2004, 310, 314 (workshop of Neroccio); Sallay 2008, 8, 16 (Neroccio de' Landi, 1480s).

**Benvenuto di Giovanni**  
**(Benvenuto di Giovanni di Meo del Guasta)**  
(Siena, 1436 – Siena, between 1509 and 1518)

Benvenuto di Giovanni worked for Siena and many provincial towns (Bolsena, Volterra, Sinalunga, Orvieto, Grancia near Grosseto) as panel and fresco painter; his activity as an illuminator is also significant. His works often show Northern-Italian influences, which could have reached him indirectly, as he is not known to have travelled to any important art centres.

His career is well-documented. Benvenuto was recorded as a painter already in 1453, at the age of 16, working on the frescos in the baptistery in Siena with Vecchietta, who was probably his master. In 1453-54 he executed some frescos, now lost, for the confraternity of San Niccolò e Santa Lucia of Siena, of which he was a member still in 1481. Between 1456 and 1461 he executed the large fresco (*Miracles of St. Anthony of Padua*) over the left side altar in the baptistery in Siena. A *cassone* frontal with the *Triumph of David* (PNS. inv. 217) was executed on occasion of a marriage between the members of the Buoninsegni and Piccolomini families in 1459. Various miniatures painted for the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala date from the 1460s. Benvenuto seems to have collaborated with Sano di Pietro in his early period: in one codex (Museo dell'Opera, Siena, 97.3), he worked alongside the older master, and he executed the predella of Sano di Pietro's St. George altarpiece (now Santa Cristina, Bolsena), in the composition of which Sano's influence is perceptible.

Benvenuto's first signed and dated work is the *Annunciation with Saints Michael and Catherine*, painted for the church of S. Girolamo near Volterra from 1466. In 1468 and 1474, he painted two Gabella covers (ASS, invv. 35 and 38). From 1470 date two of his signed and dated altarpieces, the *Annunciation* in S. Bernardino in Sinalunga and the *Adoration of the Shepherds* in the Pinacoteca in Volterra (opinion is divided whether its present predella showing scenes from the life of the Virgin originally belonged to this work or the earlier altarpiece from 1466). In 1470, Benvenuto is also documented at the Ospedale of Siena, where fragmented frescos showing St. Andrew and two male figures remain.

The artist's early works show a strong influence of Vecchietta, notable in the figural types, often shown in difficult poses, and in the artist's keen interest in the use of linear perspective, the construction of complex spaces, and the use of Renaissance architectural elements in his scenes. Around 1470, more sophisticated, bright colours and a new sensibility for subtle light effects appear in his paintings at the influence of the miniatures of Liberale da Verona and Girolamo da Cremona.

From the 1470s date Benvenuto's best works, the altarpiece formerly in San Michele Arcangelo in Montepertuso from 1475 (now Pieve, Vescovado di Murlo), the Borghesi altarpiece painted for the church of San Domenico in Siena (ca. 1475-1477/1478), and the *Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints Peter and Nicholas* from 1479, which has a provenance from Orvieto (National Gallery in London). In these works, Benvenuto successfully combined the traditional Sienese compositional schemes and gold ground with a novel formal language that is based on formal abstraction, incisive contours, highly refined modelling, emphasized plasticity, and nervously zigzagging draperies broken by hard forms. His forms are often translucent; the details – hairs, jewellery – are stylized and worked out with metallic hardness. His young and idealized figures have pallid complexions and carefully modelled, luminous skin. In the 1470s and '80s, his style became increasingly harsh and restless, with eccentric details including bizarre foreshortenings and body postures with strangely disjointed limbs.

Benvenuto's results have often been likened to, and influenced by, Girolamo da Cremona, Carlo Crivelli, and Mantegna (whose works Benvenuto knew through prints). He was an inventive and non-conformist artist, who often turned away from established schemes, as is evinced by his works for private devotion showing the Nativity and the Virgin and Child. The latter – in contrast to the scheme established by Sano di Pietro – often show the Madonna instead behind a marble ledge, in an off-centred composition.

In the 1480s, the painter received a series of public commissions. In 1481 he executed a fresco showing the *Madonna of Mercy* for the administrators of Monte dei Paschi (Rocca Salimbeni, Sala della Torre, Siena). He worked much for the Sienese Cathedral: in 1482, he received payment for miniatures for cathedral choir books; in 1483-85 he submitted cartoons for three Sybils and the *Sacrifice of Jephthah* for the pavement of cathedral. In these years, he also painted a large number of monochrome frescos showing standing patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament in the drum of the Sienese Cathedral (signed). Still in the 1480s, Benvenuto began working for the Benedictine monks at S. Eugenio in Monistero near Siena, for whom he painted a psalter (now Badia, Cava dei Tirreni), various frescos (now detached and transported inside the church and in the Museum Bardini in Florence). A monumental altarpiece for the same monastery showing the *Ascension of Christ* was completed in 1491 (PNS, inv. 434; the predella fragments are now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington.) This altarpiece well exemplifies Benvenuto's dry and harsh style in his later maturity, when his works became more charged with tension.

The changed political situation in Siena in 1487 did not favour Benvenuto; at least, in a tax declaration from 1488 he complained of poverty and diminishing possibilities of work. His alleged misfortunes seem to be contradicted by the rising amount of his tax payments in 1488 and 1491, indicative of his relative wealth.

The aging painter must have been increasingly being helped by his son Girolamo from the later 1480s on, although only in 1491 did he state in a tax declaration that he had had an assistant for about a year.<sup>641</sup> From this time on, his production becomes inextricably intertwined with that of his son, Girolamo, and attributions between the two painters still often change back and forth. Perhaps due to collaborating with Girolamo, Benvenuto's last signed works are calmer and have a tendency for simplification. They are the altarpieces from 1497 in Santa Flora, Torrita, the *Assumption of the Virgin* painted in 1498 for Franciscan Observant Convento della Grancia near Grosseto (Galleria Benucci, Rome)<sup>642</sup>, and the *Virgin and Child, Saints Sebastian and Fabian* dated 1509 (Collegiata della Santissima Trinità, Sinalunga). The artist's death occurred between the date of this altarpiece and 1518, when a document refers to his wife, Iacopa di Tommaso da Cetona, as a widow.

At the present state of research, it is not always possible to separate the hands of Benvenuto and Girolamo between about 1490 and the early 1510s. The difficulty arises from the fact the painters collaborated but were also concomitantly but independently active until at least 1509 and possibly also for some time afterwards (see Girolamo's biographical profile below, with Cat. 31-32). Their respective styles are not comparable in 1498, as formerly believed, because it was wrongly claimed that Girolamo di Benvenuto's *Assumption of the Virgin* in Montalcino (Museo Civico e Diocesano d'Arte Sacra, inv. 17MD, cf. Fig. 32/11), is signed and dated 1498. In fact, it appears to date at least a decade later.<sup>643</sup>

A new path of research could be taken by a careful comparison of Benvenuto's last signed and dated work from 1509 in Sinalunga<sup>644</sup> and Girolamo's signed and dated *Madonna delle Nevi* altarpiece from 1508 (main panel and lunette in the PNS, inv. 414a and I.B.S. 19;

<sup>641</sup> Born in 1470 and thus reaching his twenties by the 1490s, Girolamo must have been the "little help" which his father declared as having "only for a year" in a tax declaration from 1491-92 (Borghesi and Banchi 1898, 350, no. 80; Bandera 1999, 205 n. 2). See discussion below with Girolamo di Benvenuto biography.

<sup>642</sup> Formerly The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; sold Sotheby's, New York, 1 June 1978, lot 133.

<sup>643</sup> Bagnoli ed. 1997, 49-50, 63 (with repr.). Bagnoli suggested a date around 1510 for Girolamo's altarpiece, which is plausible and concords with Victor Schmidt's independent opinion (1997, 215) according to which the likely date for the panel is somewhat after Girolamo's signed altarpiece of 1508. The history of the mix-up is summed up in Bandera 1999, 208 n. 134 (to which the contribution of Fredericksen and Davisson, 1966, 16 could be added), and the two altarpieces are discussed and reproduced *ibid.* 180-181, 184ff, 242. For Girolamo's *Assumption* altarpiece, see Cat. 32.

<sup>644</sup> Bandera (colour repr. pp. 199-201); Cecilia Alessi, in Longi and Martini ed. 1995, 37-39, colour repr. on p. 87.

the predella is dispersed (Figs. 31/9-10). Scholars often claim that Girolamo participated in the execution of the altarpiece from 1509, which is very possible, but certainly does not constitute a ground to attribute disputed works to Girolamo on the basis of similarities with details of this work. For the reconstruction of Girolamo's *oeuvre*, the firm points remain his certain works from 1508 and ca. 1515, besides some severely damaged frescos at Santa Maria della Scala from 1499-1504.

**Select bibliography:**

Romagnoli, *ante* 1835 (1976), V, 153-184; Berenson 1897, 134-135; Berenson 1909, 147-150; Berenson 1936, 65-67; Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 390-420; Brandi 1949, 148-52; Sandberg-Vavalà 1953, 337-40; Bologna 1954; Fredericksen and Davisson 1966; G. Tantillo, "Benvenuto di Giovanni", in *Dizionario Biografico ...*, vol. 8 (1966), 689-691 (with extensive bibl.); Berenson 1968, I, 39-42; Bandera 1974; Bandera 1977; Kanter 1983; Alessandro Angelini, "Benvenuto di Giovanni", in Zeri ed. 1984, II, 582; Laurence B. Kanter, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 300-315 (It. ed. 314-29); Seidel 1989<sup>1</sup>, (republ. 2005); Torriti 1990, 305-308; Ladis 1992; Alessi et al. 1992; Susanne Günther, "Benvenuto di Giovanni", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 9 (1994), 191-193; Rossi 1999; Bandera 1997; Bandera 1998; Bandera 1999; Alessi 2003; Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 106-124; Anna Rossi, "Benvenuto di Giovanni", in Bollati ed. 2004, 91-93.

## 18.

### Benvenuto di Giovanni

*Saint Angelus of Sicily*

#### Fig. 18/1

ca. 1498-1509

tempera and gold on wood

panel and painted surface: 23.7 x 23.5; thickness: 2.1-2.5 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 29.

#### Provenance:

Acquired probably in Siena by Johann Anton Ramboux before 1842; Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, no. 208 (as Giacomo Pacchiarotti); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 208 (as Giacomo Pacchiarotti); Arnold Ipolyi, Pest, 1867-72; Ipolyi's gift to the National Picture Gallery in 1872, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts in 1906.

#### Technical notes:

The support is a single panel with horizontal grain (Fig. 18/2). The surface of the reverse is rough and uneven. It seems to conserve its original thickness in the lower left and upper right corners (as viewed from the back); in the other areas it is thinned. There are two larger cavities at the centre bottom and the upper right. There is a deep horizontal crack running the whole width of the panel at about its upper third, which has been filled with 0.2 cm thick and ca. 1.3 cm deep wedges. There is small piece of wood (height: 7.2, width: 0.3, depth: 0.6-0.7 cm) nailed to the centre of the left side. The stub of an old hand-hewn nail is in the right side of the panel, located at 9 cm from the upper edge. The upper side of the panel has not been cut: the surface of the wood is original and the border of the painted field is indicated a *barbe* and by a dark red line (possibly madder lake mixed with lead white) of the same colour as the one that contours the pink roundels on the left external side in MFA 29 and some of its companion pieces. The open worm channels do not contradict this observation as they are channels whose top has collapsed (Fig. 18/11). The vertical sides and the bottom of the panel are cut and there are extensive repairs along the bottom edge.

The paint surface is worn and damaged; there are scattered minor losses, indents, scratches, and some extensively damaged areas (Fig. 18/9). Losses are covered in part by old and now discoloured retouching; in part by a more recent retouching in *tratteggio* (especially in the central part of the knife, in the sky around the head, along the horizontal crack at the level of the saint's shoulder, in the palm branch and in a large area to the left of the palm branch). The head and the neck of the saint are much damaged; there are repairs on his forehead, around his left ear, and below his right ear. (Fig. 18/3). The gilding of the halo, originally executed in mordent gilding, has almost completely disappeared. The two upper corners are extensively repaired.

The work is enclosed in a modern gilt frame.

#### Documentation:

On reverse: "*S. Pietro Martire Domenicano*" (in black ink, 19<sup>th</sup> c. handwriting, probably by Ramboux); "*Dal Pittore Giacomo Pacchiarotti Cittadino Senese*" (handwritten in ink); "23" (in pencil on white label); "*J.A.Ramboux*" (in red wax seal); "*ORSZÁGOS KÉPTÁR. KÉPTÁR. Az 1888. évi leltározás. 29. sz.*" (printed white label);

On modern frame: “K995” (inv. of frame, handwritten on label, postdating 1888).

The small panel shows a beardless, tonsured friar with a halo, holding a brownish-coloured, closed book in his left hand and a palm branch, the sign of martyrdom, in his right. A knife in his head indicates his way of martyrdom. The blood from his wound trickles down his head and falls on his ample white cloak, which he wears over a black habit. The figure is enclosed in a medallion. The composition is somewhat awkward because of the conjunction of the palm branch and the knife.

The piece is a fragment from a predella of which four other elements have been identified so far: the *St. Jerome* (Huis Bergh Foundation, ‘s Heerenbergh, inv. 14; formerly Ramboux Coll., Cologne, no. 207, height left 23,6/right 23,9 cm; width top 23.2/ bottom 23,5 cm; thickness 2-2,4 cm, Fig. 18/5)<sup>645</sup>; a *Man of Sorrows* (whereabouts unknown and not known in reproduction, formerly documented in the Ramboux Coll. in Cologne, no. 206, with the measures 9” x 9” [23.5 x 23.5 cm])<sup>646</sup>; a *Male saint* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. 44.831, 24.4 x 20.2 cm, with later additions: 28.5 x 28.3 cm, Fig. 18/6) and the *St. Vincent Ferrer* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. 44.832, 23.1 x 21.7 cm, with later additions: 28.5 x 28.3 cm, Fig. 18/7).<sup>647</sup> To these four companion pieces, a hitherto unknown, homeless fragment showing *St. Sigismund* (Fig. 18/8) can be added now, as will be discussed below.<sup>648</sup>

Each of the fragments shows a saint at three-quarter length, standing before a sky that is shaded from blue at the top to near white at the bottom. The figures are framed in summarily painted, pink roundels that suggest red marble *oculi* whose edges are shaded with black, deep

<sup>645</sup> For this work, see Gengaro 1934, 183 (“attributed to Matteo di Giovanni”); Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 360 (Matteo di Giovanni); Gerson and Os ed. 1969; Wright 1980, 141 (Girolamo di Benvenuto); Van Heek 1987, 140, colour repr. p. 147 (“Girolamo di Benvenuto, ca. 1508”); Charlotte Wiethoff in Os et al. ed. 1989, 86-87 (with further bibl.) Lojenga-Rietberg 2001, 84, fig. 73 (attributed to Girolamo di Benvenuto, ca. 1508). I am very grateful to Victor Schmidt for information about the dimensions of the work and for his invaluable help in arranging for the photography of this piece.

<sup>646</sup> Ramboux (1862, 36) recorded his three pieces as follows: “Giacomo Pacchiarotti. 206. Christus mit übereinander geschlagenen Händen in dem Grabe stehend. Eine von den frühern Arbeiten des Giacomo Pacchiarotti, Bürgers von Siena. Holz, 9” h., 9” b. - Giacomo Pacchiarotti. 207. Der hl. Hieronymus, mit einem Stein sich auf die Brust schlagend und einen Rosenkranz haltend. Halbe Figur von demselben Meister. Aus Siena. Holz, 9” h., 9” b. - Giacomo Pacchiarotti. 208. Der heil. Petrus von Mailand, Dominicaner und Martyrer, mit Palme un Buch; halbe Figur; von demselben. Holz, 9” h., 9” b.”

<sup>647</sup> Fredericksen and Zeri 1972, 92, 564; Murphy 1985, 119; Kanter 1994, 203-205 (with further bibl. and a very useful technical report).

<sup>648</sup> A photograph of this piece is preserved at the Fototeca of the Fondazione Zeri, Università di Bologna, inv. 45414. As far as I know, the work is unpublished. An annotation on the photograph says that in 1975 it was in the Bonacossa Coll. in Milan. The connection of this fragment with the others is so obvious that it does not need detailed argumentation. A curved shadow cast by the modern frame on the right edge of the painting indicates that the panel has a warp along the horizontal axis, consequently, a horizontal grain, which supports its association with the other predella fragments. The work, which I know from this photograph only, must be enlarged at the top and the bottom, and appears overpainted in some areas. The roundel is completed at the top and bottom, and the decorative “lunette” motif has been painted out but is still perceptible under the overpainting at the left, but not on the right.

red, and white strips to suggest depth and a light source from the upper right. The area between the medallions was coloured dark. The lost centre piece of the predella represented – possibly but not certainly also in a roundel – the *Man of Sorrows* standing in the tomb with hands crossed in front of his body.<sup>649</sup> As frequently in fifteenth-century Sienese art, *St. Jerome* wears the habit of the Gesuati order, an off-white or greyish habit with a black leather belt.<sup>650</sup>

The dismembering of the predella must have occurred before 1842, when Ramboux left Italy. The collector recorded a Sienese provenance for the *St. Jerome* only<sup>651</sup> but it is probable that he acquired his three panels together. The provenance of the two pieces in Boston cannot be traced back to earlier than 1930,<sup>652</sup> and nothing about the earlier history of the *St. Sigismund* is familiar to me.

The association of the hitherto known four fragments is the merit of Henk van Os. In 1969, he recognized that the *St. Jerome* comes from the Ramboux collection and called attention to the two – at that time unidentified – companion pieces recorded there. In 1971, he added the two Boston fragments to the series and noted that H. Defoer had in the meantime identified the lost “Saint Peter Martyr” in the fragment now in Budapest (although giving its location wrongly as in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna). These points were repeated Charlotte Wiethoff’s catalogue entry on *St. Jerome* in 1989.<sup>653</sup> Since then, the series was discussed by Laurence Kanter in 1994 and Maria Cristina Bandera in 1999.

All scholars who commented the original context of the series, including Kanter and Bandera, concurred in suggesting a Dominican origin for the dismembered predella.<sup>654</sup> MFA 29 has always been believed to portray Saint Peter Martyr, and this identification seemed to be corroborated by Fredericksen’s identification of one of the saints in Boston as *St. Vincent*

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<sup>649</sup> Ramboux’s description (cf. note 646 above) makes it clear that this representation was a Man of Sorrows standing in the tomb and not a Salvator Mundi, as interpreted by Bandera (1999, 242-243, cat. 40). Representations of the Salvator Mundi are extremely rare in Sienese art, but there is indeed one example by Benvenuto himself: the central element of another dismembered Dominican (?) predella, as noted by Bandera (1999, 105). Bandera’s hypothesis that the predella examined here is modelled on the one with the Salvator Mundi in the centre, does not hold up, since neither of her two premises are true: there is no iconographical similarity between the central pieces and the predella discussed here, as we shall see, is not Dominican.

<sup>650</sup> On the Gesuati order, whose patron saint St. Jerome was, see discussion in Cat. 5.

<sup>651</sup> See note 646 above.

<sup>652</sup> These two fragments had been in the possession of Edward Jackson Holmes around 1930, and were then donated to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (Kanter 1994, 203).

<sup>653</sup> The location of the “Saint Peter Martyr” is given in these publications as in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, an error corrected by Carl Strehlke in his review of *The Early Sienese Paintings*, 1991, 200.

<sup>654</sup> Cf. Gerson and Os ed. (1969, considering also the rosary held by St. Jerome as an indication for Dominican milieu), van Os (1971), Wiethoff (1989); Kanter 1994, 205; Bandera 1999, 188.

*Ferrer*, the Dominican preacher and miracle worker from Valencia (c. 1350-1419).<sup>655</sup> While this recognition is indisputably correct, the identity of the other saint in Boston and the one in Budapest must be reexamined. The former has been variously described in the past as simply a male saint or as a Carmelite, a Premonstratensien, or Dominican saint.<sup>656</sup> His vestments, however, exclude that he could be a Dominican, since the members of that order wear a black habit over a white tunic and scapular. Similarly, the white-clad Premonstratensians can be excluded and they were hardly present in 15<sup>th</sup> c. Italy anyway. Since the bearded saint in Boston wears a white cloak over a black tunic, he can only be a Carmelite,<sup>657</sup> though his identity remains uncertain.

His vestments show that the figure in MFA 29 must be likewise a Carmelite, and not a Dominican saint.<sup>658</sup> He thus cannot be St. Peter Martyr, but rather St. Angelus of Sicily (of Licata or Leocata, of Jerusalem), who was martyred on 5 May, 1225,<sup>659</sup> and appears in the only Tuscan example known to George Kaftal, Fra Filippo Lippi's panel in the Castello Sforzesco, "as a beardless Carmelite friar, a knife in his head".<sup>660</sup> The closest analogy to the way this rarely represented saint is shown in MFA 29 is a panel in the Carmelite church in Palermo (Fig. 18/10).<sup>661</sup>

The presence of the two Carmelite saints in the predella undoubtedly points to a Carmelite commission rather than a Dominican one (notwithstanding the inclusion of the Dominican *St. Vincent Ferrer* and – it should be added – that of *St. Jerome*, who seems to

<sup>655</sup> In Fredericksen and Davisson 1966, 31. The identification is based on the Dominican vestments and on the inscription on the book: "*Timete Deum et date illi honorem quia venit ora iudicii eius*" (Revelation 14, 7). For St. Vincent Ferrer, see Kirschbaum ed. 1968-1976, vol. 8, cols. 562-565, esp. 563; and Kaftal 1952.

<sup>656</sup> Fredericksen 1966 (Carmelite?); Fredericksen and Zeri, 1972, 92 (Anonymous Carmelite St.); Van Os 1971 (Carmelite saint); W. G. Constable, manuscript opinion, cited by Kanter 1994, 203 (Premonstratensien); Murphy 1985, 119 (Carmelite); Wiethoff 1989 (Carmelite), Kanter 1994 (Male Saint, perhaps Premonstratensian), Kanter, written communication cited by Bandera 1999, 243 (Dominican), Bandera 1999, 242 (Dominican).

<sup>657</sup> For the vestments of religious orders, cf. Rocca ed. 2000, 303-318 (Dominicans); 240-46 (Premonstratensians); 369-378 (Carmelites).

<sup>658</sup> This was also noted by Andrea de Marchi, who in an oral communication to MFA on 28 September, 1993, suggested that the piece represented the Carmelite St. Albertus Siculus. This saint, however, is usually shown in Sieneese art as a young Carmelite holding a lily and a book, cf. Kaftal 1952, coll. 13-14; Kirschbaum ed. 1968-1976, V, coll. 75-76.

<sup>659</sup> For St. Angelus of Licata, see AA.SS., Maii, II, Venezia 1738, pp. 56-95; Daniela della Vergine, *Speculum Carmelitanum*, II, Antwerp, 1860, 351-371; G. Fanucchi, *Vita di S. Angelo martire*, Viterbo, 1870; A. A. Strnad, in Kirschbaum ed. 1968-1976, V, coll. 165-165; Giuseppe Morabito, s. v. in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, Rome, 1961, vol. 1, cols. 1240-43, with further literature (Morabito mentions that his cult was celebrated in the Carmelite order from at least 1456 and Pius II verbally approved the cult). The fundamental study on St. Angelus is by Ludovico Saggi (1962), who points out (126-28, 312) that the resemblance of the iconography of St. Peter Martyr and St. Angelus of Sicily is not fortuitous: the story of St. Peter Martyr had a defining influence both on the hagiography and the visual representations of the Carmelite saint. For a recent study regarding the iconography of the saint, with special emphasis on a narrative scene from his life (the encounter with Sts. Dominic and Francis of Assisi), see Cifani and Monetti 2005.

<sup>660</sup> Kaftal 1952, col 60; col. 14, fig. 17 in cols. 15-16; repr. in Ruda 1993, 54-55, Pl. 21.

<sup>661</sup> Kaftal 1965, col. 70, fig. 65.

represent the Gesuati order here).<sup>662</sup> The Carmelite houses for which Sieneese artists were likely to work were few, with S. Niccolò al Carmine in Siena being the most probable source of commissions.

The rediscovery of a sixth fragment with the figure of *St. Sigismund* adds substantial weight to a hypothesis that the predella was painted for the Sieneese Carmelite church. The church conserved St. Sigismund's relics,<sup>663</sup> and tradition held that what is now the sacristy was originally a small church dedicated to St. Sigismund.<sup>664</sup> In fact, in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, that is, when the predella in question was painted, the Vescovi family had this space renovated as their burial chapel dedicated to St. Sigismund. The works were executed between 1501 and 1507 possibly by the same Giacomo Cozzarelli who created the outstanding polychrome terracotta statue of the saint for the high altar.<sup>665</sup> The feast of S. Sigismund was celebrated at this time with great solemnity. In this light, the fact that St. Sigismund appears in this Carmelite predella strongly, even if only hypothetically, points to the church of S. Niccolò al Carmine as the place of original provenance.<sup>666</sup>

Many features of the original appearance of the predella can be gathered from its fragments (Fig. 18/12). As the intact upper edge of MFA 29 indicates, the medallions were not complete at the top and the bottom.<sup>667</sup> Allowing for a missing saint on the left, the

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<sup>662</sup> The inclusion of saints from other orders is not unusual in Sieneese predellas and could have a variety of reasons ranging from a mutual respect for the venerated saints of other orders (especially common between Franciscans and Dominicans) to personal motives, such as wanting a personal patron saint of the commissioner or of his family present (Vincenzo or Girolamo in our case).

<sup>663</sup> When Bishop Francesco Bossi visited the church on 7 October, 1575 (AAS, Visite Pastorali, ms. 21, f. 688r, published by Recupero 2002-03, 413), he saw in the cupboard of the sacristy some relics, of which he named only those of St. Sigismund and St. Albert only ("inter quas reliquias aderant duae reliquiae sanctorum Sigismundi et Alberti"). The representation of St. Sigismund was not rare in Sieneese art of the second half of the fifteenth century (a phenomenon that has often been explained by the impact of Emperor Sigismund's stay in Siena in 1432-33), but the saint does not appear to have had elsewhere a cult comparable to what he enjoyed at S. Niccolò al Carmine.

<sup>664</sup> Gigli 1723 (ed. 1854), II, 30 ("...Carmine, la cui antica chiesa fu a S. Sigismondo insieme con S. Niccolò titolata"); Liberati 1939-1961, esp. 1940, XLVII, 159-162, n. 4 on pp. 159-160: "Si vuole che la sagrestia del Carmine fosse in antico la chiesa di San Sigismondo", referring to 18<sup>th</sup>- and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript sources (Giovanni Antonio Pecci, *Iscrizioni*, ASS, I, f. 576; Assunto Picchioni, *Notizie sulle Chiese di Siena*, BCS, ms. A.VIII.2, f. 88); Lusini (1907, 49-51) says that the Renaissance chapel of St. Sigismund was founded and constructed at the commission of the Vescovi family.

<sup>665</sup> Bersano 1957, esp. 127; Carlo Sisi, "Giacomo Cozzarelli" in *Domenico Beccafumi...1990*, 540, 541 fig. 2; Francesca Fumi Cambi Gado, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 414-17.

<sup>666</sup> A niche in the right wall of the church – containing Benedetto di Bindo's splendid *Assumption of the Virgin* fresco – was renovated in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Berenson (1968, I, 188) and Hiller von Gærtringen and Schmidt ("Girolamo di Benvenuto", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 55, 2007, 259) claim that the new frescos on the sides of the niche (showing *St. Lawrence* and, in my opinion, *Job*) are the work of Benvenuto's son Girolamo. I cannot agree with this attribution and thus the possibility that the altarpiece with this predella stood in this niche, redecorated in the time when Benvenuto worked with his son, must be discounted.

<sup>667</sup> This is not frequent but happens in other cases. Andrea di Niccolò painted similar medallions in the predella of a small *Enthroned Madonna with saints* (sold Sotheby's, New York, 17 January, 1985, lot 39; repr. Cinotti ed. 1985, 79). In the predella reconstructed here, adjoining structural elements with moulded frames must have

predella contained at least seven medallions, and it may well have been even wider, since in most cases the Man of Sorrows in the centre of Sienese predellas is flanked by the mourning Virgin and St. John the Evangelist.<sup>668</sup> Benvenuto's predella medallions are usually more-or-less widely spaced, but this predella could have been different. The unusual, fragmented motifs seen at mid-height along the inner edges of the roundels (well discernible in the *St. Jerome* and the *St. Angelus* and just perceptible under the modern overpainting on the left sides of the *Carmelite saint*, the *St. Vincent Ferrer*, and the *St. Sigismund*) are, in my view, not floral decorative motifs, as has been suggested, but the remnants of rings or clasps that once connected the medallions.<sup>669</sup> If this interpretation is correct, the medallions in this predella were directly conjoined (which, without the clasps, is common). The width of the predella with seven medallions would have been around 190-195 cm wide; if it had nine fields, its width was at least 250 cm. The original sequence of the figures is unknown and is arbitrary in the proposed reconstruction.<sup>670</sup>

The dating and attribution of the fragments have been subject to debate. Ramboux ascribed his three pieces to the young Giacomo Pacchiarotti, whereas Térey and Pigler catalogued MFA 29 as a Sienese work from about the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> c. or 1500. Fredericksen ascribed the Boston panels to Girolamo di Benvenuto but noted their resemblance to Benvenuto di Giovanni's *Assumption of the Virgin* from 1498. The attribution of the Boston fragments to Girolamo was maintained in 1972 by Fredericksen and Zeri and in 1985 by Murphy.<sup>671</sup> The *St. Jerome* was considered as a work of Matteo di Giovanni<sup>672</sup> until van Os

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bordered the painted field at the top and the bottom; these are painted in Andrea di Niccolò's work because of the much smaller size and less demanding concept of the work.

<sup>668</sup> For two examples by Benvenuto, in which the the Virgin and St. John the Evangelist flank the Man of Sorrows, who – like in the lost piece from the series discussed here – stands in the tomb with crossed arms, see the predellas in the Cappella del Rosario in Santa Cristina, Bolsena and in the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria of Perugia, inv. 78 (repr. Bandera 1999, 38-39). Exceptions to this very common iconographical scheme are the predellas in which Christ, standing in the tomb with crossed arms, is flanked by other saints: Girolamo di Benvenuto's (?) *Nativity* in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles (repr. Fredericksen and Davisson 1966, fig. 1 on unnumbered page; Bandera 1999, 134), Sano di Pietro's *Virgin and Child with Sts. Agnes, Catherine Alexandria and two angels* (Lanckoronski Coll., Cracow), Bernardino Fungai's *Virgin and Child with Sts. John the Baptist and Magdalene* (PNS, inv. 375), Andrea di Niccolò's work mentioned in note 667 above.

<sup>669</sup> Cf. Kanter 1994, 204. These motifs are not "within the circle" but over the surface of the medallions. Such rings or clasps between predella medallions are very rare. Similarly clasped medallions, albeit with small, non-figural decoration inserted between them, appear in Bartolomeo Caporali's predella from about 1477-79, which includes seven saints in roundels (Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia, inv. 179, see Paola Mercurelli Salari, in Garibaldi, Vittoria and Francesco Federico Mancini, ed. 2008, cat. 27, 218-19, repr.). This predella is similar to the one discussed here also in that the medallions are not complete at the top and the bottom. Fictive roundels arranged in several tiers are clasped in a similar way in Mantegna's painted parapet behind the sitting figures in the Camera degli Sposi in the Castel San Giorgio in Mantua.

<sup>670</sup> Only the position of a gradually rising crack running through the *St. Jerome* and the *St. Angelus* suggests that the former was situated to the left of the latter.

<sup>671</sup> Fredericksen and Zeri 1972, 92; Murphy 1985, 119.

<sup>672</sup> Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 360.

(1969) ascribed it – independently of Fredericksen’s attribution of the Boston fragments, of which he was unaware – to Girolamo di Benvenuto. In 1971, van Os extended this attribution to all the fragments and dated them about 1508 with reference to Girolamo’s *Madonna delle Nevi* altarpiece which bears that date. Wiethoff (1989) and Tátrai (1991) accepted this attribution. Strehlke (1991) proposed an attribution to Benvenuto instead of Girolamo, with which Kanter (1994) and Bandera (1999) agreed. The latter scholars dated the series to ca. 1498-1500 on the basis of a comparison with Benvenuto’s altarpiece from 1498.<sup>673</sup>

I feel that the attribution to Benvenuto is convincing, since the heads are individualized, firmly and luminously modelled; the tonal contrasts are pronounced, the facial features are finely chiselled and sculpturally articulated – features that differ from the figures in the predella of the *Madonna delle Nevi*, Girolamo’s earliest certain work.<sup>674</sup> Girolamo’s figures have laxer contours and modelling, and the construction principles for the heads are different (larger and more widely spaced eyes, softer skin, mouths with depressed corners, double chins, etc.). The figures of the Carmelite predella bear comparison with Benvenuto’s altarpieces from 1498 and 1509, and were probably painted some time between them. Although workshop assistance cannot be excluded in any or all of these works, if Girolamo participated in them, his hand cannot be clearly differentiated and, on the whole, an attempt to attribute him the fragments of the Carmelite predella would be difficult to justify.

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 36, no. 208 (Giacomo Pacchiarotti); [Ramboux] 1867, 38, no. 208 (Giacomo Pacchiarotti); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1873, 4, no. 23 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1876, 7, no. 97 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Országos Képtár...* 1878, 7, 97 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Országos Képtár...* 1879, 7, 97 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pulszky 1881, 7, no. 29A (“School of Giotto, 14<sup>th</sup> c., St. Peter Martyr”); Pulszky 1888, 4, no. 29 (Sienese painter, end of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Országos Képtár* 1897, 17-18 (Sienese painter, end of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 142 (Sienese painter, end of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>, 387, no. 29 (Sienese painter, end of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Térey 1913<sup>1</sup>, 297, no. 29 (Sienese school); Pigler 1954, 527 (Sienese painter, ca. 1500); Fredericksen and Davisson 1966, 30-31, figs. 27-28 (mention only the two pieces in Boston as works by Girolamo di Benvenuto representing an “unknown (Carmelite?) saint” and *St. Vincent Ferrer*, close to “Benvenuto’s Assumption of 1498 in New York, and are probably of that period”); Pigler 1967, 645 (Sienese, ca. 1500); Henk W. van Os, in Gerson and Os ed. 1969, cat. 12 (Girolamo di Benvenuto, calls attention to the other fragments described by Ramboux); Os 1971, 72 (Girolamo di Benvenuto, ca. 1508, erroneously gives the location of MFA 29 as in the

<sup>673</sup> This comparison is valid but should be observed with care, since about the right third of the head of St. Anthony of Padua, to whom the figures in question are likened, is entirely reconstructed (around the figure’s left ear).

<sup>674</sup> The four predella pieces rediscovered after their dispersal are now in the Berenson Coll., Florence; Fondazione Longhi, Florence; and two in private collection, cf. Zeri 1979; M. G. Sarti, “Girolamo di Benvenuto” in *Dizionario Biografico...* vol. 56, 2001, 545.

Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna); Charlotte Wiethoff, in Os et al. ed. 1989, 86, cat. 20 (Girolamo di Benvenuto, ca. 1508, erroneously gives the location of MFA 29 as in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna); Cséfalvay and Ugrin 1989, 115 (Sienese painter, ca. 1500, reconstruction of the Ipolyi collection); Strehlke 1991<sup>1</sup>, 200 (Benvenuto di Giovanni; notes that the piece is found in Budapest, not in Vienna); Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 50 (Girolamo di Benvenuto); Andrea De Marchi, communication to the MFA, 1993 (represents St. Albertus Siculus); Kanter 1994, 204, fig. 42 (Benvenuto di Giovanni, ca. 1498-1500); Kier und Zehnder ed. 1998, 573-4 (Benvenuto di Giovanni or Girolamo di Benvenuto (?), 1498-1500); Bandera 1999, 14 n. 42, 187 repr., 188, cat. no. 83 (and related cat. nos. 81, 82, 84), figs. on p. 187 (Benvenuto di Giovanni, ca. 1498-1500); Sallay 2008, 10, 11, 14, colour repr. (Benvenuto di Giovanni, forms part of a Carmelite predella to which also a *St. Sigismund* belonged, possibly painted for S. Niccolò al Carmine in Siena).

## 19. Workshop of Benvenuto di Giovanni

*Adoration of the Christ Child*

**Fig. 19/1**

last third of the 15<sup>th</sup> century

tempera and gold on poplar (?) wood

panel and painted surface: 24 x 22.2 cm, thickness: 2 – 2.5 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 24.

### **Provenance:**

Acquired in San Gimignano by Johann Anton Ramboux before 1842; Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 112 (as Suor Barbara Ragnioni da Siena); sold 1867 at Lempertz, Cologne, no. 112 (as Suor Barbara Ragnioni da Siena) to Arnold Ipolyi; Arnold Ipolyi, Pest (1867-72); gift of Arnold Ipolyi to the National Picture Gallery in 1872, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts in 1906.

### **Exhibited:**

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest (opened on 15 April, 1967): *Ismeretlen mesterművek – Kiállítás a Szépművészeti Múzeumban* (Unknown masterpieces – Exhibition in the Museum of Fine Arts).<sup>675</sup>

### **Technical notes:**

The support is a single, vertically-grained piece of wood, which is slightly warped (Fig. 19/2). It has been thinned after the warping occurred, with the result that the thickness of the panel is now uneven, becoming thinner towards the vertical edges. The panel originally had an engaged frame, after the removal of which the extensions of unpainted wood were sawed off and 0.2-0.3 cm thick wooden strips were glued to all four sides.<sup>676</sup>

The painted surface conserves its original dimensions. There are fragments of a *barbe* on all sides and gold leaf extending from the original engaged frame can be discerned along the edges.

The painted surface is in good condition. There are small losses (especially at the border of Joseph's blue robe and red mantle) and three, approximately 3 cm long, radially connected cracks meeting in the Christ Child's hands, caused by a large knot in the panel. The bottom of Virgin's blue robe and a round area in the centre of her white robe are repaired. There is a more extensive and inpainted damage along the left edge at mid-height. The copper-green pigment has darkened; the sky is soiled and abraded, the figures of the angel and the pastors are damaged and repaired. The hillside is abraded. The surface is covered by somewhat darkened varnish and accumulated dirt (notable especially on the red robe of Joseph).

The paint has been applied in a coarse and thick manner. The areas under the herald angel announcing to the pastors and the three halos were originally gilt over red bole. The

<sup>675</sup> The work is not mentioned specifically in the catalogue written by Éva Eszláry and Miklós Mojzer (*Ismeretlen mesterművek – Kiállítás a Szépművészeti Múzeumban*, Budapest, 1967), only generally on p. 4 as follows: "predella fragments from Florentine and Siense works of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> c. The bright colours of the latter were revealed by recent restorations." Miklós Mór's restoration diary conserved at the Old Masters Department in the MFA records in 1967 that he restored the piece for this exhibition.

<sup>676</sup> In two old, pre-restoration photographs filed with Francesco di Giorgio in the Fototeca Zeri in Bologna (inv. 44705-06), the pieces of wood added on the sides are different.

original gold of the halos extends under the upper parts of the heads. At a later date, the halos have been overpainted in brown paint, possibly in burnt sienna, and new, ray-patterned haloes were applied in shell gold. The Virgin's white dress is decorated with *sgraffito* over gold leaf. The hem of the Virgin's dress and the star on her left shoulder are executed in shell gold.

The work was restored by Miklós Móré in 1967.

### Documentation:

On reverse: “*gentile da Fabri/ano.*” (19<sup>th</sup> c. handwriting in ink); “*P.....*” (“Ramboux?”) (illegible handwriting in ink); “*929/I*” (in blue pencil); “*ORSZÁGOS KÉPTÁR. KÉPTÁR. Az 1888. évi leltározás, 24. sz.*” (printed on white label).

The Virgin Mary kneels in adoration in front of the Child, who lies naked on the ground, his vulnerability expressing his humility and human nature: the Word that has become flesh<sup>677</sup> (Fig. 19/6). The old Joseph sleeps in the left foreground, propping his head on his left arm. Behind them, the ox and the ass stand,<sup>678</sup> as usual in Siene painting, in a grotto that derives from eastern tradition. Behind the Virgin there is a serried group of trees, one of which, immediately behind the Virgin, is a fruit tree with a conspicuously twisted trunk.<sup>679</sup> Above her, the scene opens to the distance and the scene of the annunciation to the pastors is visible between city-topped hills and in front of a natural sky: an angel surrounded by rays delivers the good news from the blue sky to two minute pastor figures (Fig. 19/4). On the hill to the left a pair of cranes stand. Cranes were known since Antiquity as birds faithful to their mates; in the context of the Nativity, they symbolize steadfast faithfulness to Christ (Fig. 19/3).<sup>680</sup>

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<sup>677</sup> On the iconography of the Adoration of the Child, see Panofsky 1953, 46; Schiller 1966-91, I (1966), 86-95, esp. 90. and figs. 185, 167.

<sup>678</sup> The ass is obstructed by Joseph's halo, whereas the ox lifts its head with an expression of genuine interest towards the Virgin (Fig. 19/5). This may not have a special significance but it is also possible that the painter relied, at least in part, on the tradition that identified the ass with the Jewish religion (or the Old Testament) and was unfavourably distinguished from the ox which in turn symbolized the Gentiles (or the New Testament) (cf. Panofsky 1953, 277-278 and esp. 470 n. 1). Whenever this distinction is expressed, however, the ox tends to look at the Christ Child, not the Virgin, the distinction being based on Isaiah I, 3 (“The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib”).

<sup>679</sup> Perhaps referring to the tree of knowledge and Mary's role as the new Eve.

<sup>680</sup> I am grateful to Umberto Albarella (Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield) and Dale Serjeantson (Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton) for their help in identifying these birds. For the symbolism of the crane, see Dittrich and Dittrich 2004, 269-274, esp. 270 with a list of examples and further aspects of the crane as symbol. There are other fifteenth-century Siene examples showing scenes related to the Nativity in which cranes appear likewise on a hill to the left: in Sassetta's *The Journey of the Magi* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, cf. Keith Christiansen, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 80-83 [It. ed. 94-97], repr.) and in the *Adoration of the Shepherds* in the central part of a triptych by the Osservanza Master (El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso). Cranes in general symbolize loyalty and vigilance. As snake-killers, they are enemies of Satan, see the two cranes in Fra Filippo Lippi's *Adoration of the Infant Jesus* (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin), where one of the animals is killing a snake. Ruda (1993, 227) unconvincingly conjectures these “waterbirds” look like cranes or herons but may in fact be intended as pelicans. For the identification of these birds as cranes and their interpretation as symbols of loyalty, cf. Aronberg Lavin 1955, 93 n. 43.

The vertical wood grain and square format exclude that this small work were a predella fragment.<sup>681</sup> It seems to have been an independent painting destined for private devotion and originally enclosed by engaged frame.<sup>682</sup> The iconography is widespread in Quattrocento Sieneese art but it has no close compositional relation to any known work by Benvenuto or his workshop.

Despite some awkwardness notable in the arrangement of the Holy Family, in the clumsy pose of St. Joseph, and the scale difference between Joseph and Mary, the overall effect of the work is pleasant on account of its balanced composition, varied colour scheme, the dynamic treatment of the landscape and the birds, and the delightfully detailed rendering of the entire scene.

Johann Anton Ramboux attributed the piece to Barbara Ragnioni, an otherwise unknown nun whose name appears inscribed as “+Suor Barbera Ragnioni” in the *Adoration of the Christ Child* in Siena (PNS, inv. 299) by Pietro Orioli and his workshop.<sup>683</sup> As has been pointed out several times, this inscription appears to be a later addition (perhaps recording the owner of the painting). Although Ramboux claimed a similarity with Orioli’s work, there is in reality nothing in common between MFA 24 and Orioli’s *Adoration* beyond the subject matter.<sup>684</sup>

After its acquisition by the National Picture Gallery in Pest, the work was prudently catalogued as a Sieneese work from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It was Bernard Berenson (1897, 1909) who first connected it with Benvenuto’s activity but dropped the painting from the subsequent editions of his lists (1932, 1936, 1968). Museum catalogues, at the same time, maintain the attribution to Benvenuto from 1937 until the present day. Miklós Boskovits excluded Benvenuto’s autography in a communication to Maria Cristina Bandera, who catalogued the work as by a painter in the circle of Benvenuto di Giovanni (1999). This judgment seems correct: the figural types have such close affinities with Benvenuto’s style that the painting

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<sup>681</sup> As believed by Gertrude Coor (1959, 91).

<sup>682</sup> A work comparable in function and scale is the *Nativity* by Vecchietta, formerly in the T. S. Bathurst Coll., London (30.5 x 24.4 cm; painted surface 25.5 x 18.5 cm, cf. Carl Strehlke, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 259-261 [It. ed. 273-75], colour repr.) and sold at Christie’s, New York, 6 April, 2006, lot 33. Among Benvenuto’s own works, the slightly larger *Nativity* (56 x 40 cm) formerly at the J. Paul Getty Museum could be mentioned (Bandera 1999, 231-32, cat. 50, colour repr. on p. 113).

<sup>683</sup> For the inscription, cf. Brandi 1933, 242 (with some doubt, believes “Suor Barbera Ragnioni” to have been a painter); Torriti 1978, II, 90-91; Torriti 1990, 356-357, with colour repr. (inscription is later addition and indicates the owner); Laurence Kanter, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 337, It. ed. 351 (inscription does not relate to the author of the work).

<sup>684</sup> Bandera (1999, 248) claims that Ramboux believed Gentile da Fabriano to be the author of the painting. This is not the case, since the headings in the catalogues of 1862 and 1867 are all attributions and Ramboux (1862, 21) expressly remarked that “*das Gemälde hat aehnlichkeit mit einem Bilde der Suor Barbara Ragnioni in der Gallerie zu Siena.*” Furthermore, the inscription “*gentile da Fabriano*” on the reverse is not in Ramboux’s hand (for whose handwriting, cf. Merzenich 1995, 304, 307).

could be considered a workshop product were it not for the entirely different concept of the landscape and of the vegetation which are here rather archaic and naïve. They have nothing in common with Benvenuto's works, in which rare vegetation and dynamically rendered, layered rocks appear in spacious and airy landscapes. With its jagged-edged grotto and small-scale, schematic fruit trees, the landscape in MFA 24 appears instead to have been influenced by the preceding generation of painters, especially by the Osservanza Master (cf. *St. Jerome in the wilderness*, predella scene, PNS, inv. 218)<sup>685</sup> and Sano di Pietro (cf. *Gesuati-predella*, Louvre).<sup>686</sup> The connection may well not be fortuitous, since the young Benvenuto seems to have collaborated with Sano on more than one occasion at the beginning of his career, and the painter of this work could have been active in their circle.

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 21, no. 112 (Suor Barbara Ragnioni from Siena; the work is from San Gimignano); [Ramboux] 1867, 23, no. 112 (Suor Barbara Ragnioni from Siena; the work is from San Gimignano); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1873, 3, no. 8 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1876, 6, no. 74 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Országos Képtár...* 1878, 6, 74, (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Országos Képtár...* 1879, 6, 74, (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pulszky 1881, 7, no. 27 (Siena, end of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pulszky 1888, 4, no. 24 (Sienese painter, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Országos Képtár...* 1897, 15 (Sienese painter, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 142, no. 24 (Sienese painter, 15<sup>th</sup> c., "Holy family"); Berenson 1897, 134 (Benvenuto di Giovanni); Destrée 1903, 79 (Benvenuto di Giovanni); Térey 1906, 19 (Sienese painter, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Berenson 1909, 147 (Benvenuto di Giovanni); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1908-1909, III (1909), 118 n. 3 (Benvenuto di Giovanni); Térey 1913<sup>1</sup>, 216, no. 39 (Sienese school, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Térey 1916, 55, repr. (Sienese school, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Térey 1924, 157 (Sienese painter, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.; in the manner of Francesco di Giorgio, related in composition to Francesoc di Giorgio's painting in the Cook collection); Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 513 (anonymous Sienese painter close in style to Benvenuto); Petrovics 1935, 8, no. 26 (Benvenuto di Giovanni); Pigler 1937, 36-37 (Benvenuto di Giovanni); Pigler 1954, 50-51 (Benvenuto di Giovanni); Coor 1959, 91-92 (Benvenuto di Giovanni, predella scene dating probably somewhat before 1470; figural composition is reminiscent of Vecchietta's fresco in the Sacristy of S. Maria della Scala, Liberale da Verona's influence is notable in the landscape); Pigler 1967, 59 (Benvenuto di Giovanni); Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 9 (Benvenuto di Giovanni); Miklós Boskovits, oral communication to Maria Cristina Bandera (not Benvenuto di Giovanni); Bandera 1999, 14 n. 42, 134 repr., 248 cat. VI (circle of Benvenuto di Giovanni); Sallay 2008, 14 (circle of Benvenuto di Giovanni).

<sup>685</sup> Repr. Carli 1957, fig. 94; Torriti 1990, 179, fig. 222.

<sup>686</sup> I cannot agree with Coor (1959, 52) who sees a derivation from Liberale da Verona's art (cf. Del Bravo 1967) in the landscape style.

## Matteo di Giovanni

(Matteo di Giovanni di Bartolo)

(Borgo San Sepolcro, ca. 1430 – Siena, 1495)

After having lost his father at a young age, Matteo di Giovanni was sent from his native Borgo San Sepolcro to Siena to be brought up by his paternal uncle, the notary Francesco di Bartolo. The circumstances of his artistic training remain obscure. Stylistic affinities in his early works have been observed with Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio, Domenico di Bartolo, and Vecchietta. He spent most of his life in Siena, but worked on occasion for Naples, Borgo San Sepolcro, Asciano, Anghiari, and Buonconvento. Besides panel paintings, he executed a few miniatures, a baldachin around the Sienese pulpit, polychromy for sculpture, perhaps a *cassone* frontal in his early career, and is also documented as a fresco painter. He lived with his uncle until 1383, when he moved to the *terzo* of Camollia with his wife Orsina di Francesco Gori del Taia (whom he married in 1479) and their children.

Matteo is first documented in 1452 in an artistic partnership with the otherwise unknown Giovanni di Pietro da Corsignano (not identical, as for long believed, with Nanni di Pietro, the brother of Vecchietta), with whom he made an altarpiece for the church of San Pietro a Ovile in the late 1450s and early 1460s. Probably in the mid- or later 1450s, he was working for his hometown, where he executed an elaborate triptych (Graziani altarpiece) around Piero della Francesca's *Baptism of Christ*. In the late 1450s and early 1460s he was commissioned two altarpieces by Jacopo Scotti in Asciano. In 1460, Matteo painted an arch-topped altarpiece (*pala centinata*) for the altar of St. Anthony of Padua in the Sienese Baptistry, and soon afterwards, two altarpieces with a unified central field (*pala quadrata*) for the cathedral of Pienza (one completed in 1462; the other shortly afterwards). In the 1468, he painted the first of his three versions of the Massacre of the Innocents altarpieces for a church in Naples (Museo di Capodimonte, Naples). From 1461 until his death, he was a devoted member of the Confraternity of St. Jerome in Siena, together with Benvenuto di Giovanni.

In the 1470s he received a long series of prestigious commissions, from the Della Ciaia family (altarpiece for Sta. Maria dei Servi in Siena, of which the central panel survives, 1470); from the Augustinian friars (*Assumption*, National Gallery, London, 1474, presumably from Asciano, although a provenance from St. Agostino in Siena has also been suggested); from the Placidi family (triptych altarpiece originally in San Domenico, Siena, 1476); the Cinughi family (high altarpiece of Madonna della Neve, Siena, signed 1477), the guild of Sienese bakers (St. Barbara altarpiece, San Domenico, Siena, 1479), and the Celsi family (altarpiece from Duomo, Siena, 1480). In 1482 he created another *Massacre of the Innocents*

altarpiece in S. Agostino, Siena; a third version of the subject was made for the Spannocchi family in Sta. Maria dei Servi in 1491.

From 1481 and 1483, respectively, date his designs for the *Massacre of the Innocents* the *Samian Sybil* for the renowned marble pavement of the Sienese cathedral. Between 1487 and 1489 the painter was employed by the financial offices of the city government, painting book covers for their registers. Matteo never interrupted his relations with his native Borgo San Sepolcro, and in 1487 he commenced work on a monumental double-sided altarpiece, which he never finished. Among his last works are the *Judith* (or *Tomyris of Scythia?*) for a series of heroes and heroines executed around 1493-94 (Cf. Cat. 30), and the lunette of the Tancredi altarpiece in San Domenico, Siena, a task which must have been interrupted by his death. The debated date of Matteo di Giovanni's death was recently definitively established as of 1 (?) June, 1495.

Matteo di Giovanni had a pioneering role in introducing the Renaissance style into Sienese painting. With a few exceptions, his altarpieces have Renaissance carpentry and are either have a *pala centinata* or *pala quadrata* form (with a lunette or a pediment above). Among the painters of his time, Matteo was most open to foreign influences, especially to that of Piero della Francesca and of Florentine masters, whose innovations reached him especially through the art of Antonio Pollaiuolo. He was quick to react to the art of Liberale da Verona and Girolamo da Cremona, present in Siena between in the late 1460s and 1470s. An artist with an independent, enquiring mind and unceasing curiosity to experiment with novel and elegant solutions, he was without doubt one of the major figures of the Sienese Quattrocento. He ran a large workshop; his students included the outstanding artist Pietro di Francesco degli Orioli, who outlived his master by one year only, and the modestly gifted Guidoccio Cozzarelli and Andrea di Niccolò.

### **Select bibliography:**

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## 20.

### Matteo di Giovanni

*Saint Jerome*

**Fig. 20/1**

ca. 1465-75

tempera and gold on wood

panel: 41.2 (left)/ 41.6 (right) x 25 cm, painted surface: 40.8 x 25 cm; thickness: 1.2-1.4 cm

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.177.

#### **Provenance:**

Acquired by Johann Anton Ramboux in Siena before 1842; J. A. Ramboux, Cologne (1832/42-1866), no. 169 (as Girolamo di Benvenuto); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 169 (as Girolamo di Benvenuto); Arnold Ipolyi in Pest, Barsszentkereszt/Besztercebánya and Várad until 1886; deposited at the Episcopate of Várad until 1919, no. 50 (as “Benvenuto Giovannini di Paolo” [*sic*]); deposited at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, 1919-1920; acquired through Ipolyi’s bequest in 1920.

#### **Technical notes:**

The support is a single vertically grained panel, which is slightly warped and has been thinned (Fig. 20/2). It shows extensive worm tunneling. Though damaged, the panel conserves its original aspect on the vertical sides. On the left, there are remains of an original claret painted layer over gesso (Figs. 20/10, 20/13). The right side shows remnants of gilding laid over dark red bole and gesso (Figs. 20/11, 20/12). The upper side of the plank shows that the wood is slab-cut from near the centre of the log. Here the paint surface extends until the end of the plank and retains fragments of a *barbe*. At the bottom, the panel extends beyond the painted surface, ending in a careless cut slanting towards the lower right (as viewed from the front). At the lowest point where the entire width of the panel is conserved, the paint surface has been cut through horizontally and removed below this line. On the slanting extension of wood, there are old gesso remnants, partly covered by modern repair.

The outlines of the composition (the borders of the ground, of the figures of the saint and of the lion) have been incised into the ground prior to painting. The gold partially extends under Jerome’s head and the lion. The figure stands under an architectural setting executed in *pastiglia* and consisting of two colonettes with capitals, a trilobed arch, and schematic foliate decoration in the corners.<sup>687</sup> The paint surface is in satisfactory condition. There are many scratches, small abrasions, raised paint and minor losses. There are small scattered retouchings over many damages and losses. A repainted area runs along the border of the red cloak at the saint’s right shoulder and right arm. The bottom section of the painting has been completely reconstructed up to a height varying between 1-4 cm, involving also the half of the saint’s right foot. An unrepaired worm exit hole is below the left eye of the saint. The top of the head is abraded and the area near the tip of the extended fingers of the right hand is damaged. Some filled and retouched areas are on the back of the right hand, under the right wrist, under the right arm, in a vertical strip in the vestment above the right foot, in the ground

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<sup>687</sup> This type of *pastiglia* decoration is relatively rare in Quattrocento Siennese art. Similar decoration, though with ogee arches in the centre, is found on two triptych wings by Pellegrino di Mariano: a signed work in private collection (repr. Brandi 1947, figs. 95-96) and a portable triptych whose present whereabouts are unknown (repr. Berenson 1930-31<sup>2</sup>, 635; photograph conserved in the Fototeca Zeri in Bologna, inv. 43389).

below the lion's fore-feet. The halo is crudely incised in free hand and there are some doubts about its authenticity.

The original gilt background is better preserved to the left of the saint than to his right, where it is considerably abraded. The gold ground is extensively damaged by scratches. There is a scratch extending the entire width of the surface at the height of the hip of the figure. Larger damaged and retouched spots are found along the edges, to the left of the saint's right elbow, and to the right of the saint's left shoulder. Two large repaired patches at about mid-height (at ca. 23 cm from the top along the left edge and at ca. 21-22 cm from the top along the right edge) conceal damage caused by nails. The hole caused by the nails is filled with wood powder paste on the reverse in the corresponding places. The *pastiglia*-border is damaged in some parts in the top right area.

The piece is inserted in a modern moulded frame. It was restored by Dezső Varga in Esztergom in 1959.

### Documentation:

On reverse: “[illegible fragment of the end of a word] 17” (in brown ink on white label, probably 19<sup>th</sup> c., cf. Fig. Fig. 20/14); “No 50. Benvenuto di Giov.<sup>i</sup> di Paolo” (late 19<sup>th</sup> c. hand-written label; number and attribution correspond to those in the Ipolyi collection, cf. Fig. 20/14); “265” (in blue chalk, postdates previously listed label); “50” (in dark blue or black chalk (?), corresponding (accidentally?) to the number of the Ipolyi collection, crossed out in the same blue chalk with which the no. 265 is written); “169” (in pencil, corresponding to the number of the work in the Ramboux collection); “NV.” (in red chalk); “KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM +” (round stamp on white round label); “55.177” (in blue pen written over round stamp); “55.177” (in black ink); “ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM” (stamped, twice).<sup>688</sup>

On modern frame: “ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM” (stamped, five times); “+KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM” (round stamp, twice); “+KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM” (round stamp on white round label); “55.177” (in pen written over round stamp on white round label); “55.177” (in black ink), “55.177 / M: 42 x 25 cm” (in blue ink, twice).

The gaunt figure of the saint stands on a grayish-green marble floor, against a gold ground. He turns slightly the right and casts his gaze downwards. His face has rugged features, with emphasized wrinkles, a prominent nose, thick lips, a large white soft beard and part curly white hair (Fig. 20/3). He wears a dark blue soutane under a transparent white alb and, on top, the ermine-lined *cappa magna* of a cardinal. With his bony fingers, the saint reaches towards a half-open, illuminated book, whose dark cover, with its metal clasps and applications, is rendered with particular attention to detail. Although the saint now appears to be paging in the book, it is probable that he originally held a quill. In fact, Johann Anton Ramboux described it in 1862 as “*Der heil. Hieronymus mit Buch und Feder*”.<sup>689</sup> The book

<sup>688</sup> For the sake of documentation it is noted that the inventory or exhibition number of 55.177 between the two World Wars, unrecorded in Museum Archives or on the work itself, was 92 (cited by Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 358).

<sup>689</sup> Ramboux 1862, 29. The shape of the damage in this area itself points to the one-time presence of a quill. An identically composed hand holding a quill in a position corresponding to the damage in the Esztergom painting is seen in the figures of St. Jerome in the predella of the Cinughi altarpiece (signed 1477, Santa Maria della Neve,

must refer to the Vulgata, the Church Father's Latin translation of Bible, which became the standard text of the Holy Scripture in the Middle Ages. In the background crouches the lion from whose paw the saint extracted a thorn and who became his inseparable companion in the desert where he retired for his scholarly work (Fig. 20/4). Although the figure has sometimes been identified as St. Mark the Evangelist on the basis of the joint attributes of the book and the lion – and the absence of the usual cardinal's hat – <sup>690</sup>, the cardinal's cloak and the long white beard confirm the traditional identification as St. Jerome,<sup>691</sup> further underscored by the fact that a known companion piece represents *St. Nicholas of Myra* instead of another evangelist.

The companion piece, whose common origin with the Esztergom panel was recognized independently by Federico Zeri and Miklós Mojzer in 1964,<sup>692</sup> shows the bishop of Myra in a similar setting but turning in the other direction (Lindenau Museum, Altenburg, inv. 81, 42.6 x 25.1 cm, Fig. 20/4).<sup>693</sup> Dressed in rich episcopal attire, the saint balances his attributes, the three gold balls, in his right hand, while in his left he holds a book and a bishop's crosier. Similarly to the *St. Jerome* in Esztergom, his figure is lit from left and casts a shadow on the ground.

The original context of the two fragments has not yet been clarified. Oertel thought the *St. Nicholas* belonged to the predella or to the framing structure of a large altarpiece; Berenson catalogued both fragments hypothetically as “from portable altarpiece?”<sup>694</sup> Mojzer first mentioned the two pieces as simply fragments of an “Altarwerk”,<sup>695</sup> whereas in the 1964 catalogue of the Christian Museum he specified that he believed them to be fragments sawn from the left and right pilasters of the same altarpiece.<sup>696</sup> Zeri suggested they were perhaps pilaster bases of a large altarpiece or, less likely, wings of a small portable triptych.<sup>697</sup> Boskovits referred to the Esztergom piece in general as a figure decorating a pilaster or a

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Siena) and of St. John the Evangelist in Celsi altarpiece (1480 [cf. note 750], Museo dell'Opera, Siena), both by Matteo di Giovanni. The quill is held the same way by St. Jerome also in the painter's *St. Jerome in His Studio* at the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass., though the hand is shown from another direction. In the first reproduction of the picture known to me (Gerevich ed. 1948, fig. 92 on p. 81), the quill is already absent.

<sup>690</sup> Gerevich 1930, 95, 99; Zeri 1964, 47.

<sup>691</sup> The saint has the same physiognomy and vestments in Matteo di Giovanni's second altarpiece in Pienza and in his *St. Jerome in His Studio* (Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass.).

<sup>692</sup> Zeri 1964, 47; Mojzer 1964<sup>1</sup>, 2.

<sup>693</sup> Cf. Oertel 1961, 102-103, Pl. 30b (reproduction cropped at the bottom); Trimpi 1987, 93-95.

<sup>694</sup> Oertel 1961, 102-103; Berenson 1968, I, 257-58.

<sup>695</sup> Mojzer 1964<sup>1</sup>, 2, referring in general to the Matteo's Graziani altarpiece in Sansepolcro as an analogous structure.

<sup>696</sup> Miklós Mojzer, in Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 60. This view was followed by Mucsi 1975, 42.

<sup>697</sup> Zeri 1964, 47. Zeri reproduced the two works side by side for the first time. The *pastiglia* colonette base in the lower right corner of the Altenburg piece visible in this photo was a later addition and has been removed since then.

predella.<sup>698</sup> Erica Trimpi presented various hypotheses: the Altenburg piece as “most probably a part of the frame of a large altarpiece”; the companion piece in Esztergom, a wing of a small portable altarpiece or the “pilaster or predella of a larger altarpiece.”<sup>699</sup> Most recently, the hypothesis of a pilaster of predella decoration was repeated for the Altenburg fragment.<sup>700</sup>

Not all these scholars clarified precisely what kind of structure they were referring to, and none of the proposals were supported by a technical examination. In view of the typology of Sieneese Quattrocento painting, the proposals can only be referred to five types of structural elements: 1. wings of a portable altarpiece, 2. fragments of a framing pilaster of an altarpiece decorated with standing saints, 3. fragments of a horizontal predella plank where a standing saint is painted between the narrative scenes, 4. individual panels projecting between painted scenes in a predella, 5. pilaster bases projecting at the end of the predella and under the pilasters.

The technical examination of the two fragments conducted separately by Holger Manzke in Altenburg and by the present writer in Esztergom, and confirmed by both of us through the direct comparison of the two fragments (Fig. 20/9) on occasion of the exhibition of the Altenburg piece in Budapest in 2006 have lead to the following conclusions.<sup>701</sup> The first four possibilities listed above can be excluded for technical reasons. The Altenburg fragment conserves its original thickness of 3.5-3.8 cm, which fact alone discourages the hypothesis of the small portable altarpiece wing. The vertical grain of both fragments excludes they could have been painted between narrative scenes on the horizontal plank of a predella. The same claret painting surviving on the left side of the Esztergom piece is found on the right side of the Altenburg piece, and, vice versa, the same gilding on the right side of the *St. Jerome* is visible on the left side of the *St. Nicholas* (Figs. 20/12-13). Moreover, on the reverse of the Altenburg fragment, fragments torn from a horizontally grained wood survive trapped in spots of glue, proving that the piece was originally fastened onto a horizontal plank

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<sup>698</sup> Boskovits 1968 (2<sup>nd</sup>, revised ed. 1978), no. 21.

<sup>699</sup> Trimpi 1987, 93-95, 139, respectively.

<sup>700</sup> *Nemzeti kincsek...* 2006, 103, cat. 6-35; Riccardo Massagli, in Boskovits and Tripps 2008, 165, who alternatively suggested the panels could be projecting pieces between scenes of a predella. Both of these hypotheses are unacceptable as they ignore the physical evidence revealed by the Altenburg panel, for which see the text below.

<sup>701</sup> I am very grateful to the Direction of the Lindenau Museum for their permission of the comparative examination and to Holger Manzke, restorer for the Lindenau Museum, for discussing it with me in the National Gallery in Budapest on 16 October, 2006. A sample of the claret paint on the side of CM 55.177 was subsequently compared under the microscope to the same type of paint on the *St. Nicholas of Myra* in Altenburg by Holger Manzke, who confirmed that they are the same, and without doubt original (verbal communication, 20 September, 2007).

(Fig. 20/8). This fastening was strengthened by nails in both pieces, as is indicated by holes and the repairs, approximately 1.5-2 cm in diameter, discernible in both panels in the gold ground of at about mid-height along both vertical sides. This type of application is typical of projecting elements of Sieneſe predellas. When these elements are projecting between the narrative scenes of a predella, they are gilt on both ſides.<sup>702</sup> Since the two fragments in queſtion are gilt on the inner ſides only and painted dark claret on the outer ſide (a treatment commonly uſed for the exterior lateral ſurfaces of altarpieces in fifteenth-century Siena), the concluſion is that the *St. Jerome* and the *St. Nicholas* were pilaster baſes jutting forth at the left and right ends of a predella – a poſſibility hitherto mentioned by Federico Zeri only. A final confirmation for ſuch an arrangement is provided by a *barbe* that ſurvives on the back edge of the gilt left ſide of the Altenburg fragment (but not on the right), indicating the continuity of the gesso ground between the fragment and the predella to which it was applied, as ſhown in the re-conſtruction (Fig. 20/18).

Since the Eſztergom piece conſerves its original edge at the top (indicated by fragments of a *barbe*) and the Altenburg fragment, its bottom (indicated by the baſe of the colonette in *paſtiglia*), it can alſo be concluſed that the Eſztergom fragment miſſes about 2 cm of the painted field at the bottom and that both fragments measured originally about 42.5-43 x 25 cm (cf. alſo Fig. 20/9).<sup>703</sup>

Pilaster baſes of ſuch narrow and tall format and ſhowing the figure of a ſtanding ſaint are decidedly rare in Quattrocento Sieneſe art,<sup>704</sup> but not without example. The beſt analogy for this ſtructure is Benvenuto di Giovanni’s altarpiece in the church of San Fortunato in Veſcovado di Murlo, originally from Montepertuſo, dated 1475. Although the altarpiece has been reſtored, its original ſtructure is clear: two ſtanding ſaints are portrayed on the projecting

<sup>702</sup> For a diſcuſſion of projecting elements between narrative ſcenes in a predella, cf. Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>, eſp. 78-79, 90 n. 34.

<sup>703</sup> It ſhould be noted that the haloes are both perplexing. *St. Jerome*’s is ſhown three-dimensionally, inſcribed with a negligence that is hardly compatible with the careful execution of the reſt of the painting (Fig. 20/3). The halo of *St. Nicholas* is ſhown as a traditional flat diſc behind the head, rendered in very fine incised lines but with a pattern that is entirely foreign to the vocabulary of Matteo di Giovanni and his contemporaries (Fig. 20/7). The two haloes are thus not only very different from each other but alſo alien to Matteo di Giovanni’s works. Further examinations are neceſſary to reſolve theſe inconſiſtencies but it cannot be entirely ruled out that the preſent haloes were created in the modern period, after the pieces were ſeparated from each other. If ſo, it remains to be answered if – and if ſo, how – the figures were originally haloed.

<sup>704</sup> Pilaster baſes until about the mid-fifteenth century were uſually painted with half-figures of ſaints or narrative ſcenes. In the ſecond half of the Quattrocento, coats of arms were uſually placed on them, but the representation of ſaints alſo remained in uſe. A contract for an altarpiece commissioned by Francesco di Giovanni Tolomei to Matteo di Giovanni in 1472 gives precise inſtructions for the decoration of the pilaster baſes which were to flank a predella ſhowing events from the life S. Bernardo de’ Tolomei: “*in un de’ canti d’eſſa predella ſia la figura d’eſſo Santo Bernardo et dall’[al]tro canto la figura di Santo Pio*” (cf. Trimpi 1987, 46).

pilaster bases at each end of a predella painted with narrative scenes. Benvenuto's pilaster bases are comparable in size to the two pieces discussed here: they are about 46 cm tall.<sup>705</sup>

As regards authorship, most scholars accepted the Esztergom and Altenburg pieces as autograph works by Matteo di Giovanni<sup>706</sup> and generally placed them early in the master's career. Mojzer (1964<sup>1</sup>) dated them to the first half of the 1460s, likening them to the Graziani altarpiece in Sansepolcro (a work now generally dated in the 1450s) and, in another publication, to the 1460s.<sup>707</sup> A dating to the 1460s was proposed by the majority of scholars too, while Massagli recently proposed a time frame of ca. 1455-60. An exception was Erica Trimpi (1987), who claimed that because of the absence of the "hardness of form of Matteo's early period" they should be dated "somewhat later, on the basis of comparison with figures in the predella of the altarpiece in the Opera del Duomo, Siena, formerly signed and dated 1480." I fully agree with Trimpi that the *St. Jerome* and the *St. Nicholas* should be placed later than early works of Matteo – the Graziani altarpiece in Sansepolcro (probably mid-1450s), the Scotti triptych and predella (ca. 1458-60) in Asciano, the San Pietro Oville altarpiece in Siena (late 1450s- early 1460s), the St. Anthony altarpiece from the Sienese Baptistry and the four apostles known from its predella (1460),<sup>708</sup> and the two altarpieces in Pienza (one completed in 1462; the other shortly afterwards) – in which the figures are rendered with sharply delineated forms and stone-hard surfaces; the draperies are abundant and softly flowing; the heads are rotund, the hair and beards are formed of separated and deeply undercut locks; the faces are wide with high foreheads and disproportionately large eyes. These stylistic features are still present in the *Massacre of the Innocents* altarpiece in Naples, recently recognized as dating from 1468,<sup>709</sup> and in the *Enthroned Madonna* from the Della Ciaia altarpiece (1470),<sup>710</sup> but the forms are slightly softened, making, in my view, this artistic period the earliest when the pilaster bases in question could have been painted.

<sup>705</sup> For the Montepertuso altarpiece, cf. Bandera 1999, 87-93, 224-225, cat. 25, repr. on p. 89, where the dimensions of the predella are given as 46 x 280 cm (it is not clear whether the height is meant for the painted surface or includes also the – modern – moulded engaged frame).

<sup>706</sup> An exception is Oertel (1961, 102-103), who despite acknowledging the high quality of the Altenburg piece relegated it to the master's workshop. Erica Trimpi listed both works in the chapter entitled "Works by Matteo, or by the Shop with his direct involment" (1987, 92). Van Marle (1923-38, XVI [1937], 384) attributed the Altenburg piece to Guidoccio Cozzarelli.

<sup>707</sup> Miklós Mojzer (in Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi, 1964, 60), referring specifically to the saints in the pilasters and in the predella of Matteo's early Sansepolcro piece for stylistic analogy, which he dated to ca. 1460-70.

<sup>708</sup> The four apostles were published in Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 568, and connected with the altarpiece by Paardekoooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 20, figs. 2-3.

<sup>709</sup> Ippolita di Majo, "Qualche considerazione su un dipinto napoletano di Matteo di Giovanni: la Strage degli Innocenti di Santa Caterina a Formello", in Alessi and Bagnoli 2006, 130-145.

<sup>710</sup> Torriti 1990, 258-259; Cecilia Alessi, in Alessi and Bagnoli 2006, 34-35.

At the same time, our pilaster bases may not be as late as 1480, around which time the painter's style takes a turn towards a more abstract formal approach. To my mind, the Esztergom and Altenburg fragments are best placed in the 1470s, in which period the faces are still rendered with a strong plasticity but are more elongated, the profiles triangular, the eyes smaller and deep-set, and the skin, hair and beard more softly rendered. The male faces have marked features, dark flesh tones, softer contours, creased, parchment-like skin, and heavily shaded. The draperies are sharply creased and often form angular folds; the contours are confidently drawn, the thick tempera paint is applied in a rough, sketchy and drier manner. The bright blue and red drapery of *St. Jerome* in Esztergom is non-functional and is arranged into thickly set, sharply folded, angular creases, which are strongly highlighted. In the stiff, angular treatment and the highlighted creases, the drapery of the Esztergom *St. Jerome* compares well to the standing saints in the Cinughi altarpiece (Santa Maria delle Neve, Siena), which Matteo signed in 1477, and to the *Assumption* in London, documented as dating from 1474 (Fig. 20/16).<sup>711</sup> The physiognomies have close analogues in the groups of male saints in the London *Assumption* (Fig. 20/17).

For the time being, no other fragments can be surely associated with the predella to which the Esztergom and Altenburg fragments belonged. With its 42.5-43 cm high painted surface, this would have been much taller than the standard predellas of the second half of the Quattrocento, for which a height of ca. 25-35 cm was customary. Precisely for their unusually large dimensions and in view of the stylistic ties discussed above, it is possible that the fragments discussed here belonged to the predella of the *Assumption of the Virgin* in London.<sup>712</sup> With its dimensions of 331.5 x 174 cm, the London *Assumption* the tallest altarpiece-centre Matteo ever painted.<sup>713</sup>

While this suggestion remains hypothetical, further observations may be noted in its favour. Recent examinations<sup>714</sup> confirmed that the *St. Augustine* and *St. Michael Archangel* in Asciano were indeed the laterals of the *Assumption* in London. In 2007, Luke Syson suggested that a fragment showing *St. Monika praying for the Conversion of Augustine*

<sup>711</sup> The date 1474 on the London *Assumption* was recorded by E. Micheli (1863, 138), who saw it in the church of Sant'Eugenio a Monistero, near Siena (then in private property), and affirmed its provenance from the Augustinian church of Asciano.

<sup>712</sup> The *Assumption* was probably part of the high altarpiece of the church of Sant'Agostino in Asciano, although an original provenance from Sant'Agostino in Siena has also been suggested (De Marchi 1987, 93-94). The structure and subsidiary panels of the altarpiece to which it belonged has been much discussed. For its history and other associated pieces, see esp. Pope-Hennessy 1950, Alessi ed. 2002, 142-143, 145, and Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 124-131 (with previous bibl.).

<sup>713</sup> Cf. Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 35-36 n. 59, 40-47.

<sup>714</sup> Written communication from Luke Syson, January 2008.

(Berenson Coll., Villa I Tatti, Florence, Fig. 20/15) belonged to the predella of this altarpiece.<sup>715</sup> The piece in the Berenson collection indeed appears to be an extraordinarily large predella fragment, which conserves its original dimensions apart from perhaps being slightly planed at the bottom. The piece is compatible with the other fragments in style and its unusually large height of 42 cm makes it a very likely candidate for a fragment from the predella once flanked by the pilaster bases in Esztergom and Altenburg.<sup>716</sup>

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 29, no. 169 (Girolamo di Benvenuto); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1864-66, III (1866), 74, n. 1 (report the attribution of the work to Girolamo di Benvenuto in the Ramboux coll.); [Ramboux] 1867, 31, no. 169 (Girolamo di Benvenuto); [Fraknói] 1871, 370 (Girolamo di Benvenuto); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1869-76, vol. IV/1 (1871), 81 n. 79 (report the attribution of the work to Girolamo di Benvenuto formerly in the Ramboux coll.); Némethy ed. 1896, no. 50 (Benvenuto di Giovannini [sic] di Paolo); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1886-1908, vol. IX (1902), 32, n. 2 (report the attribution of the work to Girolamo di Benvenuto in the Ramboux coll.); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1908-1909, III (1909), 119 n. 4 (report the attribution of the work to Girolamo di Benvenuto in the Ramboux coll.); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1903-1915, V (1914), 165 n. 3 (report the attribution of the work to Girolamo di Benvenuto formerly in the Ramboux coll.); Gerevich 1930, 95, 99 (Matteo di Giovanni, identifies the figure as St. Mark); Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 358 (Matteo di Giovanni); Gerevich ed. 1948, 79, fig. 92 on p. 81 (Matteo di Giovanni); Mojzer 1958, 8 (Matteo di Giovanni); Zeri 1964, 47, fig. 11 on p. 48 (Matteo di Giovanni, identifies the figure as St. Mark); Mojzer 1964<sup>1</sup>, 2-4, no. 8, fig. 6 (Matteo di Giovanni, first half of 1460s); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 60, fig. III/44 (Matteo di Giovanni, “probably early work on basis of comparison with pilaster and predella figures of Sansepolcro altarpiece, ca. 1460-70”); Berenson 1968, I, 258 (Matteo di Giovanni, “from portable altarpiece?”); Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, no. 21 (Matteo di Giovanni, probably 1460s); Mucsi 1975, 43, no. 202, fig. 42 (Matteo di Giovanni, pilaster fragment, 1460s); Trimpi 1987, I, 138-139, II, fig. 117 (Matteo di Giovanni or “shop with his direct involvement”, close to 1480); Vilmos Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 238, no. 105, Pl. 105 (Matteo di Giovanni, between 1460-70); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 568, no. 169, (Matteo di Giovanni, ca. 1460-70); Anonymous author, in *Nemzeti kincsek...* 2006, 103, cat. 6-35 (Matteo di Giovanni, after 1460 (?); formed part of a predella or framing structure of an altarpiece); Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 124-131, esp. 131 (Matteo di Giovanni, cites written communication from the present writer that the *St. Jerome* and the *St. Nicholas* were pilaster bases and may have belonged to the London *Assumption*); Riccardo Massagli, in Boskovits and Tripps ed. 2008, 164-65, cat. 30 (Matteo di Giovanni, ca. 1455-60, fragment of a pilaster or panel projecting between predella scenes); Sallay 2008, 7-8, 11, 16, colour repr. (Matteo di Giovanni, pilaster base, perhaps from the Asciano altarpiece)

<sup>715</sup> Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 124-131.

<sup>716</sup> The dimensions of the panel are 42 x 39.1 cm; the painted surface measures 42 x 38.8 cm. The support is a single, 3.1-3.5 cm-thick panel with horizontal grain that conserves its original thickness and is warped. The plank is cut on the left and on the right and is sanded or slightly planed at the bottom and top. As fragments of a *barbe prove*, the painted surface has not been reduced on the left, top and right. At the bottom, the paint edge is irregular and chipped, and appears to have been slightly reduced. I am grateful to Joseph Connors for allowing me to examine this piece in May 2007. Many scholars, myself included (Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>, 90 n. 27), have ascribed this piece to Guidoccio Cozzarelli in the past, an attribution that now seems to be wrong and should be changed in favour of Matteo di Giovanni.

## 21.

### Matteo di Giovanni

*Saint Bartholomew*

#### Fig. 21/1

ca. 1480-85

tempera and gold on wood

panel: 89.8 x 56.8 cm; painted surface: 80.9 x 48.5 cm; with original engaged moulding: 90 x 56.5 cm; thickness: 3 cm (panel), 4.5 cm (with engaged moulding)

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 1211.

#### Provenance:

Purchased by Károly Pulszky 4 July, 1895 from Emilio Costantini in Florence (as Antonio Pollaiuolo) for the National Picture Gallery, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts in 1906.

#### Exhibited:

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest (October – December, 1988): *Pulszky Károly emlékének* (In memoriam Károly Pulszky), cat. 345.

#### Technical notes:

The support consists of a single, vertically grained board which conserves its original thickness (Fig. 21/2). The surface of the reverse is uneven, with diagonal saw marks. There are remains of old gesso. The panel has a strong warp and is very worm-tunnelled. Worms caused substantial wear around the edges, which required reinforcement by conservation intervention. Parts of the support and of the engaged frame have been replaced by new wood (as viewed from the front: a large section in the lower right corner and on the upper left side, a small sections in the upper and lower right corners). In the centre of the upper part there is an old nail hole. A 22 cm high, large vertical crack runs from the about centre of the bottom edge. The back edge of the right side (as viewed from the front) is chamfered. There are original gesso drippings on both vertical sides. On the top side, there are nails projecting between the engaged frame and the panels, showing a certain pattern.

The moulded engaged frame is original apart from smaller sections replaced with new wood. The gilding has been repaired with bronze-powder and renewed in the upper left and right corners, in the middle section of the left side, and along the entire bottom part.

The painted surface of the panel is in good condition except for a large area of loss in the left-hand side of the beard and on part of the right hand of the saint together with the middle section of the handle of the knife. There are smaller paint losses in the floor and several patches repaired in the hair and the beard. The dark background is original. The outlines of the gilt borders have been incised into the ground. The incision continues all the way to the bottom on the right, and continues along the bottom edge, suggesting that the painter originally may have been considered using a gilt border on all four sides.

Infrared reflectography revealed an underdrawing in brush, with discontinuous lines of different thickness executed in free hand but perhaps following a pre-established design. There is very little shading executed in a different medium, some sort of metalpoint.

A minor conservation intervention consisting of dusting was undertaken by Kornélia Forrai in 1986.

### Documentation:

On reverse: “I” (in white paint); “ORSZ. KÉPTÁR. 1211” (printed on white label); “Szépművészeti Múzeum. Közép-olasz festő. Szt. Bertalan. Vétel: E. Constantini, Firenze, 1895. Ltsz. 1211” (printed on white label).

According to his legend, St. Bartholomew was flayed alive before his martyrdom by decapitation in Armenia.<sup>717</sup> In this picture, the saint looks at the viewer candidly and with an air that has a touch of apprehension. He stands on a fictive marble floor that ends illusionistically before the pictorial plane, and holds in his right hand a knife, his attribute of martyrdom. The saint’s other attribute, the flayed skin, appears as an elegantly arranged drapery around the bleeding body. Though not frequent, this eccentric motif is not as rare as sometimes believed: it appears in several 14<sup>th</sup>-century frescos,<sup>718</sup> as well as in the fresco executed around 1518-1520 by Floriano Ferramola and his workshop on the wall between the left and central apse of the upper church Santa Maria in Solario in Brescia. Siene examples include a pilaster fragment by Matteo’s student, Pietro di Francesco Orioli (PNS, inv. 366, Fig. 21/7),<sup>719</sup> and St. Bartholomew, dressed in his own skin appears among in the first row on the right of the Christ among the cross-bearing saints in Giovanni di Paolo’s predella in Parma.<sup>720</sup> The flayed skin appears as drapery also in narrative scenes showing the saint’s preaching and decapitation, as in a leaf of a *laudario* illuminated by Pacino di Bonaguida,<sup>721</sup> in Barnaba da Modena’s St. Bartholomew altarpiece in the Museo Diocesano in Genoa,<sup>722</sup> in the Sts. Bartholomew and Elizabeth altarpiece in the Cathedral of Barcelona,<sup>723</sup> and, in Siene painting, in the damaged predella by the Maestro dell’Osservanza (PNS, inv. 218)<sup>724</sup> and in Pietro di Giovanni d’Ambrogio’s predella scenes in the Louvre in Paris (inv. RF. 1984-156, 1984-157).<sup>725</sup> Among the iconic representations of the saint predating the present panel, a little known fresco in the church of San Francesco in Asciano may be especially important

<sup>717</sup> Iacopo da Varazze, ed. Maggioni 1998, vol. 2, 834-844; Jacobus de Voragine, transl. Ryan 1993, 112-113.

<sup>718</sup> See the image of the the standing saint by a Perugian painter in the Galleria Nazionale di Umbria, Perugia, inv. 714, first pointed out as an iconographic precedent by Miklós Boskovits (1968, no. 22; 1978, no. 22); another standing image of the flayed saint dressed in his skin in the right aisle of the church of Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome; an Umbrian fresco fragment of the bloody upper body of the saint with his skin laid on his shoulder (MFA, inv. 1301, cf. Tátrai ed. 1991, 121); and further in the text for the fresco in San Francesco in Asciano (Fig. 21/6).

<sup>719</sup> Repr. in Torriti 1990, 345, fig. 439.

<sup>720</sup> Repr. M. Merlini, in Fornari Schianchi ed. 1997, 72-74.

<sup>721</sup> Repr. in Palladino 1993, 41, cat. 21b.

<sup>722</sup> Rotondi 1962, 183 n. 1 (“dopo d’essere scuoiato e portando la pelle sulle spalle predica ai sacerdoti armeni”), fig. 60a (cited for this iconographical curiosity by Laclotte 1985, 111 n. 2).

<sup>723</sup> Cf. Post 1930-1966, vol. 5 (1934), 276 and fig. 72.

<sup>724</sup> Reproduced, in very poor quality, in Torriti 1977-78, 251, fig. 295; Torriti 1990, 178-179, fig. 223. The decapitation of the saint is shown on the right. Although much of the paint layer has been destroyed, it is still possible to make out the kneeling saint who raises his hand in prayer, while the skin of one of his hands hangs before his thighs.

<sup>725</sup> Laclotte 1985; Raffaelli 2004-2005, 77-80, 188-193.

since Matteo di Giovanni, who worked for Asciano more than once,<sup>726</sup> was almost certainly familiar with it and may have drawn inspiration from it for the present work (Fig. 21/6).

The iconography of this unusual representation is based on a passage in the book of Job (2:4): *Pellem pro pelle et cuncta quae habet homo dabit pro anima sua*, which in medieval sermons and hymns was often related to the flaying of St. Bartholomew. The flayed skin came to be interpreted as an external coat of mortality, symbolic of sin and the material nature of man, which the apostle sacrificed for a coat of immortality and was thus purified of sin.<sup>727</sup>

The stylistic characteristics of MFA 1211 leave no doubt as to the authorship of Matteo di Giovanni, first proposed by Michel Laclotte (oral communication), and subsequently accepted both by Boskovits (1968, 1978) and Tátrai (1991). Erica Trimpi (1987), who knew the work from a photograph only, questioned the fully autograph nature of the work.<sup>728</sup>

Matteo's works often reveal an inclination for unconventional solutions. The Budapest panel startles the viewer with the naturalistic depiction of the blood streaking down the skinned body, and with the idea, touching on the morbid, of exploiting the colour contrast between of the yellowish pale tone of the exterior and the bright red of the inside of the skin of the lifelessly hanging hulls of the arms and the legs.<sup>729</sup>

The painter must have been fascinated by the idea of rendering a splayed muscular figure. Matteo demonstrated a keen interest in human anatomy as early as in the lunette of his first Pienza altarpiece (completed 1462), where he was quick to update his visual language on the newest Florentine achievements in the representation of the human body, especially on the basis of Antonio del Pollaiuolo's series of the *Labours of Hercules* painted for the Medici around 1460.<sup>730</sup> His *St. Bartholomew* in Budapest follows the conventions of the representation of the flayed saint in that it shows a bloody, red-coloured body, but is notable for the high ambition with which the painter drew the muscular human figure. The athletic figure is arranged in a somewhat misunderstood *contrapposto* pose, based on drawings often used by Matteo and his students. The non-experimental nature of the underpainting in the

<sup>726</sup> Matteo appears to have executed three altarpieces for the church of Sant'Agostino in Asciano, two altarpieces for Giacomo Scotti during the late 1450s (Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 26) and the altarpiece for the high altar in 1474, showing the *Assumption of the Virgin* in the centre (Cf. Cat. 20). For an alternative but hypothetical proposal for the original provenance of the *Assumption* from S. Agostino in Siena, cf. De Marchi 1987, 93-94.

<sup>727</sup> Bériou 2005; Kay 2006. I am indebted to Elena Dana Prioteasa's research on this topic (forthcoming article).

<sup>728</sup> Stylistic and technical evidence shows that Mauro Lucco's doubts regarding the authenticity of the work lack foundation.

<sup>729</sup> It is difficult to judge from the black-and-white illustration published by Chandler Post, but the same idea seems to have been used already for the Barcelona altarpiece cited above.

<sup>730</sup> As Miklós Boskovits pointed out (1968, no. 22), an interesting indication of Matteo's success in incorporating these Florentine elements into his own work is the fact that in its early history the Budapest painting was ascribed to Pollaiuolo himself.

figure suggests that it is derived from a prototype showing a male nude. Infrared light revealed hairs around both nipples in the underpainting, which may be a sign of a copying process.<sup>731</sup> These were logically omitted in the phase of painting the flayed body (albeit the nipples were illogically executed). The lower part of the body is based on a model very frequently used in the workshop. It appears in the *St. Sebastian* in London (National Gallery, inv. 1461, 126.4 x 59.7 cm, Fig. 21/8)<sup>732</sup> and, *en reverse*, in the *Baptism of Christ* in Moscow (cf. Fig. 25/3). Matteo's student, Guidoccio Cozzarelli copied the entire figure of this Christ in his *Baptism* (San Bernardino, Sinalunga, ca. 1482-83, Fig. 25/6), reversed again. Matteo's *St. Bartholomew* must have been the primary inspiration for Cozzarelli's two representations of St. Sebastian, one in a detached fresco at Villa Bartalini in Monastero near Siena (Fig. 21/9)<sup>733</sup> and his panel painting from 1495 (PNS, inv. 296),<sup>734</sup> and for Pietro Orioli's figure, similar in iconography and in the pose of the lower half of the body (Fig. 21/7). In contrast to the *St. Sebastian* in London, the *St. Bartholomew* in Budapest stands firmly on the ground, due to the well-attuned foreshortening of the feet and of the ground, the convincing cast shadows, and the left foot that surpasses the imaginary border of the floor and protrudes into the viewer's space.

The model for *St. Bartholomew's* head and his right arms with the knife is identifiable in the earlier representation of the same saint in Matteo's first altarpiece created for the Pienza cathedral. The two heads are virtually the same as far as the figural type is concerned and must be based on the same drawing, but the stylistic differences reveal the great chronological gap between the two works (Figs. 21/4-5).

For the date of the Budapest piece, the proposals so far advanced were those of Miklós Boskovits, who first (1968) suggested a dating to ca. 1480, then the period between 1460-65 (1978). In my view, the style of the work points to a date around 1480 or in the first half of the 1480s: the marked plasticity and hardness of form typical of the early works have disappeared; the facial features are less detailed and rendered more softly; the hair and beard, earlier painted in clearly defined, individual strands and tufts have become soft and blended.

<sup>731</sup> A related figure is Pietro Orioli's *St. Onofrio* in the altarpiece inv. 424 in the PNS (Torriti 1990, 349-351, colour repr.)

<sup>732</sup> The date of this work is still a matter of debate. The figure appears to be a derivation from another work, since its relation to the surrounding landscape is poorly defined: the figure and the landscape are shown from two different viewpoints, with the result that the saint touches the ground with his toes only. It is considered as a late work in museum catalogues (Davies 1961, 370-371; Baker and Henry, 2001, 442). In contrast, Luisa Gengaro (1934, 164) suggested an early date for the picture, while Trimpi favoured a dating in the 1470s (1987, 150, with earlier bibl.). Berenson claimed the participation of Cozzarelli in this picture for the figure of the angels and the landscape (1932, 351; 1936, 302; 1968, I, 259).

<sup>733</sup> Repr. in Guerrini ed. 1994, 131.

<sup>734</sup> Torriti 1990, 267.

In contrast to the more natural colours of the Bartholomew in Pienza, the face in the Budapest piece is strikingly pale; its subtle modelling has an almost *grisaille*-like effect, which had a growing popularity in Sieneese painting in the 1470s and 1480s.

Because of the unusual type of representation, it has not yet been clarified whether this work was an independent panel or formed part of a larger complex. Without elaborating on the idea, Boskovits (1968, 1978) proposed that it once formed part of an altarpiece. Trimpi thought that it could have been a “lateral on a small triptych or it may have simply stood alone or flanked by scenes of his life”. It cannot be excluded that the work formed part of a triptych (which would have been about 170 cm wide); but its size and format make it an unlikely candidate for the centre of a *vita* panel. It seems most likely that the panel was intended to stand alone, since there are many analogies in contemporary Sieneese art where a self-standing image is shown against a dark background with a punched gold border.<sup>735</sup>

There was a certain cult of St. Bartholomew in Siena: in early times, he appeared next to the Virgin as one of the four main patron saints of Siena in Duccio’s stained glass window made for the Siena cathedral in 1288 but in the same master’s *Maestà* completed in 1311 he was already substituted, for reasons not yet known, by St. Victor.<sup>736</sup> There was an altar in the crypt of the cathedral dedicated to St. Bartholomew, a confraternity of S. Bartolomeo<sup>737</sup> and a S. Bartolomeo parish church near Porta Camollia.<sup>738</sup>

#### References:

Pulszky and Peregriny 1896, 12 (Antonio Pollajuolo); Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 22 (Antonio Pollajuolo); Peregriny 1909-15, III (1914), 52; Pigler 1954, 299 (Central-Italian, second half of 15<sup>th</sup> c., remarks that the work is inventoried in the museum as by Antonio del Pollajuolo); Pigler 1967, 448 (Central-Italian, second half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Boskovits 1968, no. 22 (Matteo di Giovanni, ca. 1480, attribution based on an oral communication from Michel Laclotte); Boskovits 1978, no. 22 (Matteo di Giovanni, probably part of an altarpiece painted between 1460-65); Laclotte 1985, 111, note 2 (Matteo di Giovanni, remarks on iconography); Trimpi 1987, 247 (possibly Matteo di Giovanni); Ágnes Szigethy, in László Mravik and Szigethy Ágnes, “Festményvásárlások az Országos Képtár és a Szépművészeti Múzeum részére” (Purchases of pictures for the National Picture Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts), in Mravik 1988, 101, no. 345 (on provenance); Mauro Lucco, written communication to the Museum of Fine Arts, 1989 (19<sup>th</sup> c. forgery); Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 77 (Matteo di Giovanni); Riccardo Massagli, in Boskovits and Tripps ed. 2008, 170 (Matteo di Giovanni, physiognomy is close to predella figures of Placidi altarpiece from 1476); Sallay 2008, 4, 15, colour repr. (Matteo di Giovanni).

<sup>735</sup> See the related discussion in Cat. 7 about self-standing images of St. Bernardino of Siena.

<sup>736</sup> St. Bartholomew was frequently represented in Sieneese art from its beginnings in the traditional manner: fully clothed and holding a knife in his hand.

<sup>737</sup> Cf. Giovacchino Faluschi, *Chiese senesi*, 19th c. ms. (BCS, E.V.16, ff. 45/2 r and v). Faluschi claims this confraternity was founded by the Blessed Ambrogio Sansedoni and met in the church of San Domenico.

<sup>738</sup> The church is now destroyed but was in use in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, cf. Hans Teubner, “San Bartolomeo in Camollia”, in Riedl and Seidel ed., 1.1 (1985), 450-451; Scorza Barcellona 2007, esp. 206 (with previous bibl.).

## 22.

### Matteo di Giovanni

*Crucifixion of St. Peter*<sup>739</sup>

#### Fig. 22/1

ca. 1480-90

tempera and gold on wood

panel: 31.7 x 38.9 cm; painted surface (without gilt strips): 28.4 x 36 cm; width of gilt strips: 1.3-1.7 cm (left); 1.4-1.6 (right); thickness: 1.9-2 cm

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.167.

#### Provenance:

Acquired by Johann Anton Ramboux in Italy before June 1838;<sup>740</sup> J. A. Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 145 (as school of Matteo di Giovanni); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 145 (as school of Matteo di Giovanni); Arnold Ipolyi in Pest, Barsszentkereszt/Besztercebánya and Várad until 1886; deposited at the Episcopate of Várad until 1919, (no. 56 “Martyrdom of Apostle Andrew” or no. 173, “St. Peter with the cross”<sup>741</sup>); deposited at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, 1919-1920; acquired through Ipolyi’s bequest in 1920.

#### Exhibited:

Műcsarnok, Budapest (18 October – 16 November, 1930): *Őszi kiállítás* (Fall Exhibition), cat. 1; Complesso Museale di Santa Maria della Scala, Siena (25 November, 2005 – 5 March, 2006): *Siena e Roma: Raffaello, Caravaggio e i protagonisti di un legame antico*, cat. 0.5.

#### Technical notes:

The support consists of a single piece of poor quality wood, probably poplar, which has a horizontal grain and has been thinned somewhat unevenly (Fig. 22/2). It is cut down along both vertical edges through the gilt strips of decoration that once separated the painted scenes of the predella. There is an extensive fault in the wood near the right edge at approximately centre height. There are remnants of four small paper fragments in glue near all four corners. The reverse has been impregnated with wax (?). There are three evenly spaced modern screw holes near the top edge. Thin modern strips of wood are screwed to all four sides of the original panel.

The slightly soiled and darkened painted scene is framed by gilded and painted decorative strip on both vertical sides, and preserves its original, lipped edge along the upper and lower borders. The painted surface is generally in good condition but is in a few areas cracked and disfigured by some blisters, especially below the face of the kneeling soldier on the right and to the right of the head of Saint Peter. There are minor retouchings and repairs, and a large one to the right of St. Peter’s waist. Along the top and the bottom the original engaged frame had been removed and the resulting bare extension of wood has been filled in and inpainted with brownish-grey paint. A minor conservation invention and a treatment of the reverse were executed by Dezső Varga in 2005.

<sup>739</sup> This entry is an extended and reworked version of my Italian text, cf. Sallay 2005.

<sup>740</sup> The work is identifiable in Ramboux’s exportation request list handed in to the Director of the Real Galleria on 26 June, 1838 (published by Merzenich 1995, 310, no. 39): “*Martirio di S. Pietro Apost(olo)*” / *id.* [tavola] / - [braccio]. *11* [soldi]. - [denaro] / - [braccio]. *13* [soldi]. *9* [denari], that is ca. 32.1 x 40.1 cm.

<sup>741</sup> Cf. Némethy ed. 1896.

## Documentation

On reverse: “nr<sup>o</sup> 39.” (in ink on a 19<sup>th</sup>-century white label, referring to the number of the work in Ramboux’s exportation request of 26 June, 1838); “*J.A.Ramboux*” (in red wax seal); “[Mat]teo I [da Si]ena (?)” (in pencil, partly covered by the label of the Fall Exhibition); “*I. 1930. őszi kiállítás*” (printed on a white label and referring to the Fall Exhibition of 1930); “43” (in large black print on white label, related to the Fall Exhibition of 1930); “229” (in blue chalk); “145” (in pencil); “*ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM*” (stamped three times); “+ *KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM*” (round stamp of the Christian Museum); “55.167” (in ink, twice); “*M.32 x 38.6 cm*” (in ink). Formerly on reverse<sup>742</sup>: “39” (in white chalk); “*H*” (in white chalk);

The small panel shows in the foreground the Crucifixion of St. Peter, which – according to late 2<sup>nd</sup>-century, apocryphal texts – took place head downwards at the apostle’s own request, since he felt unworthy to die the same way as his Lord.<sup>743</sup> While two armed soldiers watch the scene from the left, three executioners are busy tying the saint to the cross.<sup>744</sup> One of them also binds the cross to a tree to prevent it from falling.<sup>745</sup> The scene of the execution is a grove on the riverbank. In the background, behind the river, a city view appears, which undoubtedly aims to evoke the traditionally believed site of Peter’s martyrdom, Rome. The river is the Tiber, and in the conspicuous rotund red fortification one can recognize a simplified representation of the Mausoleum of Hadrian, known since the Middle Ages as Castel Sant’Angelo.

<sup>742</sup> Rendered illegible during the conservation intervention of 2005.

<sup>743</sup> Cf. Lipsius and Bonnet, I, 93-97 (*Actus Petri cum Simone*) and 171 (*Passio Sanctorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli*); Shotwell and Ropes Loomis 1927; Carr 1978, esp. 145, 160-165, who also discusses the earliest representations of the martyrdom of St. Peter between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. As Carolyn Carr notes, the early textual sources were incorporated also in the *Legenda Aurea* (Jacobus de Voragine, ed. Ryan 1993, 345) For a summary on the literary tradition about Peter’s death, see Barnes 1900, 96-103; O’Connor 1969, 53-59; Huskinson 1969.

<sup>744</sup> There is no reliable source on how the apostle was attached to the cross, and iconography varies in this regard. In the representations up to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century St. Peter is often nailed, but sometimes tied to the cross. In representations dating from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup>, he is generally nailed. In the second half of the fifteenth century, an increasing frequency of the tied version can be observed. Sometimes a combination of the two methods is seen: the saints’ feet are tied and his hands are nailed to the cross. An early Sienese example, which Matteo di Giovanni could have known and in which St. Peter is tied to the cross, appears in a panel attributed to Guido di Giovanni (PNS, inv. 15). A further Sienese precedent that shows the apostle tied to the cross (in front of a city wall) is a miniature (BCS, H.I.7, f. 110), attributed to a late 14<sup>th</sup>-century Sienese artist by van Os (1974, fig. 47) and to Andrea di Bartolo by Gaudenz Freuler (in *De Benedictis* ed. 2002, 342, fig. 375). A miniature by Martino di Bartolomeo (Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Lucca, Corale n. 10, f. 126v, ca. 1394-95), in contrast, shows St. Peter nailed to the cross between the two *metae*. Exceptionally, also St. Paul’s martyrdom is shown within the same scene (Ada Labriola, in Filieri ed. 1998, 212-14).

<sup>745</sup> I know no analogy for this motif. It is probably an invention of the painter, though is not impossible that it is related to the legendary “terebinth”, the turpentine tree under which Peter was buried according to the *Passio sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli* (cf. Lipsius and Bonnet 1891-1903, I, 173 [*abstulerunt corpus eius occulte et posuerunt sub terebinthum iuxta Naumachiam in locum qui appellatur Vaticanus*], cited by Huskinson 1969, 137). The tree also figures in the influential mid-15<sup>th</sup>-century writings of Flavio Biondo (cf. Huskinson 1969, 139).

In presenting a distant urban view in the background, Matteo's scene joins those representations of the second half of the fifteenth century that departed from the established iconographical tradition which – adhering to an older tradition about Peter's death – showed the apostle's crucifixion on the site of the Vatican, usually *inter duas metas*, that is, between two pyramidal architectural signposts, whose interpretation is amply discussed in scholarship.<sup>746</sup>

This *veduta*-like background is an important novel feature in the history of the iconography, but its interpretation raises more than one question. Perhaps the most important one is what prompted the change to show St. Peter's crucifixion away from the Vatican. In this regard it may be of interest to recall the debate that surrounded the exact site of the apostle's martyrdom in the fifteenth century. According to a historically unverifiable tradition of late medieval origin, St. Peter was not crucified near the later site of the Vatican Basilica, nor – as a later version of the old tradition believed – near the Castel Sant'Angelo, but on the Gianicolo Hill, on the site where the church of San Pietro in Montorio (“in Monte Aureo”) stands today. This view gained increasing support in the fifteenth century, and culminated in the early 16th-century veneration of the site by the erection of Bramante's Tempietto. It seems likely that this dispute affected also the visual expressions of the theme: in fact, after the first third of the quattrocento the representations of St. Peter's crucifixion lost their former relative iconographical uniformity and showed the scene with solutions that varied from case to case. Some scenes continued to show the two *metae*, albeit, it would seem, with a changed intention as to their meaning (according to the new view, only one *meta* was located in the area of the Vatican; the other was identified with the pyramid of Caius Cestius, so that the site at San Pietro in Montorio indeed fell *inter duas metas*); in others, the *metae* were omitted or relegated to the background, and the site of the scene was shown with a cityscape or Roman architectural elements in the background.<sup>747</sup>

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<sup>746</sup> The identification of the two *metae* with historical structures or buildings is a matter of a long standing debate in scholarship. Several scholars believe that in most 13<sup>th</sup>- and 14<sup>th</sup>-century depictions they are identifiable with the *Meta Romuli* and the *Terebintum Neronis*. At the origin of the tradition of the representation that shows the martyrdom flanked by the *metae* lies the now destroyed fresco cycle in the atrium of Old St. Peter's, which also included the scene of the Crucifixion of St. Peter. Cf. Hueck 1969-70, esp. 131-133; Floriani Squarciapino 1962; Andaloro 1984, esp. 157-161, with further bibl.; d'Onofrio 1988, 74-75, 158, esp. n. 123. For a detailed discussion of the identification of the *metae* and the various textual and visual traditions relating the locale of St. Peter's death, see below. For an isolated view that attempts to localize Peter's death in the area of the Campus Martius, see Demus-Quatember 1974 (reviewed by Huskinson 1976). For further literature on the iconography of St. Peter's martyrdom in general, see Wilson 1977, 243-252; Sauvel 1938, esp. 337-338; Réau 1955-59, III/3 (1959), 1096-99.

<sup>747</sup> On the debate and on related artistic representations, see esp. Huskinson 1969; Fehl 1971; Parlato 2001; Bartolomei Romagnoli and Vignuzzi 2001, esp. 339-342. The veneration of the site of San Pietro in Montorio was especially promoted by the writings of Maffeo Vegio and by Pope Sixtus IV, who established a monastery

Matteo di Giovanni's work must be viewed in this context, and under such circumstances its underlying intention may have been to avoid suggestions for a precise localization of the site of the martyrdom and provide only a general idea of Rome by showing one its most salient landmarks, the Castel Sant'Angelo. A similar aspiration may be present in Giovanni Bellini's predella scene in the Pesaro altarpiece, which too shows the apostle's death in a landscape, with the east view of Castel S. Angelo as the single architectural element in the background (Fig. 22/3).<sup>748</sup> The *moles Hadriani*, it should be added, was itself in certain older versions of the legend associated with the site of St. Peter's death, it thus lent itself well both for a universal suggestion of a Roman locale and for an evocation of St. Peter's story.<sup>749</sup>

Another question about Matteo's *veduta* in the Esztergom panel is whether it is based on a real view of the *borgo* in Rome. The answer is difficult in view of the highly schematic nature of the representation, evident also in the way Castel St. Angelo is rendered: its quadrangular outer wall-system is omitted and its central rectangular tower appears as a simplified, cylindrical structure. At the same time, it is interesting to note that the papal stronghold is shown as a medieval fortification with battlements and loopholes, differently from historicizing reconstruction which Matteo showed in his approximately contemporary predella to the Celsi altarpiece (1480),<sup>750</sup> where an idealized antique representation of the

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in 1472 at San Pietro in Montorio (Huskinson 1969, 139ff; Fehl 1971, 336-337). The standard iconographical tradition showing the Crucifixion of St. Peter strictly between and in close proximity to the two *metae* is abandoned, perhaps for the first time, in Filarete's doors for Old St. Peter's. According to many scholars, the two *metae* in this work are to be identified, in keeping with the more recent thought on the locale of Peter's death, with the *Meta Romuli* and the *Meta Remi* (that is, the pyramid of Caius Cestius). Many unconventional representations of St. Peter's death follow this work in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Some continue showing the crucifixion *inter duas metas*, although with a distant city view seen through the opening of the walls (Gherardo di Giovanni, *Breviarium Romanum*, fol. 27, Florence, Mus. Naz. del Bargello, Ms. 68, inv. 2); others depict it inside the town walls (Filippino Lippi, Brancacci chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence) or with antique architectural motifs in the background (Pinturicchio and his shop, Basso della Rovere chapel, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome), but still with a "gula" nearby in remembrance of the old tradition.

<sup>748</sup> On this scene, see esp. Wilson 1977, 243-52, who notes (pp. 246-248) that, among other motifs, Bellini's use of a landscape with a cityscape in the back and his choice to show the apostle affixed to the cross by ropes may be due to transalpine influence. This view is difficult to verify. A scene like *The Crucifixion of Saint Peter with a Donor* by a northern French painter from ca. 1450 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 32.100.108-11) is comparable to Bellini's – and Matteo's – scene in these respects but its precise relation to the Italian scenes, if any, remains unclear. Wilson's reading of Bellini's scene does not satisfy the reader's curiosity in that she devotes little attention to the remarkably precise representation of Castel S. Angelo in Bellini's scene.

<sup>749</sup> Cf. Huskinson 1969, 138, n. 21. In Flavio Biondo's *Roma Instaurata* dating from 1444-46, the Castel St. Angelo is actually identified with one of the *metae*, even though the author himself recognized the anachronism of this view (Cf. Huskinson 1969, 138).

<sup>750</sup> The date of the Celsi altarpiece is sometimes considered as lost or uncertain (Trimpi 1987, 203-205; Buricchi 1998, 61; Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 46). A visual examination shows that although the mordent gilt inscription itself is mostly lost, its imprint remains in the paint film, and the end of the inscription is clearly discernible: (...)“XXX •” (the end clearly marked by a large dot). The reliability of this date is confirmed by the stylistic characteristics and the 17<sup>th</sup>-century transcriptions of the date 1480 published by Trimpi and mentioned by Buricchi.

Mausoleum appears in re-evocation of the 6<sup>th</sup>-century story of St. Gregory's procession (in which the building itself is a "protagonist") (Fig. 22/4).<sup>751</sup>

Matteo's visual source for the present scene must thus have been different but remains unidentified. It was perhaps a horizontally compressed and schematic east view of the *borgo*, in which the polygonal structure could correspond to the octagonal tambour of the Ospedale di Santo Spirito, the building to its right to the facade of Old St. Peter's (which appeared in some contemporary representations with arched coupled windows (*bifore*), for example, in the lost prototype on which Hartmann Schedel's famous view (Fig. 22/5) and the so-called Mantua plan are based),<sup>752</sup> the tower on the far left to the campanile of S. Spirito in Sassia, and perhaps the gray crenellated structure in the foreground to a section of the travertine Ponte S. Angelo (Pons Aelius, Pons Sancti Petri) with one of the square towers of Pope Nicholas V. In a real view from this angle, however, more of the bridge would be visible, and it is also possible that this structure stands for a gate interpolated from another view, perhaps from the south – that is, from the Gianicolo – from where the campanile, the polygon and the castle would more or less occupy the same position. In any case, the numerous imprecisions in the rendering make this hypothesis doubtful.<sup>753</sup> It is also questionable whether Matteo, who is not documented to have visited Rome, could have had access to such a recent visual source which would include the Octagon of the hospital that was not completed before the late 1470s and possibly only at the beginning of the 1480s.<sup>754</sup> For these reasons, it seems more likely on the whole that we are dealing with a view borne by fantasy, or, at the most, with a view which, though based on realistic elements and perhaps pasted together from more than one source, constitutes in its entirety an imaginary ensemble.

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<sup>751</sup> For the late 15<sup>th</sup>-century aspect of Castel St. Angelo, just before its reconstruction by Pope Alexandre VI, cf. the drawings of the *Codex Escurialensis* (repr. Egger 1932, I, pl. I; Garms 1995, 57, B3, B4; Spagnesi 1995, 9, figs. 1-2).

<sup>752</sup> Cf. Frutaz I, pp. 150-151. The prototype in question dates from around 1480-90. Schedel's *veduta* was published in 1493 (cf. Schedel 2001, LVIIv.- LVIIIr.); the Mantua map dates from after 1538. For views of medieval Rome, see Frutaz, 1962, II, esp. figs. 153-165, and fig. 175 for a reconstruction of the ground plan of medieval Rome (by Roberto Valentini and Giuseppe Zucchetti), on which the spatial relations of the buildings can be studied (Fig. 22/6).

<sup>753</sup> If the octagonal structure refers to the Spedale di Santo Spirito at all, it shows round windowd (*oculi*) are in the tambour instead of alternating coupled and tripled windows (*bifore* and *trifore*), and even a lantern or second-storey-like structure on its top. This could be due to a sketchy and schematic intermediating source, made perhaps even before the roof was finished. In any case, any kind of connection is made particularly difficult by the schematic and compilative nature of *vedute* before the very end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>754</sup> Howe 1977 (1978), 53-55, 60. A not completely reliable, 19<sup>th</sup>-century inscription added at the time of the renovation of the building (1874), source puts the date of the reconstruction at 1482: "Erecta a MCCIV reaedificata a MCCCCLXXXII" (Brockhaus 1884, 290). As noted by several authors, a *terminus ante quem* for the octagon is a miniature dated 1483 by Attavante degli Attavanti that shows the cupola in the view of Rome behind a Crucifixion scene (Frutaz 1962, I, 146-147; II, Pl. 163).

As its format, dimensions and subject matter suggest, the piece originally formed part of a predella, dismembered before 1838, when CM 55.167 was first documented in Ramboux's possession. Even though already Ramboux placed the work into the school of Matteo di Giovanni (1862), subsequent early attributions included an artist distantly connected with the manner of Andrea del Castagno (Van Marle 1928), the circle of Niccolò Alunno (Benesch 1929), and Francesco di Giorgio (Gerevich 1928, 1930, 1948; Czobor 1955). Berti Toesca (1932), followed by Gengaro (1934), Berenson (1932), and Galetti and Camesasca (1950), believed it to be by Matteo di Giovanni himself, while Coor (1959), Tátrai (1993) and Berenson himself in a later opinion (1968) ascribed it again to the school of Matteo. Mojzer (1964) and, more recently, Dittelbach (1999) considered it a production by Matteo's student and follower Guidoccio Cozzarelli. Erica Trimpi (1987) rejected Cozzarelli's authorship and thought the author must have been Matteo himself or an unidentified, gifted member of his workshop. In 1988, Laurence Kanter argued for Matteo's authorship again, pointing out the confident underdrawing in a companion panel.

The physiognomic types, the complex and varied figural poses, and the dynamic handling of the thin tempera paint suggest indeed that we are dealing with an autograph work by Matteo di Giovanni. It is most closely comparable with the predella of the Celsi altarpiece – especially with its central scene showing the *Resurrection* (Fig. 22/7) – in the treatment of the architecture and the landscape, in the spatial organization, as well as in the equipment and anatomical forms of the soldiers in the foreground. In both scenes an arched, gate-like structure shown in similar perspective borders the composition on the left; on the right, similar landscapes stretch into the distance, with diffuse, boggy waters and loose-leafed trees painted in a very fluid medium. Similar, too, are in both predellas the dexterously painted bearded male faces with strongly marked features (Figs. 22/8, 22/9), and the 4 mm-wide double concentric punchmarks in the decorative strips between the scenes. At the same time, the very loose, sketchy figural and landscape style indicates for CM 55.167 and its companion panels a somewhat more advanced moment in Matteo's career. Just how much later they were painted is difficult to say, since no small-scale works by Matteo survive between the Celsi predella and the book covers from 1487, 1488, and 1489, in which some similar solutions can be seen. In my view, a date in the first half of the 1480s is more likely but the second half of the decade cannot be excluded.

Three further fragments survive from the predella to which CM 55.167 belonged: the *Saint Bernardino Restoring a Child to Life*<sup>755</sup> (Galleria Moretti, Florence, Figs. 22/11, 22/13); the *Banquet of Herod*<sup>756</sup> (The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York, Fig. 22/12, 22/14) and the *Crucifixion*<sup>757</sup> (City Art Gallery, Manchester, inv. 1951.2, Fig. 22/10).<sup>758</sup> The common provenance of these panels is proved by their similar style, dimensions<sup>759</sup> and the matching remnants of the vertical gilt divisions between the scenes. In all four panels, this gilt decoration is bordered by incised vertical lines and with a row of 4 mm-wide double concentric punches. Along the vertical edges of the Manchester *Crucifixion*, fragments of a cherub's haloed head and wings can be seen between geometric fields decorated with blue and red. This decoration is completed by the fragmented motifs on the right border of the *Banquet of Herod* and the left border of the *Crucifixion of St. Peter*. The right border of the

<sup>755</sup> This piece was formerly in the Suida Manning Coll., New York, and then in the Marco Voena Coll. (exhibited in 2001 in Milan, cf. Terzaghi 2001, 88-89). At the time of writing (2004), it was with Fabrizio Moretti, whom I thank for the possibility of examining it. The panel, with horizontal grain, measures 30.1 cm (left) / 30.2 cm (right) by 38.1 cm (above) / 38.2 cm (below); the painted surface without the gilt strips measures 27.9 cm (left) / 28 cm (right) by 35.7 cm (above) / 35.9 cm (below). The extension of wood is 1.8-1.9 cm wide above and 0.7-0.8 cm wide below the painted surface; it has been filled in and masked with greenish paint. The support has been thinned to 0.7-0.8 cm and cradled. There is an 8 cm long horizontal crack at about mid-height on the right (as viewed from the back). The reverse of the piece bears no documentation. The photograph published in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 280 (It. ed. 294), fig. 50b is uncropped.

<sup>756</sup> The horizontally grained support is 31.1 x 37.8 cm; the painted surface 28.2 x 35.5 cm. The panel has been thinned to about 1 cm and cradled with the same type of cradle as the St. Bernardino scene, which proves that the panels were together at some point. My thanks go to Stratton D. Green for examining and photographing the *Banquet of Herod* upon my request (written communication, 2 July, 2002). The photograph published in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 280 (It. ed. 294), fig. 50a is cropped on both sides; for a complete photograph, see Kettlewell 1981, 32.

<sup>757</sup> *Concise Catalogue* ...1980, 64 (attributed to the school of Matteo di Giovanni). The horizontally grained panel measures 31.2 x 71.2 cm, and is 1.7 cm thick. The painted surface (28.1 x 67.8 cm without the gilt strips) is framed by a *barbe* on the top and the bottom, located 1.6 cm from the top and 1.5 cm from the bottom. The unpainted wood at the top and bottom has been masked with gesso and pale green paint. The panel is slightly planed at the bottom. The reverse is not cradled and is full of knot holes. I am deeply grateful to Peter Hartley for his detailed condition report on the *Crucifixion* in Manchester (written communication, 4 April, 2002) and to Melva Croal for arranging the examination of this piece, which involved the removal of the modern frame. The knot holes are also found on the reverse of CM 55.167 in the area once closest to the Manchester panel.

<sup>758</sup> For a summary of earlier reconstruction attempts, when CM 55.167 was associated with the *Calling of St. Peter and Andrew* in Williamstown, the *Supper at Levi's House* in Zurich, and a *Crucifixion* in Cleveland, cf. Vilmos Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 239-40. CM 55.167 was first associated with *St. Bernardino Restoring a Child to Life* and the *Banquet of Herod* by Federico Zeri (cf. Laurence Kanter, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 278-281 [It. ed. 292-95], with previous bibl.), and, independently, by Erica Trimpi (1987, 249-50, 253-54, 255-256, 259-60). Trimpi and Kanter included the Manchester *Crucifixion* in the series on the basis of style, iconography and dimensions, but Kanter wrongly claimed that no gold survived at its edges. For the physical proofs for the inclusion of the Manchester *Crucifixion*, cf. Sallay 2003<sup>1</sup>, 44, n. 29; Sallay 2005, 72-75. Kanter tentatively connected with the series a *Decapitation of St. Paul* recorded in the Ramboux coll. (no. 146); this work, however, has been identified with Luca di Tommè's predella fragment in Esztergom (CM, inv. 55.156; cf. Mojzer 1964<sup>2</sup>, 224; Cséfalvay 1989, 103; Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 565).

<sup>759</sup> The respective heights of the painted surfaces (which are more relevant than the heights of the supports, some of which are slightly reduced) is as follows: 28 cm (*Miracle of St. Bernardino*), 28.2 (*Banquet of Herod*); 28.1 (*Crucifixion*), 28.4 (*Crucifixion of St. Peter*).

latter shows fragments of a vase and foliate motifs,<sup>760</sup> similar but not identical to the pattern found along the left edge of the St. Bernardino scene, where the vase has a handle and the foliate patterns are different. The St. Bernardino scene must therefore be situated on the extreme left.<sup>761</sup> The order of the panels can thus be established as follows: *Saint Bernardino Restoring a Child to Life, Banquet of Herod, Crucifixion, Crucifixion of St. Peter*, a lost scene (Fig. 22/15).

Taking into consideration also the destroyed parts (the gilt strips were about 6 cm wide), the total width of the predella can be calculated to about ca. 245 cm, to which pilaster bases may have additionally joined. The altarpiece to which the predella belonged remains unidentified. It presumably showed the standing figures of S. Bernardino, St. John the Baptist, St. Peter and a further saint above the respective scenes of their lives, probably on the two sides of the Virgin and Child. The frequent claim according to which titular saints usually appear at the place of honour, on the right of the Virgin, must be treated with caution because of a number of exceptions; yet, there is a certain chance that our altarpiece was originally dedicated to Saint John the Baptist (or – there are also examples for type of his arrangement – to St. Bernardino of Siena). While these conclusions remain hypothetical, it may be noted that if this predella belonged to a St. John the Baptist altarpiece, its connection with the *Baptism of Christ*-lunette (cf. Cat. 25) is possible on grounds of the suggested authorship, dating, iconography, and dimensions.

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 26, no. 145 (School of Matteo di Giovanni); [Ramboux] 1867, 28, no. 145 (School of Matteo di Giovanni); Van Marle 1928, X, 378 (an artist “distantly connected with” Andrea del Castagno’s manner); Gerevich 1928, 225-26 (Francesco di Giorgio); Benesch 1929, 70 (identifies the scene as “Andreasmarter”, close to Niccolò Alunno); Lepold 1931, 11, cat. 1 (Francesco di Giorgio); Gerevich 1930, 95 (Francesco di Giorgio); Berti Toesca 1932, 946-47 (Matteo di Giovanni); Gengaro 1934, 180 (grouped with “opere variamente attribuite a Matteo di Giovanni”); Berenson 1936, 302 (Matteo di Giovanni); Gerevich ed. 1948, 69-70 (Francesco di Giorgio); Galetti and Camesasca, 1951, II, 1622 (Matteo di Giovanni); Czobor 1955, 8 (Francesco di Giorgio); Coor 1959, 89 (Workshop of Matteo di Giovanni); Miklós Mojzer, in Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 64, Pl. III. fig. 49 (Cozzarelli, rather early work); Mojzer 1964<sup>1</sup>, 5-6; Berenson 1968, 258 (workshop of Matteo di Giovanni); Mucsi 1975, 43, no. 205, fig. 39 (Guidoccio Cozzarelli, predella fragment with a companion piece in Williamstown, early work painted together with Matteo di Giovanni for

<sup>760</sup> A good analogy for the dividing gold strips showing a vase from which a foliate decoration issues is found in an earlier work by Matteo, the predella in Asciano (Alessi ed. 2002, repr. on pp. 136-137).

<sup>761</sup> Examinations have revealed that too little remains of the right border of the S. Bernardino scene and of the left border of the *Banquet of Herod* to exclude (as claimed by Laurence Kanter, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 278 [It. ed. 292]) that they were originally contiguous. Because of the usual typology of Sienese altarpieces of the period and the substantial combined width of the fragments, it seems correct to assume that the predella contained a total of five scenes only.

the church of San Pietro Ovile in Siena); Trimpi 1987, 249-50, 253-54, 255-256, 259-60 (Matteo di Giovanni or a gifted member of his shop, but not Cozzarelli, 1490s); Laurence B. Kanter, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke, ed. 1988, 278 (It. ed., 292-295) (Matteo di Giovanni, early 1480s); Vilmos Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 239-240, no. 108, Pl. 108 (workshop of Matteo di Giovanni, last third of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 565 (Matteo di Giovanni or Guidoccio Cozzarelli); Thomas Dittelbach, "Cozzarelli, Guidoccio", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 22 (1999), 114-115, esp. 115 (Guidoccio Cozzarelli); Maria Cristina Terzaghi, in Commellato, Fiz, and Voena ed. 2001, 88-89 (Matteo di Giovanni, ca. 1470); Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, fig. 29 on p. 47 (Matteo di Giovanni, reconstruction sketch); Sallay 2003, 44 n. 29 (reconstruction of predella); Sallay 2005, 72-75 (Matteo di Giovanni, ca. 1480-85, reconstruction of predella); Sallay 2008, 8, 16 (Matteo di Giovanni).

## 23.

### Matteo di Giovanni

*Virgin and Child with Two Angels*<sup>762</sup>

#### Fig. 23/1

1482

tempera and gold on wood

panel and painted surface: 66 x 76 cm; maximum height of panel without the 19<sup>th</sup> century-addition on top: 63.5 cm; thickness: ca. 1.6 cm

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.175.

#### Provenance:

Altarpiece of the Innocents, Church of Sant'Agostino, Siena; acquired by Arnold Ipolyi some time after 1863 and in his collection until 1886; deposited at the Episcopate of Várad until 1919, (no. 53, "Madonna and two angels, copy after Fra Angelico" or no. 57, "Madonna and two angels"<sup>763</sup>); deposited at the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, 1919-1920; acquired through Ipolyi's bequest in 1920.

#### Exhibited:

Royal Academy of Arts, London (1 January – 8 March, 1930): *Exhibition of Italian Art 1200-1900*, cat. 921; Múcsarnok, Budapest (18 October – 16 November, 1930): *Őszi kiállítás* (Fall Exhibition), cat. 32.

#### Technical notes:

The panel was cut from the central part of a segmental-arched topped lunette and made up into a rectangular format by adding wood pieces from the discarded parts produced during the dismembering. The arched part of the support consists of three horizontally grained planks, a ca. 3.5 cm wide strip at the top, a ca. 40 cm wide plank in the centre and a 20 cm wide plank at the bottom (Fig. 23/2). The part added on top is affixed with six thin dowels. After the transformation, the support was thinned from its original thickness of ca. 4 cm<sup>764</sup> to ca. 1.6 cm. There are two, ca. 1.5 cm wide bisected dowel holes in the reverse: an 11.5 cm-long one in a vertical position at the top of the original arch and a fragmented one in a diagonal position in the added parts. The reverse is repaired in some with some gesso-like material. The added pieces seem to have been scraped before they were newly gessoed and gilt in a process that involved the regilding of the entire original gold ground. The haloes of the Virgin and the angel on the right were extended in the new area in rough imitation of the original punchwork. In 2002, the added parts were searched in two spots along the right and left borders for traces of original paint, without result. Further examinations are needed to determine the relation of the added parts to the central part of the lunette.

The painted surface is in relatively good condition. There are cracks, scratches, small losses of paint, small accumulations of dirt on the paint surface, and many darkened retouches, especially in the flesh areas. There is some loose paint in the lower right area. The Virgin's blue mantle has been painted over. Damages along the horizontal conjunction of two larger boards have been inpainted. The bottom and the vertical sides of the painting are cut;

<sup>762</sup> This entry is a reworked and abridged version of my text published in Italian, cf. Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>, esp. 81-93.

<sup>763</sup> Cf. Némethy ed. 1896.

<sup>764</sup> The original thickness is known from another surviving fragment of the lunette which has not been thinned (cf. Fig. 23/10 and text below).

the edges here are damaged and repaired. The outlines of the figures have been incised into the gesso before painting. The gilt decoration imitating gold embroidery in the Virgin's veil, the Child's pink sash, the white sash of the angel on the left are abraded. The angels' wings are modeled with red lake and blue paint over a gold ground. The sleeve of the angel on the right is executed in *sgraffito*, with green paint over gold leaf.

On all four sides, ca. 1 cm wide, unpainted wood strips are added, to which more recent, approximately 0.6 cm wide, unpainted wooden strips were screwed (probably in the 1950s).

The work was restored by Sebestyén Endrődi in 1923. A minor intervention was carried out by Lajos Nikássy in 1937 who "provisionally filled" losses and covered it with two layers of varnish.<sup>765</sup> CM 55.175 was treated again by Dezső Varga in 1959, who brought to light the original gold ground in a large area to the left of the Virgin.<sup>766</sup>

### Documentation:

On reverse: "DOGANA DI TERRA / R. C. A." (in red wax seal of the Papal States, in illegible but identifiable condition, diam.: 2.3 cm<sup>767</sup>, Fig. 23/3); "N. 13" (large, thin letters in red chalk, predating the 20<sup>th</sup> century); "BOTT.?" (in white chalk, possibly remnant of an inscription recording an attribution to Botticelli); "192" (in blue chalk); "44" (large black print on white label, related to the Fall Exhibition of 1930); "32. 1930. ŐSZI KIÁLLÍTÁS" (printed on white label, documenting the Fall Exhibition); "Rest. 1923. Endrődi Sebestyén" (in ink); remnants of a round white label with blue printed border; "ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM" (stamped, three times); "M. 66 x 76" (in pencil, twice); "+ KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM" (round stamp); "55.175" (twice, in pencil and in black ink).<sup>768</sup>

The Virgin, the Christ Child, and the two attendant angels appear in front of a gold ground suggestive of the transcendental sphere. The two standing angels turn towards the central group in quiet, joyful adoration; their subordinate role is indicated by their smaller scale. The Virgin and Child are shown close to the pictorial plane. Mary has fine, marbly skin, whose delicacy is heightened by the diaphanous veil ornamented with stripes of gilt embroidery. She wears a red dress, embroidered with gold along the hem, and a blue mantle lined with green. The bright red of her dress stands out from the low-keyed chromatic scheme of the rest of the painting, and draws the viewer's attention to her. A composite motif consisting of rays and one six-pointed and two five-pointed stars enclosed in circles

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<sup>765</sup> Nikássy notes in his restoration reports archived at CM that the work is "full with old repairs" and "can be ironed only provisionally".

<sup>766</sup> For a state preceding the 1959 restoration, cf. Gerevich 1948, fig. 91.

<sup>767</sup> This seal is fairly common; it appears on other works in the CM, on a Siene work in the Johnson Coll. in Philadelphia (Strehlke 2004, 499, repr.), and in the Pinacoteca Vaticana. "R. C. A." is an abbreviation for "Reverenda Camera Apostolica" (cf. Volbach 1987, 12, cat. 3 and the repr. of the same seal on Tav. Agg. 1, fig. 6).

<sup>768</sup> The documentation "91. Matteo di Giovanni, 1435 kör - 1495", written in red ink on a white label and now tacked to the back of the other *Madonna and Child with Two Angels* by Matteo di Giovanni in the collection (cf. Cat. 24 but removed for photography for this catalogue) originally belonged to this piece. The no. 91 corresponds to inventory or exhibition number used between the two World Wars (cf. note 251 above). CM 55.175 is cited as inv. 91 in Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 330 and appears under this number also in a series of other documentation dating from the 1930s and relating to the London exhibition of 1930, a restoration intervention, and other administrative notes.

accentuates her right shoulder, referring to her epithet as *stella maris*.<sup>769</sup> Her legs are turned to the side and pulled up to support the unusually large, reddish-haired infant who looks out at the viewer and raises his right hand in blessing.<sup>770</sup> In adherence to earlier, trecentesque convention, he is fully clad in a finely creased, white tunic girded at the waist by a rose-coloured sash embellished with gilt embroidery. His left leg is turned towards the viewer, in foreshortening; Mary touches his left foot with her refined and elongated fingers.<sup>771</sup> The Child rests his other foot on the stretched edge of the blue mantle, and places rests his left hand, which the artist carefully articulated, on his thigh. The haloes of the Child and the angels are foreshortened.

The carefully balanced composition radiates heavenly harmony. It is devoid of spatial definition; the figures and draperies are carefully modeled so that they seem to appear in relief in front of the flat golden background. The large, chromatically homogeneous surfaces are revived by small ornamental details executed with great care. The angels' slashed sleeves imitate brocade and gold embroidery. Pearls and small gilt fringes embellish the bluish dress of the angel on the left, and very fine, now hardly legible, gilt strips are embroidered into the white sash of the angel on the left (Figs. 23/4-6).

The painting is a central fragment of a lunette whose arched corners once showed two saints turning to the Virgin and Child in adoration: Saint Augustine and Saint Francis of Assisi (Figs. 23/8-10). The rugged features of the male saints formed a contrast with the figures in the central group, emphasizing their transcendental beauty. All three fragments were turned into independent pictures at the time of the dismemberment of the lunette and made up into a rectangular form above the arch. The *St. Augustine* (formerly Lord Allendale Coll., London, 42 x 30.5 cm?) was recognized to belong to CM 55.175 in 1930,<sup>772</sup> certainly as an outcome of the exhibition of the Esztergom piece at the Royal Academy of Arts in

<sup>769</sup> The originality of this unusual motif has not yet been proved by technical examination. I know of no analogy of this motif in contemporary painting and, whether original or a later addition, it may have a complex meaning which has not yet been explained.

<sup>770</sup> Erica Trimpi (1987, 137) justly noted that the enlargement of the Child and the unnatural elongation of the Virgin's neck must be due to the painter's efforts for optical correction to adjust to the beholder's viewpoint from below.

<sup>771</sup> This gesture is adapted, with slight modifications, from the Placidi altarpiece in San Domenico, Siena (1476).

<sup>772</sup> The fragment showing St. Augustine was first published in the 1930/31 catalogue of the Burlington Fine Arts Club and brought into connection with the Esztergom fragment (London, *Burlington Fine Arts Club* 1930-31, no. 66: "*Bust of a Mitred Saint by Matteo di Giovanni. A fragment from the left hand side of a lunette representing the Virgin with two Saints and two Angels, the centre portion of which is in the Archbishop's Palace in Esztergom.*") The piece has not been traced since 1930, thus the dimensions of the picture given here are based on previous literature (Pope-Hennessy 1960, 67, n. 15; Trimpi 1987, I, 154).

London at the beginning of that year.<sup>773</sup> The *St. Francis* (Priv. Coll., Milan, 46.5 x 36 cm)<sup>774</sup> was related to the Esztergom piece and the *St. Augustine* by John Pope-Hennessy in 1960.<sup>775</sup> It is Pope-Hennessy's merit, too, to have discovered Ettore Romagnoli's description of the lunette, which reports it in the dormitory of Sant'Agostino in Siena still in an intact condition.<sup>776</sup> It should be noted, however, that Romagnoli's words, written some time before 1835, rely on Guglielmo Della Valle's book dating from almost half a century earlier (1786) and the information contained within must thus be referred to that period:<sup>777</sup> *"In fondo al dormitorio di S. Agostino vi è una tavola, che ha la figura di mezzo cerchio, e che probabilmente era la sommità di altra tavola, assai grande da altare. In campo d'oro vi è la Vergine sedente col bambino in braccio nel mezzo di due Angeli amorosamente assistenti, con S. Agostino, e S. Bernardino, figure poco meno delle naturali. Quanto sono amabili nel volto il Bambino, la Vergine, e gli Angeli! Il colorito, il disegno, e la maniera corrispondono a quella della Madonna della neve, di cui si parlò poc'anzi."*<sup>778</sup>

Pope-Hennessy rightly proposed also that the lunette originally belonged to the Altar of the Innocents in the church of Sant'Agostino, whose central panel showing the *Massacre of the Innocents* (ca. 236.5 x 236.5, painted surface 232 x 232 cm) remained in the church until 1987 and is now deposited at the Complesso Museale di Santa Maria della Scala in Siena.<sup>779</sup>

<sup>773</sup> *Exhibition of Italian Art...1930*, 396, cat. 921. The common provenance of the two pieces is confirmed in the commemorative catalogue following the exhibition, cf. Balniel and Clark 1931, I, 69, no. 199.

<sup>774</sup> This fragment conserves its original thickness of ca. 4 cm. For its technical description, cf. Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>, 82-83.

<sup>775</sup> Pope-Hennessy 1960, 63-67, figs. 17-18.

<sup>776</sup> The relevant passage in Romagnoli's manuscript reads: *"e nel fondo del Dormitorio è ancora una tavola in figura di mezzo archio, che probabilmente era la sommità di altra tavola assai più grande da altare. In Campo d'oro vi è M.V. sedente col Bambino in braccio con due angeli dai lati, oltre S. Agostino, e S. Bernardino, figure poco meno che naturali."* (Romagnoli *ante* 1835 (1976), IV, f. 660, cited by Pope-Hennessy 1960, 67, in whose transcription the reading "d'alta tavola" must be corrected in "di altra tavola").

<sup>777</sup> Della Valle, 1872-76, III (1786), 51. Also Romagnoli's expression "di mezzo archio" (of half arch), which has little sense, seems to be an erroneous reading of "di mezzo cerchio" (of half circle) of Della Valle. It was not unusual for Romagnoli to turn to earlier sources in his descriptions; in fact, precisely in the description of the main panel of the altarpiece, the *Massacre of the Innocents* in Sant'Agostino, he cites extensively and literally from Della Valle (cf. Della Valle 1872-76, III (1786), 51-52 e Romagnoli *ante* 1835 (1976), IV, 649-651). Consequently, we have no certainty that the lunette survived the dissolution of the order in 1808-10 and was still in Sant'Agostino at the time of Romagnoli's writing (cf. Chronology of S. Agostino by Monika Butzek and Hans Teubner, in Riedl and Seidel ed., 1.1 (1985), 14; to be noted that the Augustinians returned at an unknown time later and functioned until 1972).

<sup>778</sup> "In the back parts of the dormitory of S. Agostino there is a panel which has the shape of a half circle and which was probably the crowning piece of another panel [note: here the author simply refers to a previously mentioned work], very large, from an altarpiece. In front of a gold background there is the Virgin, sitting with the Child in her arms between two angels, who lovingly assist to the scene, with St. Augustine and St. Bernardino, figure hardly less than natural size. How lovely the faces of the Child, the Virgin, and of the Angels are! The colours, the drawing and the manner resemble those in the Madonna della Neve of which I spoke shortly before."

<sup>779</sup> Pope-Hennessy 1960, 67. For the *Massacre of the Innocents*, see also Trimpi 1987, 205-210 (with previous bibl.); Buricchi 1998, 65-68, Sallay 2006, 157-163 (with previous bibl.). The dimensions 244 x 246 cm published by Enrica Neri Lusanna (in Riedl and Seidel ed. I.1 [1985], 114) probably include the modern frame.

The *Massacre* is signed and dated at the bottom: “·OPVS · MATEI · IOHANNIS · | ·DESENIS · MCCCCLXXXII·”.<sup>780</sup> Monika Butzek showed that the altar on which Matteo di Giovanni’s altarpiece was placed in 1482 had been founded nearly twenty years earlier by the widow Andreoccia di Bandino di Ser Luca. In her last will dated 17 June, 1463, the widow left her possessions to the Augustinian hermits on condition that they found an altar in their church within two years from her death unless she herself succeeds in creating a chapel before she dies. The altar was to be dedicated to St. Francis, almost certainly in memory of Donna Andreoccia’s first husband, Checco [Francesco] di Jacobo. Donna Andreoccia was dead by May 1464 without having succeeded in her plans, and the Augustinians must have accommodated her request shortly afterwards.<sup>781</sup>

The altar in question was the first on the left in the church; its original form and decoration are not known.<sup>782</sup> Neither do we have any certainty on who commissioned, and for what reason, the altarpiece of 1482. It has been hypothesized that because of a renewed cult of the Innocents,<sup>783</sup> the Augustinians themselves decided to erect a new altarpiece and re-dedicate the altar to the Innocents, while maintaining its old title of St. Francis in keeping with the desire of the altar’s founder.<sup>784</sup> The iconography of the lunette reflects this new situation: St. Francis appears in adoration on the heraldic left side of the lunette, St. Augustine, the patron saint of the order and titular of the church, occupies the post of honor on the right of the Virgin.

In 1665, the altar was given over to the Tolomei family, who transferred here their altarpiece, the renowned Beato Agostino Novello altarpiece by Simone Martini, from their

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The painting was removed from Sant’Agostino for restoration between 1987-1991 by Alfio del Serra (Florence), then deposited at the Museo Civico, and, at the time of writing (2006), at the Complesso Museale di Santa Maria della Scala in Siena. For a detailed study of the iconological background of the altarpiece, cf. Silberger 1999, esp. 273-299.

<sup>780</sup> The authenticity of this date was occasionally doubted (for a summary of these discussions, cf. Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>, 86, 88). For the Matteo di Giovanni exhibition of 2006, technical investigations were carried out that confirmed the originality of the inscription (Sallay 2006, esp. 162 n. 1). The inscription was transcribed very precisely, in two lines as in the original, by Otto Mündler in September 1856: “OPVS MATEI IOHANNIS | DE SENIS MCCCCLXXXII” (Togneri Dowd ed. 1985, 119).

<sup>781</sup> Monika Butzek, in Rield and Seidel ed., 1.1 (1985), 220-224, and doc. 19 on p. 463.

<sup>782</sup> It became the second altar in 1530 when another altar was constructed before it. For hypotheses on the first form of this altar and the possibility of a first altarpiece showing St. Francis of Assisi, see Monika Butzek, in Rield and Seidel ed., 1.1 (1985), 220, 222, and Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>, 92, n. 79.

<sup>783</sup> Previous literature has often brought this renewed cult into connection by with the massacre of the Christians at Otranto in 1480 (cf. Hobart Cust 1901 [2000], 55, 59; Schubring 1904; Schubring 1908; Aronow 1985, 213-215; Trimpfi 1987, 209; A. Angelini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 335, 341; Buricchi 1998, 65; De Marchi 2002<sup>1</sup>, 75, n. 81; Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>). Recent scholarship tends to attribute less importance to, or outright refute (Silberger 1999), the events of Otranto as a factor for the diffusion of this subject in Siennese art. This view is supported by the recent realization that Matteo’s first version of this subject was painted in 1468 for Naples, and his later versions may be due to the success of the first version (Alessi and Bagnoli ed. 2006).

<sup>784</sup> Cf. Monika Butzek, in Rield and Seidel ed., 1.1 (1985), 220, 222, 224 (“Zustand 1575”); Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>, 88.

former altar in the church, which had to give way to a new altar commissioned by the Chigi family.<sup>785</sup> The Tolomei, apparently reluctant to completely dispose of Matteo's splendid altarpiece but not willing to part with their old altarpiece either, removed Matteo's lunette and positioned Simone Martini's panel, almost as it were a lunette (as its arched format suggests), over Matteo's *Massacre of the Innocents*.<sup>786</sup> The lunette of Matteo's altarpiece was put in deposit in the dormitory, where Della Valle later documented it.

We have very little information its subsequent fate.<sup>787</sup> The fragment in Esztergom comes from Arnold Ipolyi's collection, which it perhaps entered after 1871, since a description of the collection from that year does not mention it among the most notable pieces (which it would deserve).<sup>788</sup> Of the fragment with St. Augustine, we know only that it was in London in 1930-31, and the provenance of the *St. Francis* cannot be traced back to more than half a century either, when it came to the Saibene collection in Milan,<sup>789</sup> perhaps from Viareggio.<sup>790</sup>

Reconstruction attempts of the fragmented lunette by John Pope-Hennessy and Erica Trimpi established its original width as 150 cm and 200 cm, respectively,<sup>791</sup> which is significantly less than what is borne out by the surviving fragments, whose combined width alone is around 136 cm (30.5? + 76 + 29.2-29.4 cm). If the fragments are accurately reassembled on the basis of the arch of the lunette (which has a radius of 146 cm) and the row of punched circles running parallel with it, the juncture of the wood panels (visible only in the central part and in the *St. Francis*), the harmonization of the size of the punchmarks, and many details that continue from one panel to another (a section of St. Francis' halo and his sleeve in the central panel; a 4 cm tall and 1.1 cm wide triangular fragment of St. Augustine's

<sup>785</sup> Monika Butzek, in Rield and Seidel ed., 1.1 (1985), 210, 212.

<sup>786</sup> On the final demolition of the altar during the renovation of the church in 1747-55 and the subsequent locations of the of the central panel within the church, cf. Monika Butzek, in Rield and Seidel ed., 1.1 (1985), 111-112, 225; Enrica Neri Lusanna, *ibid.*, 113-114; Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>, 86-87. It is unknown whether the altarpiece had a predella and no surviving pieces can be even hypothetically associated with it.

<sup>787</sup> After Romagnoli's description (*ante* 1835) – which, as has been mentioned, may not refer to a contemporary state of things –, I have not found any reference to the lunette among the sources regarding Sant'Agostino. Brogi makes no mention of it, either, in his unpublished inventory compiled in 1863 (Brogi, 1863).

<sup>788</sup> [Fraknói] 1871.

<sup>789</sup> Written communication of Giovanni Saibene, 20 December, 2001.

<sup>790</sup> In the photo archives of the Fondazione Roberto Longhi of Florence, a handwritten note on the back of the photograph (Box 18, inv. 0180127), taken probably between the two world wars, indicated the location of the work as in Viareggio. I am grateful to Miklós Boskovits for calling my attention to this information.

<sup>791</sup> Pope-Hennessy 1960, 67; Trimpi 1987, II, 459, fig. 115. To make up for the enormous difference between his calculated lunette width and that of the main panel (232 cm), Pope-Hennessy suggested decorative carving at the sides of the lunette. This proposal, however, does not take into account the typology of Sieneese altarpieces in the second half of 15th-century, according to which lunettes are at least as wide as the main panel(s) of the altarpiece, and in many cases wider (cf. the altarpiece diagrams in scale, published in Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 44-47, and Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>, esp. 76-77, 91 n. 65).

dark mantle in the lower left corner of the central panel; parts of the angels' wings in all three panels), the width of the lunette at the level of the bottom edge of the Esztergom fragment comes to about 242 cm. This is already wider than the 232 cm-wide central panel<sup>792</sup> and could suggest that the lunette had a very low segmental arch form and showed three-quarter figures.

Further observations, however, indicate that the lunette originally showed full figures (Fig. 23/11).<sup>793</sup> The bottom edge of 55.175 has been cut, and the bottom plank in its support is only about half as wide now (20 cm) as the middle one (40 cm) even though it is more likely that originally both had approximately the same width. In addition, an important echo of the original composition may be found in a lunette by Matteo's student Guidoccio Cozzarelli painted for the *Baptism of Christ* altarpiece in San Bernardino in Sinalunga around 1482-83 – that is, contemporarily or very shortly after Matteo's work (Fig. 23/12).<sup>794</sup> Not only are the composition and the figural poses similar, even the scale difference between the central group and the male saints recurs, and angels' hands are also similar, albeit shown in a mirrored position. It is likely, then, that also Cozzarelli's model showed full figures and was cut exactly at the height of the seat of the Virgin, probably a backless stone throne similar to the one in Cozzarelli's work and in that of Pastura (Antonio del Massaro), which also seems to be based on the same prototype (Fig. 23/13).<sup>795</sup>

These comparisons also suggest that in Matteo's lunette the figures were originally positioned on a ground. The difference in proportions between his work and Cozzarelli's

<sup>792</sup> It is important to note that the painted surface of the central panel has not been reduced, as is demonstrated by the ca. 1.5-2 cm wide unpainted margins extending in all directions.

<sup>793</sup> A low segmental-arched lunette was supposed in Pope-Hennessy 1960, Trimpf 1987, I, 136, II, fig. 115, and Riedl and Seidel ed., 1.1 (1985), 222. Trimpf did not exclude that the Esztergom fragment could be cut along the bottom but, as is evinced by her reconstruction sketch, did not draw any conclusions from it. The possibility of the full-figure version was independently proposed by Ludwin Paardekooper as an alternative to the traditional reconstruction (2002, 46, sketch no. 22) and by Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>, esp. 85-86.

<sup>794</sup> Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, inv. 41.45, 94 x 188 cm, with frame 118 x 203.5 cm (Cf. Coor 1962; Paardekooper 1993, esp. pp. 55-56). For the date of Cozzarelli's lunette, cf. Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>, esp. p. 92 n. 71, with previous bibl.

<sup>795</sup> This composition is possibly based on, or transmitted by, a lost work by Perugino or his circle. Another interesting precedent with a sacred central group flanked by two kneeling saints is Fra' Angelico fresco over the portal of San Domenico in Cortona (ca. 1438-40), of which the sinopia and a very damaged pictorial surface survive (cf. Pope-Hennessy 1974, 197, pl. 36 (fresco) and fig. 12 (sinopia)). Matteo himself repeated this composition in the lunette of the Altar of the Innocents painted in 1491 for the church of Santa Maria dei Servi in Siena (Trimpf 1987, 219-21; Buricchi 1998, 73-74, fig. 42), except that in this work the kneeling figures are doubled (commissioners and patron saints), and it is interesting to note that even the last known work of Matteo, the Tancredi lunette (San Domenico, Siena), is realized with similar compositional elements: in the place of the Virgin there is the Man of Sorrows flanked by two angels and two kneeling saints, and the stone throne has been transformed into his tomb (Trimpf 1987, 215-17; Alessandro Angelini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 476-77; Buricchi 1998, 78-79). In Siena, sculptural decoration of lunettes (cf. the now-destroyed decoration over the central exterior door of the Cathedral, showing two kneeling figures presented to the standing Virgin by two angels, repr. Riedl and Seidel ed. 3.1.2 (1999), figs. 6, 9) or in tomb monuments (relief in the Petroni chapel-lunette by Agnolo di Ventura, showing two genuflect saints turning towards the enthroned Madonna and Child, 1336, S. Francesco, Siena, cloister, repr. Colucci 2003, fig. 263) could also inspire this type of composition.

semicircular lunette imply, furthermore, that in the first the Virgin is seated lower, she turns slightly to the right and her knees are positioned higher up. The destroyed part of the composition can thus be calculated only in fourth of the total original height of the lunette. In the final form of the reconstruction, the lunette is still defined by a segmental arch, but not as low as formerly believed. Its width comes to about 266 cm; that is, it surpasses the central panel by 17 cm on every side, which is compatible with the formal conventions of Sieneese altarpieces of the *secondo quattrocento* (Fig. 23/14).

The Esztergom *Virgin and Child with Two Angels* is one of the most subtle and elegant achievements of Matteo di Giovanni's late mature period. Compared to the artists' works from the 1470s, the features of the Virgin and the angels are rendered with less *chiaroscuro*. The draperies are arranged in closely set, crisp folds; little attention is paid to cast shadows or spatial depth; the painter's ambition turns instead toward a highly refined, decorative rendering. Few of Matteo's Madonnas are so aristocratically pallid and fragile. In the pale, lean faces, narrow eyes, and thin, bloodless lips, the influence of the Virgin-figures brought into fashion by Neroccio and Benvenuto di Giovanni in the 1470s is perceptible.<sup>796</sup> This new female beauty ideal first appears in Matteo's works in the so-called *Percenna Madonna* (1470s, Museo d'Arte Sacra della Val d'Arbia, Buonconvento), and in the *Virgin and Child with the Sts. John the Baptist and Jerome* from the Sieneese church of San Sebastiano in Vallepiatta (ca. 1480; Uffizi, Florence, inv. 3949), and in the Madonna no. 238 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Siena (Fig. 24/7), to which CM 55.175 is most closely comparable.<sup>797</sup> The supremely tranquil, heavenly sphere inhabited by these figures of ethereal beauty stands in intentional contrast with the central scene below: it underscores the drama of the gruesome massacre, which is characterized by a more animated composition, less finely rendered figures, and a more vivacious chromatic range.

#### References:

Della Valle 1782-86, vol. 3 (1786), 51; Romagnoli *ante* 1835 (1976), 660; Gerevich 1928, 225, repr. p. 226 (Matteo di Giovanni) [all subsequent critics cite the work as by Matteo di Giovanni]; Benesch 1929, 70 (it is unclear whether this reference is to CM. 55.175 or 55.176); Gerevich 1930, 95, repr. p. 96.; Lepold 1930, 12, cat. 32, repr.; *Exhibition of Italian Art...* 1930, 396, cat. 921; *Catalogue of a Collection of Pictures...* 1930-31, no. 66 (the *St. Augustine* in London belongs to the Madonna in Esztergom); Balniel and Clark 1931, I., 69, no. 199 (51 x 76 cm, "A Painting of a Holy Bishop in the Collection of Lord Allendale seems originally to have formed the left-hand part of an altar-piece of which this picture was the centre [without repr. of the Bishop]); Berenson 1932, 351 (fragment); Berti Toesca 1932, 947,

<sup>796</sup> Noted also by Gertrude Coor (1961, 133).

<sup>797</sup> For the Madonna no. 238 in Siena, cf. Brandi 1933, 205; Trimpi 1987, 185-86 (around 1477-1482), Torriti 1990, 260-261, fig. 332 (1485-90); Buricchi 1998, 62, no. 23, fig. 35 (around 1479).

repr. p. 944; Gengaro 1934, 180 (catalogued under “opere variamente attribuite a Matteo di Giovanni”, fragment); Delogu 1936, 184, repr. p. 174; Berenson 1936, 302 (fragment); Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 330-332, fig. 183 on p. 330 (close to the altarpiece of the Madonna delle Nevi from 1477); Gerevich ed. 1948, 79, fig. 91; Galetti and Camesasca 1950, II, 1622 (1951, II, 1622); Mojzer 1955, 8; Pope-Hennessy 1960, 63-67; Coor 1961, 123 (also n. 40), Plate 133; Mojzer 1964, 4, 7 n. 12; Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi, 1964, 60-62, no. 45, fig. 45; Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1967, 54, no. 17, repr. (1482, the predella pieces are in London, Chicago, Florence, one is lost); Berenson 1968, I, 258, II, figs. 815-17 (reproduction of the three lunette fragments together, “14(82?)”); Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, no. 23-24; Mucsi 1973, 16, no. 31, fig. 31 (detail); Mucsi 1975, 42, no. 204; *Early Italian Paintings...* 1983, 63-64, cat. 41 (accepts Pope Hennessy’s reconstruction of the S. Agostino altarpiece from 1960); Tátrai 1983<sup>1</sup>, 34-35, with an erroneously repr. of inv. 55.176 (1482); Monika Butzek, in Riedl and Seidel ed., 1.1 (1985), 222; Trimpi 1987, I, 136-137, 154, 157, 210; II, fig. 112; De Marchi 1987, 93 (remarks on the lack of reconstruction of the altarpiece in the *Die Kirchen von Siena*); Cséfalvay 1989, 108, fig. 7 (reconstruction of the Ipolyi collection); Mucsi 1990, 11, no. 28, fig. 28 (1482); Vilmos Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 238-239, no. 106, Pl. 106; Lloyd 1993, 157 n. 9; Kontsek 1998, 33-34, colour repr. 37 (1482); Silberger 1999, 273-299, esp. 276 (iconological analysis of altarpiece); Kontsek 2002, 20 [the work was not present at the exhibition]; Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 46, no. 22; Sallay 2003<sup>2</sup>, 81-93 (reconstruction of altarpiece); Sallay 2006, 157-163; Schmidt 2006, 710 (review of 2006 exhibition in Siena); Sallay 2008, 8, 16.

## 24.

### Matteo di Giovanni

*Virgin and Child with Two Angels*

#### Fig. 24/1

ca. 1485-95

tempera and gold on poplar wood

panel: 64.4 x 46.2 cm; painted surface: 56.6 x 38 cm; thickness: 1.2-1.6 cm

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.176.

#### Provenance:

Canon Raffaele Bertinelli, Rome, no. 40 (as Matteo da Siena);<sup>798</sup> purchased 1878 by János Simor for his private collection, from where it passed to the Christian Museum.

#### Technical notes:

The support consists of a single board with a vertical grain (Fig. 24/2). It has been thinned and reinforced on the reverse by a four, approximately 1.5 cm thick and 5-5.7 cm wide wood strips along all four sides. The application of these wood strips postdates the acquisition in 1878, as their sides are not covered by the ochre-coloured protective layer found on the side of the main panel. The opened worm channels have been filled in the reverse, which was then impregnated with oil(?) for protection. The top and vertical sides of the original support is covered by an ochre-coloured protective layer over gesso which is found on many paintings from the Bertinelli collection (on the bottom, only traces of the gesso remain). Since the rectangular reinforcement does not have this layer on its sides, it probably postdates the acquisition of the work in the Museum.

The original engaged frame has been removed and ca. 3.7 cm wide unpainted wood strips extend beyond the painter surface on all sides. Small fragments of the wood of the engaged frame survive embedded in glue on the top and left unpainted strips of wood. A *barbe* is visible on all four sides of the paint surface.

The paint surface is somewhat abraded and a prominent craquelure has developed especially in the flesh areas. The gold ground is slightly worn. The outlines of the figures have been incised into the gesso prior to painting. The Child's halo and the border of the Virgin's dress around her neck are decorated in red glaze over the gold. The hem of the Virgin's dress along the neck and the hand is decorated by parallel diagonal incisions in the gold. Smaller damages have occurred in the hair of the Virgin above the forehead, in patches on her red dress, to the right of and under the left eye of the Child, and in his shoulder. A large knot in the wood where the Virgin's right hand and the Child's left join has caused the surface to crack in radiating directions.

The painting is enclosed in a nineteenth-century carved and gilt frame.

The work was restored in the Christian Museum at an unknown date after its purchase in 1878 and by Dezső Varga in 2001. During the restoration of 2001, dirt and the strongly darkened varnish have been removed. The lower, transparent layer of veil on the Virgin's

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<sup>798</sup> In the list of Overbeck and Minardi, no. 40 as "*Maria SS. col Bambino e 2 angeli, Matteo di Siena*". In the 1878 inventory taken after Raffaele Bertinelli's death: "*23. Vergine col Bambino con intorno due angeli, maniera di Matteo da Siena, 56x28 [dimensions:], L 160 [estimated value:], restauato in alcune parti.*" There is no doubt that this entry refers to the present picture, even if the compiler of the inventory erroneously indicated the width of the picture as 28 cm instead 38 cm.

forehead (cf. Fig. 23/3) was claimed to be a later addition and removed.<sup>799</sup> The flesh areas have been extensively retouched. A ca. 2 x 2.5 cm area below the Child's left foot along the bottom edge was left uncleaned for the sake of documentation.

#### Documentation:

On reverse of support: "40" (black print on white label, corresponding to the number of the painting in the Bertinelli collection); "Nr. 40. *Matteo da Siena. Madonna s két angyal*" (in ink on white label, probably written by Maszlaghy in 1878); "Az Esztergomi Hercegprímási Képtár tulajdona. Leltári szám: 74" (printed on white label, inv. no. added in hand, probably written by Maszlaghy in 1878 or shortly after); "55.176" (in black ink); "KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM +" (round stamp on white label, twice); "55.176" (in ink written over the round stamp); "ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM" (stamped); "55.176" (in ballpoint pen).

On reverse of modern frame: "KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM +" (round stamp); "ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM" (stamped, three times); "55.176" (in ink); "M. 64 x 46 cm" (in pencil, twice); "40" (in pencil, three times along the bottom margin); "11" (in black felt pen, 21<sup>st</sup> c., related to the location of the work in the exhibition).<sup>800</sup>

To judge from where the angels must stand, the Virgin is seated on an armless throne or stool invisible to the viewer. She turns gently toward the animated child whose position in space is vaguely determined. He is not sitting on the Virgin's knee; it rather appears as if he were pushing himself off with his left leg and kicking forward with his right. A comparison with a somewhat earlier (ca. 1480-85) version of the composition (Staatliches Museum, Schwerin, inv. G 567; painted surface: 58 x 38 cm) reveals that this awkward posture is the result of an adaptation from the earlier work, where the Child is firmly placed on the mother's left knee (Fig. 24/4).<sup>801</sup> Many other motifs were taken over from the Schwerin composition or a common prototype to both, including the string of coral beads and pearls around the Child's neck, which have an apotropaic function but also allude to the rosary,<sup>802</sup> and the mother's touch on the baby's back to help him keep his balance and to hold his shroud, the only garment he wears, in place. The Virgin's ample figure is framed at the bottom by the green-

<sup>799</sup> This aspect of the restoration intervention remains a controversial issue. The removal was not preceded by scientific examination, and although the alleged posterity of this portion of the veil cannot be excluded *a priori*, the presence of the lower parts of the same transparent veil around the Virgin's neck suggests that more caution should have been exercised before its removal.

<sup>800</sup> The old inventory or exhibition number of this work between the two World Wars was 90. It is recorded under this number in some archival sources in the CM and in Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 358.

<sup>801</sup> For the Madonna in Schwerin, which is very little known to Sieneese studies and, as far as I know, not yet related to the Esztergom version, see Regina Erbenraut, in Berswordt-Wallrabe ed. n.d [1999], 44-45, with colour repr. and previous bibl.(reporting that the attribution and a dating to ca. 1480 were confirmed by Bruno Santi in a written communication of Sept. 14, 1999).

<sup>802</sup> This type of necklace composed of pearls and coral beads recurs in other late works of the painter, as in the Madonna inv. 280 in the PNS, recently discussed by Laura Bonelli (in Alessi and Bagnoli ed. 2006, 54-55).

lined dark blue cloak which ends in a decorative but stiff bundle bending over the crook of her right arm – a formula that frequently occurs in the artist’s earlier production.<sup>803</sup>

An intimate atmosphere characterizes the work; the depicted figures are completely unaware of the viewer’s presence. Whereas in most of Matteo’s Madonnas the mother and the child look directly at the beholder, here the infant turns communicatively to his mother as if to implore for her caresses and protection. He reaches for his mother’s hand with an affectionate gesture, fondling it with both hands and apparently wishing to draw it closer to himself.

In this intensely human interaction between mother and child, the two angels have a secondary role, in accordance with the well-established formula introduced in devotional works of the Madonna and Child by Sano di Pietro in the middle of the century and followed extensively by the successive generations. The deacon’s stolas worn by the attendant angels enhance the sanctified atmosphere of the scene by alluding to the analogous role of ministrants at the mass.

Although Matteo di Giovanni’s autography has been occasionally doubted – Mojzer (1964) and Berenson (1968) did not exclude that workshop assistants participated in its execution –, the quality of the piece is without doubt in line with the master’s standards.<sup>804</sup> Regarding the date of the work, Erica Trimpi (1983) and Vilmos Tátrai (1993) gave general indications only, considering it, respectively, a mature work or a production from the last third of the fifteenth century. The only scholar to advance a more precise proposal was Miklós Mojzer (1964), who believed it to be a *Spätwerk*, and, more precisely, a work from around 1480 together with the Madonna from S. Eugenia (Museo Diocesano, Siena), which he considered to be very close to our piece.<sup>805</sup> In my view, the Esztergom Madonna is later than ca. 1480, a period when Matteo di Giovanni was at the peak of his full maturity and produced a series of outstanding masterpieces. Stylistic evidence points instead to the latest phase of the artist, covering the last decade of his life.

The dated or datable works from this period include three book covers from 1487, 1488, 1489, the altarpiece of the *Massacre of the Innocents* in the church of Santa Maria dei Servi in Siena from 1491, the *Judith* (Indiana University Museum, Bloomington, inv. L62.163) which formed part of the noted cycle of heroes and heroines painted around 1493-94 (cf. Cat. 30),

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<sup>803</sup> See the “*Percenna Madonna*” (Museo d’Arte Sacra della Val d’Arbia, Buonconvento), the *Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels* (PNS, inv. 400) or the *Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels* (PNS, inv. 280).

<sup>804</sup> A remark by Arduino Colasanti (1910<sup>1</sup>, 408; 1910<sup>2</sup>, iii.) reporting that a Madonna by Matteo was “completely altered by repainting” was erroneously related to this painting (Trimpi 1987, I, 138). Colasanti’s judgment in fact refers to a Madonna by Pesellino’s follower (CM, inv. 55.189).

<sup>805</sup> For recent literature on the Madonna from S. Eugenia, see Gabriele Fattorini, in Alessi and Bagnoli ed. 2006, 50-53, with a proposal for dating to ca. 1477-82.

the lunette from the Tancredi altarpiece in San Domenico in Siena, which the artist must have finished just before his death in 1495, and, most importantly, the monumental altarpiece created for the high altar of the Santa Maria dei Servi in Sansepolcro, commissioned to the artist in 1487 but, as recent studies revealed, still under way in 1490 and never fully completed, so the dating of its existing parts remains uncertain.<sup>806</sup> These works are characterized by dulled colour scheme; heavier, fuller figures; calm, languid faces; rounded heads, a slack facial expression, and a certain absent-minded mood. The artist still took great care in working out the details of the faces, hairs, and the veil but the modelling of the draperies and bodies is much less deftly executed. A typical feature of the late Madonnas is the livelier representation of the Christ Child.

In CM 55.176, the resplendent, richly tooled golden ground is an archaism utilized perhaps at the commissioners' request, since the artist often replaced the conventional gold ground with a landscape or natural, cloud-speckled sky already from the 1470s on.<sup>807</sup> The Virgin in CM 55.176 compares well to especially the Virgin Annunciate in a tondo in the right lateral of the Sansepolcro altarpiece (Fig. 24/6)<sup>808</sup> and to some female figures in the 1491 version of the *Massacre of the Innocents* (Santa Maria de' Servi, Siena). The closes analogues for the Child, too are found in these two pieces (Fig. 24/8) and he is also comparable to the Child in the Gabella cover from 1489 (London 2007, 88-91). Among the Matteo's late but undated devotional Madonnas, CM 55.176 is also close in style to the *Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist, Jerome, and Two Angels* (Private coll.),<sup>809</sup> the *Virgin and Child with the Archangel Raphael, Tobias, St. Sebastian and Three Innocents* (formerly in the Palazzo Piccolomini, Pienza; stolen in the late 1970s).<sup>810</sup>

### References:

Maszlaghy 1878, 13, no. 74 ("Giovanni Matteo da Siena"); Maszlaghy 1891, no. 74 ("Giovanni Matteo da Siena"); Colasanti 1910<sup>1</sup>, 408 (well conserved and attributable to Matteo di Giovanni's period immediately following 1470, for the close relationship with the Madonna in the church of Percena near Buonconvento and with that of the Contrada della Selva [now Uffizi, Florence]); Colasanti 1910<sup>2</sup>, iii (id.); Benesch 1929, 70 (Matteo di Giovanni; it is unclear whether this reference is to CM. 55.175 or 55.176) Berti Toesca 1932, 947 (Matteo di Giovanni); Delogu 1936, 184 (Matteo di Giovanni); Van Marle 1923-38, XVI

<sup>806</sup> See Banker 2002; Franklin 2002, esp. pp. 132-33.

<sup>807</sup> Some examples: *Madonna di Percenna*, 1470s (Museo d'Arte Sacra della Val d'Arbia, Buonconvento); *Madonna and Child with Saints*, ca. 1480 (Uffizi, no. 1890. n. 2949); *Madonna and Child*, early 1480s (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, no. 283), *Madonna and Child with the Archangel Raphael, Tobias, St. Sebastian and Three Innocents*, 1490s (formerly in the Palazzo Piccolomini, Pienza).

<sup>808</sup> Repr. in Franklin 2002, Pl. LIII, fig. 3.

<sup>809</sup> Olcott 1904, fig. on p. 66; Trimpi 229-231 (ca. 1490, with probably some shop intervention). Not mentioned by Buricchi 1998.

<sup>810</sup> Trimpi 1987, 172 (c. 1490-95).

(1937), 358 (Matteo di Giovanni); Lepold and Lippay, 55; Gerevich ed. 1948, 79 (Matteo di Giovanni); Mojzer 1964, 4-5, 7 n. 13 (late work, ca. 1480); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 62, no. 46 (Matteo di Giovanni, late work); Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1967, 56, no. 18, repr. (Matteo di Giovanni, late work); Berenson 1968, I, 258 (workshop of Matteo di Giovanni); Mucsi 1975, 42, no. 203 (Matteo di Giovanni, late work); Tátrai 1983<sup>1</sup>, colour repr. on p. 34 (erroneously accompanying text for CM 55.175); Trimpi 1987, I, 138, II, fig. 134 (Matteo di Giovanni, repainted, mature work); Vilmos Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 233, no. 107, Fig. 107 (in greater part by Matteo di Giovanni, last third of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Sallay 2008, 8, 16 (Matteo di Giovanni, ca. 1485-95, related to the earlier version in Schwerin).

## 25.

### Matteo di Giovanni

*Two Angels*<sup>811</sup>

#### Fig. 25/1

ca. 1480 (?)

tempera and gold on poplar wood

panel: 24.6 x 35 cm, thickness: ca. 0.3-0.8 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 19.

#### Provenance:

Acquired by Johann Anton Ramboux before 26 June, 1838;<sup>812</sup> J. A. Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 144 (as Matteo di Giovanni); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 144 (as Matteo di Giovanni); Arnold Ipolyi Coll., Pest, 1867-1872; Ipolyi's gift to the National Picture Gallery in 1872, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts in 1906.

#### Exhibited:

Budapesti Történelmi Múzeum (Budapest History Museum), Budapest (1998): *Egy Nagyváros születése: Pest, Buda, Óbuda az egyesítés idején* (Birth of a Metropolis: Pest, Buda and Óbuda at the time of their unification), cat. 3.1.29.

#### Technical notes:

The support consists of a single piece of wood that has been thinned to about 0.3-0.7 cm (Fig. 25/2). It has a horizontal grain and is strongly warped. A triangular section in the upper right corner (as viewed from the back) is a later addition with a complete reconstruction of the pictorial surface. The wood is somewhat damaged by woodworms. There are vertical saw marks on the reverse.

The painted surface is lightly abraded but is in a good condition. The paint film is evenly covered by a network of craquelure. Damages occurred all around the edges, especially at the bottom. Indented lines running parallel the edges seem to be damages caused by the tight application of a modern frame. The paint film is loose and flaking in the upper right corner. There are losses along the edges, especially at the bottom. The bottom part of the halo of the right angel is repaired on both sides of the head.

Just below the upper right corner of the modern triangular addition two small gilt dots on red bole are discernible along the edge of the original part, and further gilding (possibly of more recent origin) shows through above these dots at the juncture of the original panel and the added triangle (Fig. 25/3). It is not possible to determine whether the oblique edge of the original panel is original (the old and the new surfaces are carefully integrated; no trace of a *barbe*, if there had been one, is discernible in the original part) or is the result of later cutting down. The haloes are tooled over gold leaf. The halo of the right angel is decorated with 2 mm-wide punched dots and a row of arches executed in free hand from 0,5-0,7 mm wide single punched dots, enclosing an area filled with rays. The halo of the left angel is decorated

<sup>811</sup> This entry is a substantially revised version of my article, cf. Sallay 2003<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>812</sup> The work can be identified in Ramboux's exportation request list handed in to the Director of the *Real Galleria* on 26 June, 1838 (published by Merzenich 1995, 310, no. 37): "*due teste di angeli / tav(ola) / - [braccio]. 8 [soldi]. 6 [denari] / - [braccio]. 12 [soldi]. - [denaro]*", that is, ca. 23.4 x 35 cm.

along the edges with the same 2 mm-wide punched dots and a ca. 2 mm diam. (diagonally measured) square 9-prong tool (Fig. 25/4). The halos are slightly abraded in parts.

The outlines of the heads are incised into the gold of the haloes but the painter departed from the original design in the course of the execution and painted the heads somewhat smaller. The change is especially well visible at the back of the head of the left angel.

The painting is enclosed in a modern frame.

### Documentation:

On reverse: “Matteo da | Siena” (in ink); “J.A.Ramboux” (in red wax seal); “199” (in pencil); “SZÉPMŰVÉSZETI MÚZEUM. Cozzarelli. Két arkangyal feje. J.A.Ramboux gyűjteményéből. Ltsz.: 19. 19” (printed, typed, and handwritten on white label)

On modern frame: “K 999” (in blue ink on white label, inv. no. of the frame); “Szépművészeti Múzeum. Lelt. sz. 342(0?)” (printed white label, number handwritten in ink, last digit damaged, perhaps “0” or “6”); “19” (in green pen on white label).

The piece, a fragment of a larger work, shows two haloed angels at bust length in front of a natural sky, with some vegetation behind the left angel. The angels have shoulder-length, soft fair hair, red wings, and vividly coloured clothes.<sup>813</sup> The one on the right turns towards his companion who fixes his gaze on something to the right of the fragment. Soft light coming from the left pervades the scene.

The subject matter was identified in earlier literature as two angels, two archangels, and, hypothetically, as Tobias with the Archangel Raphael.<sup>814</sup> Since both figures are winged, the latter definition is untenable. Instead, as I have proposed earlier (2003<sup>1</sup>), the fragment must have been cut from a Baptism of Christ-scene, since angels turn towards each other in an open air scene precisely this way in many fourteenth and fifteenth Italian depictions of this subject only (Fig. 25/7).<sup>815</sup> Two angels appear in a very similar position in a *Baptism of Christ*

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<sup>813</sup> The angel on the right has a flame over his head. This motif seems to refer to the flame of the Holy Spirit (Keith Christiansen, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1998, 92 [It. ed. 106]) but I have found no satisfactory explanation why only one of angels is distinguished with it. The flame may mark a certain rank among the angels, as it often appears on the heads of archangels (e.g. Pietro di Giovanni’s *Archangel Michael*, Lehman Coll., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, probably 1430s; Giovanni di Paolo’s *Archangel Gabriel*, 1450s, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart; Matteo di Giovanni’s *Archangel Michael*, 1474, Museo d’Arte Sacra, Asciano) but in other cases it seems to mark no special distinction (Giovanni di Paolo’s *Madonna and Child held by Two Angels*, Museo Civico e Diocesano d’Arte Sacra, Montalcino; Sassetta’s *Assumption of the Virgin*, formerly Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin; Matteo di Giovanni’s *Assumption of the Virgin*, Sta. Maria dei Servi, Sansepolcro). In a *Baptism of Christ*-composition, flames appear on the head of most angels in Giovanni di Paolo’s work from the 1450s (The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, WA1913.2).

<sup>814</sup> The latter idea was suggested by Pigler 1954, 129; Pigler 1967, 160; and Tátrai ed. 1991, 31. Pigler’s suggestion is not clear, since he titled the work as “*Köpfe zweier Erzengel*,” while in the text he laconically describes the subject as probably a fragment from the journey of the young Tobias.

<sup>815</sup> Other examples include Lorenzo Ghiberti’s influential relief on the baptismal font in the Sieneese Baptistery, Verrocchio’s and the young Leonardo’s famous work in the Uffizi, Agnolo Gaddi and his workshop (Santa Croce, Florence, Cappella Castellani), Domenico Ghirlandaio’s fresco (Santa Maria Novella, Florence), Cosimo Rosselli’s predella scene (Centro per i Studi sul Rinascimento, Florence), Lorenzo di Credi’s panel (San Domenico, Fiesole), etc. The same arrangement is found, in reverse, in the Baptism in Jacopino di Francesco’s fresco (S. Anastasia, Verona), in a fourteenth-century Sieneese miniature (Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Siena, Corale 125, fol. 48v), in Domenico Ghirlandaio’s fresco (Sant’Andrea a Brozzi, San Donnino), Pietro Orioli’s

painted by Matteo's student and closest follower, Guidoccio Cozzarelli shortly before 1483 (Fig. 25/10).<sup>816</sup> Besides the outdoor setting and the grouping of the angels, a further element supports this interpretation: the claret drapery resting on the shoulder of the right angel. This must be the "purple robe" of Christ held by the *angeli ministrantes* (Matthew 4, 11; Mark 1, 13), seen in many other Baptism scenes as well. The angel standing closest to the Savior holds the purple robe on his right shoulder in the same way in Cozzarelli's cited altarpiece. Perhaps the white cloth on the shoulder of the left angel in MFA 19 also belongs to Christ's vestments.

The central fragment of the same composition can be identified (cf. Sallay 2003<sup>1</sup>) with the *Baptism of Christ* (112 by 64 cm) in the Pushkin Museum, Moscow (Fig. 25/6),<sup>817</sup> which too, appears to be a fragment, since the compositional tradition in Italian Quattrocento painting require Christ and John the Baptist standing in a wider landscape, with two or more attendant angels.<sup>818</sup> The common origin of the Budapest and Moscow fragments is supported by a series of indications. Although their attribution has been a subject of debate, it seems certain that they are by the same hand. They complement each other iconographically, they match in scale, and are both lit from the left. Most importantly, both fragments were originally painted on wood with a horizontal grain. Although the Moscow piece has now been transferred to canvas, the marks caused by damage along the juncture of the planks survive imprinted in the painted surface and indicate that the grain of its original wooden support was horizontal.<sup>819</sup>

This latter feature merits further attention, since large scale panels with a horizontal grain were used in Quattrocento Siennese painting almost exclusively for lunettes crowning a *tavola quadrata*.<sup>820</sup> Lunettes were used in Siennese altarpiece-structures from the late 1450s to the early sixteenth century; their size usually ranged from about 60 to 140 cm in height and from 170 to 280 cm in width. Of the more than two dozen examples that survive, only one is painted on vertical, not horizontal, planks.<sup>821</sup> The approximately half life-size scale of the

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panel (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), among other examples. On the subject of the Baptism of Christ, see esp. Aronberg Lavin 1981.

<sup>816</sup> On this altarpiece, see esp. Paardekooper 1993, esp. p. 53.

<sup>817</sup> Inv. 140, tempera and gold on canvas (transferred from wood). The halos, the cross, the Baptist's dish, and the rays emanating from the Dove are gilt. The work was acquired in Italy between 1880 and 1898 by Dmitry Khomyakov, who presented it to the Rumyantzev Museum in Moscow in 1901, from there it came to its present location in 1924. Cf. Markova 2002, 147-149, with previous bibl.

<sup>818</sup> Viktoria Markova (2002, 147-148) too hypothesized that the Moscow piece is cut on all sides and its composition may have originally included angels.

<sup>819</sup> Markova 2002, 147-148. The dark line crossing at the height of the chest of the figures is due to this damage. An inscription on the back of the present support records the transfer, carried out in 1889 by A. Sidorov.

<sup>820</sup> For the main register of Siennese altarpieces in the second half of the fifteenth century, vertical planks were used regardless of the format of the altarpiece.

<sup>821</sup> This is Guidoccio Cozzarelli's lunette in Princeton, cf. Fig. 23/12.

Moscow and Budapest fragments is consistent with the lunette-size, but would be too small for the main register of an altarpiece. The composition suggests that originally the Budapest-Moscow *Baptism of Christ* was probably not much higher than its preserved central section now in Moscow.

In addition, both fragments have some physical traits that underpin the hypothesis that were cut from a lunette. In MFA 19, the triangular piece of wood with a reconstructed pictorial surface added in the upper left corner may well be a late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century addition *ex novo*, aimed at creating a rectangular “picture” for the art market, and not a replacement of an original part that had been removed. The halo of the left angel seems compositionally aligned to this oblique edge and the two gilt spots that follow the diagonal edge may be remnants of gold leaf originating from a nearby engaged frame underlying the tempera film. The fragment, in short, may well be a piece from the upper left-hand section of a lunette.<sup>822</sup>

In the Moscow fragment, as well, damage and repairs seem to be present in the uppermost areas. A curvilinear irregularity is perceptible extending the entire width of the preserved section, best discernible in the upper right corner. The curve seems to reach its apex above the Dove of the Holy Spirit and to descend again slightly in the upper left corner, just above the dove’s right wing. Clearly, it suggests a lunette as the original form. The precise nature and extent of this damage has yet to be determined by a restorer’s examination, but the appearance of the present state suggests that, in this case also, the rectangular format may be the result of later additions at the top.<sup>823</sup>

In the reconstruction proposed here, Christ stands in the axis of the composition, as the curve and the position of the Dove indicate,<sup>824</sup> and the angels stand on the left (their kneeling

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<sup>822</sup> Although the present straight edge of the missing corner of the Budapest panel could, theoretically, suggest not a curved lunette-shape but a pediment form, this is unlikely, not only because of the form suggested by the Moscow fragment (see below). Large-scale pediments are extremely rare in Sienese painting of the period (cf. Sano di Pietro’s and one of Matteo di Giovanni’s altarpieces in the Pienza Cathedral, ca. 1460-62) and in any case it was normal practice to plane down the slight curve of a lunette fragment before adding a corner. For a similar completion of a lunette fragment, see Matteo di Giovanni’s *St. Francis of Assisi* in the Saibene Collection in Milan (Figs. 23/9-10).

<sup>823</sup> The addition in the Moscow *Baptism* may have once been similar to the one visible in Matteo di Giovanni’s lunette fragment in Esztergom (Figs. 23/1-2).

<sup>824</sup> It is the position of the Dove of the Holy Spirit that determines the axis of the composition. A comparison with other fifteenth- and sixteenth-century representations of this subject demonstrates that Christ does not necessarily stand in the centre; the two protagonists may also stand symmetrically off-centre on both sides of the axis (cf. Domenico Ghirlandaio, fresco, Sant’Andrea a Brozzi, San Donnino; works by Perugino and his workshop: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; fresco in the Chiesa della Nunziatella, Foligno; Duomo, Città della Pieve; Galleria Nazionale dell’Umbria, Perugia; Signorelli’s works: Pinacoteca Comunale, Città di Castello; San Medardo, Arcevia; Palazzone, Cortona; etc.). In these cases, however, it is the Dove (or God the Father) that appears above Jesus and St. John in the middle. In the Moscow fragment, therefore, the Dove’s position above the Saviour indicates by itself, regardless of the curve, that Christ originally stood at the axis of the composition.

being excluded by the sky that extends behind them) (Fig. 25/8).<sup>825</sup> It is perhaps not by chance, either, that the bottom of the Budapest piece more or less falls in line with the joint between the planks. The tiny piece of foliage showing through behind the left angel suggests the one-time presence of close-up landscape-elements framing the composition. The presence of the arch would also mean that the composition is complete at the top. In the absence of available intact sections defining the curve of the lunette or the bottom line of the composition, it is not possible to determine the original dimensions of the lunette. What seems certain is that it measured at least 250 cm in width (and could have been much wider), and was probably about 115 to 120 cm high.

Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, both the Budapest and Moscow fragments were unanimously ascribed to Guidoccio Cozzarelli; with some doubt expressed by Viktoria Markova only, who published the Moscow piece in a series of catalogues as Guidoccio Cozzarelli (?). The attribution to Cozzarelli was first suggested by Berenson in 1909 for MFA 19; and by Muratov in 1910<sup>826</sup> for the Moscow *Baptism*. In 2004, Boskovits pointed out the higher quality of the Moscow *Baptism* and very cautiously suggested that Matteo di Giovanni's disciple, the young Pietro di Francesco Orioli could have painted it around 1480.<sup>827</sup> Orioli's artistic activity has been studied by Alessandro Angelini,<sup>828</sup> who disagreed both with the earlier proposals to Cozzarelli and with Boskovits' proposal (verbal communication to the present author) and ascribed both fragments to Matteo di Giovanni himself, dating them around 1480 (2006).

Contrary to my earlier opinion (2003<sup>1</sup>), I think Angelini is closest to the truth regarding the question of attribution.<sup>829</sup> Both the attribution to Matteo di Giovanni and the date around 1480 seem may be accepted as a work hypothesis, although MFA 19 does not come up to Matteo's usual standards in every aspect. Albeit the left angel is portrayed with great immediacy and verosimilarity (Fig. 25/5 a), in the right angel the eyes are rather carelessly

<sup>825</sup> I thank Ludwin Paardekooper for calling my attention to the fact that the Moscow piece seems to have been cut from the original panel slightly obliquely. The reason for this is unknown but the horizon line and the verticals of the towers of the cityscape in the background leave no doubt that this observation is correct.

<sup>826</sup> Muratov 1910. The attribution was accepted by Tancred Borenius (Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1903-1915 V (1914), 186 n. 1.)

<sup>827</sup> In Boskovits, Bliznikov, and Maffei 2004, 115. This review of Viktoria Markova's catalogue appeared exactly contemporarily with Sallay 2003<sup>1</sup>, so Boskovits could not yet reflect on my association of MFA 19 with the Moscow fragment and on the question of the attribution of MFA 19.

<sup>828</sup> Angelini 1982<sup>1</sup>, 1982<sup>2</sup>, 2002;

<sup>829</sup> On the problem of distinguishing Matteo's and Cozzarelli's hands, see Bernard Berenson, "Guidoccio Cozzarelli and Matteo di Giovanni", in Berenson 1918, 81-94; Trimpi 1987, 12; Laurence B. Kanter in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 282 (It. ed. 296).

executed and there is no trace of the crisp precision of the solid and volumetrically rendered forms that characterize Matteo's best works (Fig. 25/5 b; cf. Figs. 23/4-6).

In the light of these new considerations, Johann Anton Ramboux's unusually specific (though obviously incorrect) note published in 1862 gains new relevance: "*Theil eines grösseren Gemäldes von Matteo di Giovanni da Siena von 1448*". Ramboux rarely provided such precise information, and in the foreword of the catalogue he notes that his data, when not based on Vasari or other art historians, derive from information he recorded on site. In view of the Ramboux' thorough knowledge of Sieneese painting (in the same note he indicates the years of Matteo's activity as 1470-1494, which excludes that he could really have meant 1448), 1448 must be a typographical error for perhaps 1478, 1484 or 1488 (to remain within the time frame indicated by Ramboux). Whichever of these dates Ramboux meant, its very recording suggests that the altarpiece from which the lunette was removed was dated – and very possibly signed too – and this information came into Ramboux's possession.<sup>830</sup> In any case, Cozzarelli's evident derivations from the Moscow-Budapest lunette in his Orlandini altarpiece completed before 1 September, 1483<sup>831</sup> – the figure of Christ is an exact copy in reverse<sup>832</sup> – (Fig. 25/10) provides a *terminus ante quem* for the former work<sup>833</sup> (unless one supposes a previous, lost work by Matteo, on which both are based, which is not likely).

Depictions of the Baptism of Christ are very rare in large-scale art forms in Sieneese art. On the Budapest-Moscow *Baptism*, two powerful, non-Sieneese models left their impact: Piero della Francesca's *Baptism of Christ* (National Gallery, London) and Verrocchio's and Leonardo's influential work of the same subject (Uffizi, Florence). Already by 1477, Matteo painted a sketchy Baptism-composition on the dalmatic of St. Lawrence in the Cinughi altarpiece, in which these influence are discernible (Fig. 25/9). As is well-known, Matteo knew at first hand his compatriot Piero's *Baptism*, having completed the altarpiece in Borgo Sansepolcro around Piero's central panel.<sup>834</sup> In other features, especially in the figure of the Baptist, the Budapest-Moscow *Baptism* seems to have drawn inspiration from Verrocchio's

<sup>830</sup> There have been very few earlier opinions for the dating of the two fragments. Viktoria Markova (2002, 148) proposed that the Moscow piece dates from after 1486 and is a later version of the central part of the Baptism altarpiece in Sinalunga (which Markova wrongly cites as dating from 1486; this date appears in Cozzarelli's other work in San Bernardino in Sinalunga, the signed and dated Pannilini altarpiece, Fig. 26/9). I have proposed a date between 1475-80 (2003<sup>1</sup>, 42).

<sup>831</sup> When the *Balia* of Siena orders Cozzarelli to hand the altarpiece over to the Franciscans of Sinalunga, Bacci 1939, 221; Paardekooper 1993, 51.

<sup>832</sup> For the relation of Christ's figure to other works by Matteo and Cozzarelli himself, see discussion in Cat. 21.

<sup>833</sup> The fact that Cozzarelli's Orlandini altarpiece must have been influenced by Piero della Francesca's *Baptism* in an indirect way has been noted by several scholars. Cole (1985, 105) expressly suggested that it is based on a lost work by Matteo di Giovanni.

<sup>834</sup> De Marchi 2002<sup>1</sup>.

and Leonardo's work from the early 1470s, which had an immediate echo among their contemporaries.<sup>835</sup> The Sieneese composition reflects the Florentine especially in the position of St. John's cross, steadied by the fingertips, in the banderole which unrolls from behind his fingers, or in the pale red drapery covering his left shoulder and adhering to his shin. The fact that the angels stand in the Budapest-Moscow composition follows not only Piero's *Baptism* but an older Sieneese tradition. Sieneese artists in this respect adhered more closely to earlier compositional traditions in Byzantine and Western art than the Florentines, which had a predilection for kneeling angels.<sup>836</sup>

Behind the large figures placed very close to the pictorial plane in the Moscow Baptism, a panoramic landscape stretches, with roads and waters, a miniature townscape, and a range of mountains on the horizon. Similar solutions are found both in Piero della Francesca's *oeuvre* and in the works of another master whose works Matteo di Giovanni observed with admiration, Antonio Pollaiuolo.<sup>837</sup>

#### References:

Ramboux 1862, 26, no. 144 (Matteo di Giovanni di Siena, "*Theil eines grösseren Gemäldes von Matteo di Giovanni da Siena von 1448* [sic!]); [Ramboux] 1867, 28, no. 144 (Matteo di Giovanni da Siena); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1873, 4, no. 35 (Sieneese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c., "zwei Erz-Engel"); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1876, 6, no. 88 (Sieneese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c., "zwei Erz-Engel"); *Országos Képtár...* 1878, 6, no. 88 (Sieneese school 15<sup>th</sup> c., "two guardian angels"); *Országos Képtár...* 1879, 6, no. 88 (Sieneese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c., "two guardian angels"); Pulszky 1881, 8, no. 37 (Siena, 15<sup>th</sup> c., two angel head fragments, gift of Ipolyi); Pulszky 1888, 3, no. 19 (Sieneese painter, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c., fragment of a larger painting); *Országos Képtár...* 1897, 13 (Sieneese painter, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 141, no. 19 (Sieneese painter, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Térey 1906<sup>1</sup>, 29, no. 61(19) (Sieneese painter, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>, 29, no. 61(19) (Sieneese school, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Berenson 1909, 158 (Cozzarelli); Térey 1913<sup>1</sup>, 296, no. 19 (Sieneese school, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Berenson 1932, 157 (Cozzarelli); Berenson 1936, 136 (Cozzarelli); Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 384 (Cozzarelli); Galetti and Camesasca 1950, I, 733 (Cozzarelli); Pigler 1954, 129-30 (Cozzarelli); Pigler 1967, I, 160 (Cozzarelli); Berenson 1968, 98 (Cozzarelli); Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 31, repr. (Cozzarelli); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 565, no. 148, repr. (Cozzarelli); Katalin F. Dózsa, in *Egy nagyváros születése..* 1998, 272, cat. no. 3.1.29. (Cozzarelli); Sallay 2003<sup>1</sup> (Cozzarelli, ca. 1475-80); Angelini 2006, 22 (Matteo di Giovanni, ca. 1480); Sallay 2008, 8, 9 colour repr., 15 (Angelini's attribution to Matteo di Giovanni seems correct).

<sup>835</sup> Brown 1998, esp. 27 and 136 (with a proposal for the commencement of the work at the end of the 1460s); Natali ed. 1998, 61-133.

<sup>836</sup> For a list of examples, cf. Sallay 2003<sup>1</sup>, 46 n. 34. Important exceptions are Ghiberti's reliefs, one of which was created for the Sieneese baptistery and then copied by many Sieneese masters.

<sup>837</sup> Cf. *St. Michael Archangel* (Museo Bardini, Florence); *Tobias and the Archangel* (Galleria Sabauda, Torino); *Hercules and the Hydra* (Uffizi, Florence); *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* (National Gallery, London). Pollaiuolo's influence on Matteo di Giovanni is notable, for example, in the *Flagellation*-lunette in the Pienza Cathedral, in the *Assumption of the Virgin* in London (Fig. 20/15), and possibly in a small and badly conserved *Hercules and Antaeus* pointed out by Andrea de Marchi (cf. Alessandro Angelini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 144, fig. 2).

## Guidoccio Cozzarelli

(Guidoccio Niccolò di Giovanni di Marco di Nanno di Cozzarello)

(Siena, 1450 – Siena, before 14 May 1517)

Guidoccio Cozzarelli was the son of a carpenter employed by the Opera del Duomo in Siena, and cousin to two artists, the goldsmith Battista and the sculptor, painter, and architect Giacomo Cozzarelli (1453-1515), who is best known as a collaborator of Francesco di Giorgio Martini. Guidoccio was almost certainly trained by Matteo di Giovanni and worked in many media: he executed panel paintings, also with a profane subject matter, frescos, miniatures and other minor works. As most painters, he lived in the *terzo* of Camollia; he married twice (1480?, 1504) and had at least seven children.

Cozzarelli's oeuvre has never been studied systematically. Especially his earliest (ca. 1470-1480) and latest activity (1498-1517) remains almost completely obscure for the lack of certain and dated works. The artist is first documented working for the Ospedale in 1470-71 for minor, now lost works ("*quattro armi et due schale*", "*sei armi*"). In 1473 he executed two figures next to a "Madonna" as well as a lunette fresco showing the *Pietà* over the entrance for the Compagnia di S. Bernardino (lost). His first certain, datable work seems to be the altarpiece in Paganico, formerly dated 1475 (its fragmentary inscription ending in "...XXV is recorded), which reveals a determining influence of Matteo di Giovanni and includes direct borrowings (the figure of St. John the Baptist) from the older master's altarpiece painted for the church of San Pietro Oville in the late 1450s and possibly the early 1460s. In his early period, Cozzarelli painted many devotional Madonnas paintings (in Buonconvento, Atlanta, Baltimore, Amherst) and a full-figure fresco formerly in the Campo of Siena (partial repr. Berenson 1968, II, 824), which despite the evident inexpertise and clumsiness of the painter have a fresh and charming effect.

From 1480 (and not 1484) dates a *Virgin and child with Four Angels* (Palazzo Pubblico, Siena)<sup>838</sup> and from 1482, the large signed panel with the *Enthroned Virgin and Child, Jerome and Blessed Colombini* (PNS, inv. 367). This commission is evidently related to the Gesuati order, outside whose church, San Girolamo in Siena, also a *Lamentation* fresco by Cozzarelli survives. In these works appears a wooden, expressionless character that is typical of many works in the 1480s. Between 1481-83 Guidoccio worked for the Sienese Cathedral: he executed monochrome frescos of prophets in the dome, a few miniatures in the liturgical books (1481-82), and submitted a design for the Lybian Sybil for the pavement (1483). His

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<sup>838</sup> The date 1480, unusual but original, is written in the halo of one of the angels. The date 1484 is painted in a later hand on the corbel that supports the piece.

figures became more monumental in this period, the draperies soft, thick, and heavily falling. From 1484 dates a Gabella cover with the *Presentation of the Virgin* (ASS, Siena). In or shortly before 1483 and in 1486, respectively, Cozzarelli completed two altarpieces for the chapels of the Orlandini and Pannilini families in the church of San Bernardino in Sinalunga (Figs. 25/10; 26/9; the lunette of the Orlandini altarpiece is in Princeton, Fig. 23/12). These pieces, along with a very little studied *Adoration of the Magi* altarpiece in Stockholm (which may have contained in its predella the *Flight into Egypt* formerly in the Placidi coll.) are his masterpieces.

From about 1490 the main influence on Cozzarelli became Pietro Orioli, a fellow student of Matteo di Giovanni, inducing stylistic changes marked by a sentimentality of expression, reduced decoration, softer forms and contours, and a growing interest in luminous effects. Guidoccio's commissions in this decade included an altarpiece painted in 1491 for Pietro d'Antonio di Teio, a merchant of wood from Ancaiano (Fig. 26/11); an poor-quality altarpiece from 1494 (Museo Diocesano di Arte Sacra, Pitigliano), a *Saint Sebastian* painted in 1495 for the German lawyer Balthasar Von Munchausen (PNS, inv. 296), and an undated and now mutilated altarpiece (Pieve di S. Giovanni Battista, Rosia). Among his last certain works are also two series of *cataletti* (bierhead) panels, one dating from 1494 (Società Esecutori Pie Disposizioni, Siena), the other from 1498 (Arciconfraternita della Misericordia, Siena). The product of Cozzarelli's latest, unknown activity may be a series of Madonna paintings, whose attribution is still discussed (Russell 1973). Although no documented work survives, the painter was still active in the 16<sup>th</sup> century: he painted minor works for the solemn funeral of Pandolfo Petrucci in 1512.

According to its inscription, the painter's tombstone in the crypt of the church of the Osservanza was placed there by himself on 23 November 1516 ("M DXVI IX KAL. DEC"). Romagnoli reported that his death occurred in 1517. In fact, on 14 May, 1517, the painter is mentioned as deceased in a marriage document of his son Carlo.<sup>839</sup>

Cozzarelli has often been judged as a mere epigone of Matteo di Giovanni, and sometimes especially harshly dismissed ("fu pittore senza essere artista", Bacci 1939<sup>1</sup>, 225). Many of his works are indeed dull and he was surely not a particularly inventive and talented artist, but some of his works are aesthetically gratifying and his best signed or documented works prove that he was capable of outstanding results. His entire output needs a thorough revision since a very large number of his works have never been the object of critical study,

<sup>839</sup> Carlo is mentioned here as "Carolo olim Guidocci Cozzarelli", cf. ASS, Notarile ante-cos., 836. The document was kindly brought to my attention by Philippa Jackson.

and there are many paintings ascribed to him whose attribution is not resolved. Although it is often claimed that Cozzarelli's best works still pass under Matteo's name, the opposite may be the case: many works ascribed to Cozzarelli could be in fact by Matteo or other students of Matteo.

**Select bibliography:**

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## 26.

### Guidoccio Cozzarelli

*Enthroned Virgin and Child with Sts. Margaret of Antioch, Catherine of Alexandria and Two Angels*

#### Fig. 26/1

between 1486 and 1489

tempera and gold on poplar wood

panel: 177.7 x 158.2 cm (width at pilaster capitals: 165.7 cm); painted surface: 165.8 x 138 cm; thickness: 0.9-1.2 cm (without the modern cradle).

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 43.

#### Provenance:

Acquired from an unidentified church near Sinalunga<sup>840</sup> by Johann Anton Ramboux before 1842<sup>841</sup>; J. A. Ramboux, Cologne until 1866, no. 148 (as “Guidoccio Cozzarelli, 1486”); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 148 (as “Guidoccio Cozzarelli, 1486”); Arnold Ipolyi, Pest, 1867-1872; gift of Arnold Ipolyi in 1872 to the National Picture Gallery, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts in 1906.

#### Exhibited:

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest (1973): *Reneszánsz Művészet Európában, 1460-1560* (Renaissance Art in Europe, 1460-1560), cat. 9.

#### Inscriptions:

At bottom of picture: “CARO(?)·VS · GVIDOCCII · PATERN · OPVS · SACELLO (...?)” (Fig. 26/2)<sup>842</sup>

On 19<sup>th</sup>-century frame at the bottom: “OPVS · GVIDOCCIUS IOAN . . . MCCCCLXXXVI” (Fig. 26/4)

In halo of Virgin: “AVE MARIA GRATIA”

In the painted marble inlay on the circular pedestal, to the right from the central roundel, incised graffiti: “W. TRAVIS”<sup>843</sup>

<sup>840</sup> Cf. Ramboux 1862, 26, no. 148 and [Ramboux] 1867, 28, no. 148: “*Guidoccio Cozzarelli, 1486. Maria auf einem Throne sitzend, mit dem stehenden Christuskinde auf ihrem Schoosse. Ihr zur Seite die heil. Margaretha mit dem Kreuze und dem zu ihren Füßen liegenden Drachen und die heil. Catharina ebenfalls mit dem Marterinstrument zu ihren Füßen. Oben schweben zwei Engel, die ihr eine Krone über das Haupt halten. Altartafel aus einer Kirche bei Asinalunga im Sienesischen mit der Unterschrift: Guidoccius Joan . . . MCCCCLXXXVI. Von Guidoccio Cozzarelli aus der Schule des Matteo. Holz. 5' 5" 6''' h., 4' 10", 6''' b.*”

<sup>841</sup> It is possible to identify the work in Ramboux's exportation request list handed in to the Director of the Real Galleria on 12 May 1842, shortly before Ramboux left Italy (published by Merzenich 1995, 313): “3. *La Madonna col Gesù B(ambino)., coronata da due Angeli, con due Sante Vergine in piede, tavola rotta in quattro pezzi / id. [tavola] / 3 [braccia]. - [soldi]. 6 [denari] / 2 [braccia]. 16 [soldi]. 6 [denari]*” (that is, approximately 176.5 x 164.9 cm).

<sup>842</sup> In “CARO(?)·VS”, the right half of O (?) is damaged and this letter could also read as C or G. Only the upper part of the right arm of V survives but no other reading for this fragment is possible. All the “V”s are very wide in the inscription, so only one letter seems to be lost between the O (?) and the V. In “PATERN”, the right half of R and the left half of N is damaged. The support is damaged and perhaps slightly dislocated between R and N.

<sup>843</sup> I have not been able to trace a traveller of this name (on travellers in general, see the works of Attilio Brilli, esp. Brilli 1986). The date of this graffiti could provide a *terminus post quem* for the disintegration of the altarpiece into fragments, since an incision of this type was likely to be done only on an intact work placed at an accessible height in a public space.

### Technical notes:

The support consists of somewhat irregularly grained, vertical planks positioned with a slight bias from the upper left to the lower right (as viewed from the front). The wood is extensively worm-tunnelled. It has been thinned with a toothed chisel to its present thickness of 0.9-1.2 cm, coated with gypsum, and cradled (Fig. 26/3). The cradle consists of 8 robust pieces of vertical fixed elements made of spruce (thickness: 3.5 cm, width: 9-12 cm) and 10 horizontal sliding elements made of hardwood (thickness: 2.2 cm; width: 4.7-5 cm). It appears to be of German manufacture and it was most likely applied or commissioned by Ramboux after the exportation of the piece to Germany, where it arrived broken into four pieces.<sup>844</sup> Between the cradles there are additional pieces of wood to reinforce the support over cracks. Since the application of the cradle, the support has cracked open in many areas, producing gaps as wide as 2 mm. Some of the cracks appear alongside, and have been caused by, the modern cradle. The dimensions of the support appear to be original on all sides, although it is not entirely certain that the planks below the pilasters belong to the original support. This cannot be verified without removing the cradle.

The work is in a precarious condition. Covered by thick and darkened varnish, the paint film is cracked, rippled, scratched, soiled, and it has become loose in numerous areas. There are three more-or-less vertically running strips whose surface is entirely reconstructed. These must be located where the four fragments of altarpiece were reunited. A ca. 3-4 cm wide, slightly curving, vertical section runs from the inscription at the bottom (from the missing area in the word CARO?.S) through Margaret's body and the right half of her face (including her left eye) all the way up to the feet of the left angel (of which only the heel of the right foot is original); another ca. 1.5-2 cm wide vertical strip starts from the inscription at the bottom (from the damaged area between the letters R and N in the word PATTERN) continuing with a slight left bias upwards through the neck of the dragon and the frieze into the cloak of the Virgin and through the body of the Christ Child (involving his right thumb and passing between his nose and right eye) and ending in the chest of the angel above; and a ca. 6-8 cm wide vertical strip starts from the inscription at the bottom (beginning just after the word SACELLO) and continues through the left lower arm and left shoulder of the Virgin all the way up to the chest and to the right half of the head of the angel on the right. The reconstruction of the composition seems to be mistaken in some parts: Catherine's wheel is clearly broken into pieces (some pieces can be seen on the floor in the foreground and at the right edge), yet the restorer repainted the damaged parts of the wheel as integral (Fig. 26/8, d).

Further large inpainted areas – mostly over lacunae but also partly over original areas – include a large part of the palmette decoration above the dragon's head, a circular area below the central roundel, the Virgin's neck, chin and right cheek, a vertical strip in the left part of the Child's face, an area in the blue background to the left of the Virgin's neck and face; a ca. 2 cm wide vertical section in the middle of Margaret's hand, a vertical area involving all of Margaret's fingers, a section of her book and of her drapery below her fingers, a large area around Margaret's right elbow; a ca. 2 cm wide vertical strip running on the left and parallel to the left brazier; a smaller area in the right half of the upper part of the left brazier, most of the blue background between the right brazier and Catherine's bust; on Margaret's sleeve of her left arms; a small spot on Catherine's chin.

The haloes, the outlines of the Child's head and some outlines of the marble architecture (especially the roundels and some horizontal lines) below the throne of the Virgin have been incised into the ground. Though executed clumsily in free hand, the child's halo appears to be original except for the repaired area over the rupture. Its incised design consists of the usual

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<sup>844</sup> See note 841 above.

cross-motif, with a diamond in the centre of each part of the cross. The haloes of the Virgin and of the two female saints are somewhat abraded. The braziers, the flames, the *all'antica* decoration on the white marble parts of the throne, the capitals, Margaret's cross, the hem and neckline of the Virgin's red dress, the hem of Catherine's red cloak, the fittings and the sides of the pages of Catherine's book have been originally decorated with mordent gilding, now all rather abraded. The decoration in ochre paint along the hem of the female saints' cloaks appears to be original. *Pentimenti* are perceptible with the naked eye in Catherine's feet, especially in the right one, which the painter originally placed slightly higher up. Technical examination suggests that the inscription at the bottom is original and executed in charcoal. It has been repaired in places but without altering the letters. The lacuna after the word SACELLO is 7.5 cm wide (for comparison, the letter L is 1 cm wide). There is finely woven textile insert for repair in the area over the book held by St. Margaret.

Examination executed with a Mintron IR sensitive CCD chip camera (950 nm), with a Schneider B&W 0950 filter and a Sun Interference filter mounted on the lens barrel, shows extensive underdrawing. In the figure of the Child there are wide, parallel hatchings from the upper right to the lower left to indicate the shadowed areas, and thicker contour lines for the forms. In the Virgin's drapery, there are thinner lines mainly for the folds, and pounced dots along necklines. In the Virgin's face, there are thickly set, thinner, parallel lines to indicate the shading the left side of face and of the nose. Many details (eyelashes) are indicated. The mouth is much damaged. Differences between the underdrawing and the final version include the position of the Child's right hand, originally located about 1 cm to the left, the first two fingers of the angel on the right, which are in the design closer to centre of crown. Margaret's cross was originally tilted closer to left brazier. The draperies are underpainted with a few thin lines to indicate major drapery folds only. The faces and hands are underpainted in great detail.

The pilasters bases and capitals, the horizontal bottom part and the arched top part the engaged frame are modern; the latter two are secured to the panel by modern screws. The pilasters shafts are original: they are made of the same poplar wood as the panel, and their *all'antica* decoration, executed in some thin black paint (soot?) over gold leaf, is mostly original but heavily repaired. On the right side of the altarpiece, a 3 mm thick, (perhaps wedge-shaped?) modern wood inlay is visible between the main panel and the right pilaster.

Punches: complex tetralobe (9 mm); double oval (6 mm long), penta-rosette (7 mm), circle, multiprong.

Previous conservation interventions attempted to eliminate the unevenness of the surface by fillings, but the deterioration of the panel has not stopped. Móré Miklós treated the painting before the exhibition of 1974; this involved "conservation, fillings, provisional cleaning and retouching." (Archives, Old Masters Department, MFA). Sarolta Wagner treated the work in 1986, which involved dusting and the reattachment of detached paint areas by ironing. A horizontal cleaning probe was done across the Virgin's mantle to the right armrest of the throne.

### Documentation:

On reverse of panel: "ORSZ. KÉPTÁR. A leltár száma 43" (printed, on white label)

On reverse of cradle: "944/4" (in blue chalk, twice); "ORSZÁGOS KÉPTÁR. KÉPTÁR. Az 1888 évi leltározás 43" (printed, on white label); "SZÉPMŰVÉSZETI MÚZEUM, Cozzarelli, Trónoló Mária gyermekével, Szt. Margittal és alexandriai Szt. Katalinnal. J.A.Ramboux-gyűjteményből. Ipolyi Arnold ajándéka. 1872. Ltsz.: 43" (typed on white label); "43" (in black ink on former label).

In front of a blue background, the Virgin sits on an elaborate marble throne. The Christ Child stands erect on her right knee and raises his right hand in blessing. St. Margaret holds a closed, dark book and a thin cross; a dragon lies at her legs. St. Catherine has a palm branch and an open red book in her hands, and a wheel at her right foot. Both saints wear a green dress and a red cloak. Two flying angels dressed in red hold the heavenly crown over the *Regina Coeli*; their feet rest on small clouds. The Renaissance marble throne has a rectangular back and is crowned by a classical entablature. Its sides are decorated with carved *all'antica* motifs. In two bowls on the top of the throne and in two gilt bronze braziers on the armrests bright red flames burn, symbolic of Caritas and of the ardent love of God. The dominating red in the colour scheme may have the same allusion.<sup>845</sup> The throne is set on a curved platform decorated with differently coloured marble inlay. Below, there is a step, whose front side is carved with palmette motifs.

With lightly inclined head, the mother turns slightly to the left and supports with her right hand the standing infant, who looks at the spectator and blesses him. This compositional solution has a long tradition in Sieneese painting since the first half of the fourteenth century – it ultimately goes back to Simone Martini's *Maestà*. Matteo di Giovanni and Cozzarelli used this composition (the child standing erect, usually blessing, the Virgin always reaching towards the Bambino's extended arm) with little variations in many altarpieces. Cozzarelli employed it already in his first datable work, an altarpiece in Paganico from 1475, and again in *Madonna of Mercy* from 1494 (Museo della Società di Esecutori di Pie Disposizioni, Siena, inv. 27).<sup>846</sup>

The two female saints stand on an inlaid marble floor rendered in somewhat uncertain perspective. In posture, drapery colours and arrangement, they are virtually mirror images of each other. This and the similarly mirrored arrangement of the angels lend a rigid symmetry to the work.<sup>847</sup>

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<sup>845</sup> In 1427, St. Bernardino commented in a sermon on the nature of fire of which nothing is more pure, thus pure red signifies Caritas (Trimpi 1987, 159; Van Os, 1968, 40-42 n. 53). Braziers with flames appears in other Madonna-altarpieces of the period, for example, in Matteo di Giovanni's Placidi altarpiece (1476, San Domenico, Siena).

<sup>846</sup> Among Matteo's works, closest in composition to MFA 43 are the *Madonna and Child with Sts. Jerome and Mary Magdalen* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Lehman Coll., inv. 65.234, repr. Zeri and Gardner 1980, 48, Pl. 58), the *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Four Angels* in the Pieve dei Ss. Pietro e Paolo, Buonconvento, the *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels* in San Lorenzo, Montepescali. Neroccio also often composed his Madonnas this way in his mature period (cf. Coor 1961, figs. 79, 83-86)

<sup>847</sup> Similar angels appear in Cozzarelli's *Assumption of the Virgin* miniature from 1481 (Libreria Piccolomini, Siena, Antifonario 15Q, f. 64r, repr. Ciardi Dupré 1972, 236, fig. 296). The model for these angels is Matteo di Giovanni's Santa Barbara altarpiece in San Domenico, Siena (1479).

The altarpiece received some attention in early literature. In 1866, Crowe and Cavalcaselle found it the only work by Cozzarelli worthy of mention in their main text (as “a genuine Madonna and Saints”).<sup>848</sup> Fraknói noted the work in his description of Ipolyi’s collection in 1871; so did Lützow in 1876 after its arrival to the Pest Gallery, and local museum catalogues continuously cited it. From the 1910s, however, international research lost sight of it for many decades. De Nicola (1913) and Brandi (1949) did not list it among the signed works of the master,<sup>849</sup> In 1915, Tancred Borenius (in Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1903-1915) and, in 1937, Van Marle were not able to trace its location any more, and it is missing from all of Berenson’s lists of Cozzarelli’s works (1932, 1936, 1968). Hungarian art historians (Térey, Pigler, Boskovits, Tátrai) and a single foreign scholar, Gertrude Coor, discussed the painting but references in international scholarship remained scarce and limited to a few dictionary entries.<sup>850</sup> Only in 2004 did Rudolf Hiller von Gaertringen analyze the altarpiece as a possible main panel for some predella fragments divided between Frankfurt (*St. Bernardino*) and a private coll. (*St. Peter, Lamentation, St. Jerome*). His reconstruction proposal is plausible but inconclusive, as apart from the approximately contemporarily date of the predella fragments there are no further indications (such as iconography, dimensions, provenance) to support it.

The most problematic aspect of MFA 43 is its alleged signature and date of 1486. Until now, virtually all critics regarded the altarpiece as signed and dated. Some scholars noted that the date is found on a modern part of the frame but considered it to be copied from the “very fragmented” old inscription at the bottom of the panel and thus reliable.<sup>851</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup>-century inscription is on the bottom horizontal framing element, which must replace (as the *barbe* at the bottom indicates) an original one that was lost when the altarpiece broke into four vertical fragments. Its wording “OPVS · GVIDOCCIVS IOAN . . . MCCCCLXXXVI” (Fig. 26/4) presents some problems and curiosities. It contains a grammatical error (with both OPVS and GVIDOCCIVS being in the nominative case), and a highly unusual, “philological” solution of

<sup>848</sup> On Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s judgments and the mention of the Budapest altarpiece: Dabell 2002, 14.

<sup>849</sup> Giacomo De Nicola, in: Thieme and Becker ed. 1907-50, VIII (1913), 38; Brandi 1949, 231-232.

<sup>850</sup> The work is noted by Padoa Rizzo (1984), Angelini (1987), Buricchi (2004) and Massagli (in Boskovits and Tripps ed. 2008, 181), but ignored by Galetti-Camesasca, 1950 (4<sup>th</sup> ed. 1951), I, 733; V. A. Bonito (in Turner ed. 1996, VIII, 100), and T. Dittelbach (“Guidoccio Cozzarelli,” in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 22, 1999, 115).

<sup>851</sup> Coor 1959, 89-90, n. 42 (“*Da die ursprüngliche Inschrift sehr fragmentarisch ist und der Stil des Gemäldes mit dem Datum 1486 in Einklang steht, scheint es wahrscheinlich, daß die später hinzugefügte Inschrift sich in bezug auf den Künstlernamen und das Datum des Gemäldes auf die ursprüngliche Inschrift stützt*”); Padoa Rizzo, in *Dizionario Bibliografico...*, vol. 30, 1984, 556; Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, no. 25.

marking a missing section after IOAN with three dots. Decorative motifs mark the beginning and the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century inscription, thus it is complete.

The source of this inscription is far from clear. Who wrote it, when, and on the basis of what? Contrary to what is generally assumed, it hardly bears any relation to the old inscription written at the bottom of the painted field, which was incompletely cited (omitting the word PATERN) by all scholars after Gábor Térey in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The full inscription reads: “CARO(?).VS · GVIDOCCII · PATERN · OPVS · SACELLO (...?)” (Fig. 26/2). The beginning of the inscription is complete (the dragon’s tail excludes there could have been further letters preceding it); its end may or may not be complete, because a lacuna long enough to accommodate about four letters follows the word SACELLO.<sup>852</sup> After this lacuna, there is a long original section under the figure of St. Catherine but technical examinations showed that the old inscription did not continue in this area. Consequently, the old inscription did not contain a date.<sup>853</sup>

The source for the 19<sup>th</sup>-century inscription must thus be searched elsewhere. The horizontal frame at the bottom had to be constructed in Germany, where the altarpiece was reassembled from its four fragments and cradled. The inscription then can hardly be based on anything else than some type of annotation by Ramboux. In the absence of any evidence, only some theoretically conceivable possibilities can be advanced here.<sup>854</sup> Perhaps the most plausible among them is that, still in Italy, Ramboux saw the *original* and damaged bottom frame of MFA 43, which became detached when the altarpiece broke into vertical pieces but was perhaps kept with the rest of the fragments. Its legible parts were probably only “GVIDOCCIUS IOAN” and “MCCCCLXXXVI”. Interestingly, in his catalogue of 1862, Ramboux made no mention of the old inscription located at the bottom of the painted field but transcribed the new one (which apparently he considered authentic) as “GVIDOCCIUS JOAN

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<sup>852</sup> Calculating room also for the dot that must have followed SACELLO.

<sup>853</sup> Theoretically, a date in narrow Arabic numerals could fit into the lacuna after SACELLO but Cozzarelli always signed his works in Roman numerals.

<sup>854</sup> One, not very likely, is that Ramboux copied the inscription from another work by Cozzarelli which he thought to be related – this could be the Pannilini altarpiece, the *Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints Simon and Thaddeus* in Sinalunga (Fig. 26/9) whose signature GVIDOCIVS IOAN[N]IS DE SENIS PINSIT A D M<sup>o</sup> CCCLXXXVI is very close to the one in MFA 43 (which Ramboux actually acquired from the vicinity of Sinalunga). The plausibility of this is very slight. Although in his drawings of works of art Ramboux occasionally recorded inscriptions that belonged to other works by the same painter, it is unlikely he would have actually applied such an inscription to a work he owned. It would also remain to be answered why he was not able to record the letters after “IOAN...” because on the basis of a pre-restoration photograph (photo H. Burton, Florence, gelatine print, late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> c., preserved at Fototeca Tatti) it does not seem that the signature on the Pannilini altarpiece was damaged or overpainted. The inscription of the altarpiece was correctly transcribed in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Giovangirolamo Carli (Notizie di belle arti, BCS, ms C.VII.20., f. 106r: “S. Simon: Guidocius: Joanis de Senis pinsit A. D. MCCCCLXXXVI. S. Taddeus”, so it was fully legible in that time too.

. . . MCCCCLXXXVI”, that is, omitting the problematic word OPVS.<sup>855</sup> (Was this word written on the frame and “philological” fidelity abandoned to “make sense” of the inscription? Was the grammar ignored because Ramboux did not want to alter the form GVIDOCCIVS that he recorded?). The word OPVS is in fact foreign to Cozzarelli: he never used the formula “OPVS GVIDOCCII” but preferred “GVIDOC(C)IVS IOHANNIS (DE SENIS) PINSIT”.<sup>856</sup> Be that as it may, about the 19<sup>th</sup>-century inscription we can conclude that its source is not the old inscription on the panel, and whatever it is, it must be treated with great caution. Even if it is based on a now lost inscription on the original frame, the last digits of the date in Roman numerals could have been missing or indecipherable, so 1486 cannot be considered as a reliable date, especially because the altarpiece does not stand comparison with the Pannilini altarpiece from 1486 (Fig. 26/9), as shall be discussed below.

What are we to make then of the old inscription “CARO(?)VS · GVIDOCCII · PATERN · OPVS · SACELLO (...?)” which is certainly *not* a modern addition? We have seen that OPVS is unlikely to belong to GVIDOCCII. As a working hypothesis, it could perhaps be supposed that the genitive GVIDOCCII belongs to the first word, which appears to be a fragmented CAROLVS, and could refer to the painter’s son Carlo di Guidoccio, who was born in 1494, married in 1517 and perhaps died in 1524 (?) but in any case before 1530.<sup>857</sup> A possible reading of the inscription, as Matteo Mazzalupi suggested to me, could be “Carolus Guidoccii patern(um) opus sacello...”, completed in the now damaged area perhaps by an abbreviated letter (d. = donavit?), that is, “Carlo, son of Guidoccio [has given?] his father’s work for the chapel”. While this reading is highly hypothetical, it works with the possibility that Guidoccio Cozzarelli signed the panel on the lower part of the frame, and that the altarpiece, perhaps left behind at the workshop, was later donated (?) by his son to a chapel, and this donation (?) was recorded in a second inscription in the panel.

<sup>855</sup> See note 840 above.

<sup>856</sup> Cf. *Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints*, PNS, inv. 367, 1482: “GVIDOCIVS PI(N)SIT / A D M<sup>o</sup> CCCCLXXXII DICENBRIS”; Ancaiano altarpiece, 1491 (Fig. 26/11): “GVIDOCCIVS IOHANNIS COZARELLI PINSIT MENSIS AGVSTI”; Pitigliano altarpiece, 1494: “GVIDOCIVS IOANNIS (DE SENIS?) PINSIT AD MCCCCLXXXIII”. See also the signature reported by Della Valle 1785, II, 237 and Romagnoli *ante* 1835 [1976], V, 237, for the frescos in the Cathedral signed in 1481: “(...) pinxerunt Guidoccius & Sebastianus de Senis MCCCCLXXXI”.

<sup>857</sup> Guidoccio’s son Carlo is mentioned by Bacci (1939, 214, 217-218, and family tree on p. 227), who transcribed his baptism record (“Charlo Prospero di Ghuidoccio Chozarelli si batezò a di 24 novembre 1494...”) and published the record of his burial date (13 February, 1523; modern style 1524), underlining at the same time the scarce attendibility of his source for the burial, the Sepultuario of the Archivio dell’Osservanza. For Carlo’s marriage in 1517, see Cozzarelli’s biography (pp. 311-13) and note 839 above. According to Romagnoli (*ante* 1835 [1976], V, 243-244/1) Carlo di Guidoccio was a painter, on the basis of a document from 1530 that refers to a “petitione heredum Caroli Guidocci Pictoris”. This needs to be confirmed by other documents, as the Latin wording leaves it ambiguous whether the word painter refers to Guidoccio or to Carlo.

The signed and dated Pannilini altarpiece from 1486 is one of Cozzarelli's most ambitious, dynamic, and inventive works. The artist's attention to spatial depth and to the liveliness of expression, his pursuit of *difficoltà* (notable in the daring foreshortening of the angels and of God the Father) make it a *capolavoro* from which MFA 43 is a far cry. In the latter, the background is shallow and unexciting, little attention is paid to a lighting scheme and to modelling, the draperies are flatter and repetitive, and the overall effect of the work is fatigued. There are gross errors in the perspective construction: the right side of the throne comes more forward than the left and its base has a more complex moulding on the right; the rectangular opening in the right armrest of the throne is incongruous in perspective with the rest; the curved base is deformed and slopes forward. A languid mood pervades the work; all three female figures look in the same direction with an expression devoid of vitality.

After the Pannilini altarpiece (which may well have been begun some years before its completion in 1486) we have no dated work by Cozzarelli until the Ancaiano altarpiece from 1491 (Fig. 26/11),<sup>858</sup> in which already a certain softness and mellow, sentimental expression is notable.<sup>859</sup> These traits seem to enter Cozzarelli's visual language around 1490 under the influence Pietro Orioli, his co-disciple with Matteo di Giovanni, and they persist in all of his later production. They are not yet present in MFA 43 and some stylistically close works, like the *Virgin and Child with Saints Bernardino and Catherine of Siena* (Barzellotti Camaiori Coll., formerly Castello di Belcaro near Siena, Fig. 26/10),<sup>860</sup> which presents traits that seem to mark Cozzarelli's style in the later 1480s: the expressions are calm, the earlier, marked plasticity has waned, and there lingers an overall feeling of melancholy.

MFA 43 thus probably dates from some time between 1486 and 1489, and certainly before 1491. Since from 1486 Cozzarelli's works show not only a decline but also an unevenness in quality, it cannot be fully excluded that MFA 43 was painted in 1486, perhaps on a poorly paid commission, but the later years of the 1480s seem to me more likely (if the date 1486 is based on an original inscription at all, the Roman numerals can be extended until

<sup>858</sup> Trimpi and Kanter correctly noted that the three book covers from 1487, 1488, 1489, earlier ascribed to Cozzarelli, are by Matteo di Giovanni (Trimpi 1987, 73-74, citing documentary evidence for Matteo's authorship of the biccherna cover of 1488, 224-229, esp. 226; Kanter, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 285 [It. ed. 299]).

<sup>859</sup> This little known altarpiece was rediscovered in 1933 in the church of San Bartolomeo of Ancaiano, near Sovicille, and published by Pèleo Bacci (1939, 207-227; see also Guerrini ed. 1988, 95, fig. 70). It is signed and dated: PIE[TR]O D'ANTONIO DI TEIO DA ANCHAIANO [FECE FARE] QVESTA PER [SVA] DEVOZIONE. [AN]NO MCC[CC]LXXXI. To the right of this reads, in smaller capital letters: GVIDOCCIUS IOHANNIS COZARELLI PINSIT MENSIS AGVSTI. The altarpiece, for some years stored in the deposits of the Pinacoteca of Siena, was restored a few years ago at the Istituto Centrale del Restauro in Rome. I thank Dr. Costanza Mora for permitting me to examine the work under restoration. The pilaster decoration of the altarpiece is not original.

<sup>860</sup> Berenson 1968, 100; photograph at Sopr. PSAE, inv. 81384.

1489). The very rare, segmental arched topped form of the altarpiece (*ad arco ribassato*) is a common feature between MFA 43 and the Ancaiano altarpiece and perhaps indicates a not very wide chronological gap between the two.<sup>861</sup>

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 26, no. 148 (Cozzarelli, 1486, transcribes inscription as “Guidoccus Joan . . . MCCCCLXXVI”); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1864-66, III (1866), 86 (Cozzarelli, from 1486, transcribe inscription as “Opus Guidoccus Joan . . . M.CCCCLXXXVI”); [Ramboux] 1867, 28, no. 148 (Cozzarelli, 1486, transcribes inscription as “Guidoccus Joan . . . MCCCCLXXVI”); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1869-76, IV/1 (1871), 96 and n. 126 (Guidoccio Cozzarelli, from 1486, formerly in the Ramboux coll.); [Fraknói] 1871, 370 (Guidoccio Cozzarelli, “with its interesting original frame that reports the name of the painter and the date”); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1873, 4, no. 19 (Guidoccio Cozzarelli); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1876, 6, no. 83 (Guidoccio Cozzarelli); Lützow 1876, coll. 6-7 (no. 19, signed and dated: OPVS. GUIDOCCIUS.IOAN.MCCCCLXXVI); *Országos Képtár...* 1878, 6, no. 83 (Guidoccio Cozzarelli); *Országos Képtár...* 1879, 6, no. 83 (Guidoccio Cozzarelli); Pulszky 1881, 6, no. 20 (Guidoccio Cozzarelli 1450-1516); Pulszky 1888, 6, no. 43 (workshop of Cosimo Roselli); *Országos Képtár...* 1897, 26, no. 43 (Sienese painter, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c. [Joannes Guiduccio?]); Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 142, no. 43 (Sienese painter, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c., “Madonna”); Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>, 388, no. 43 (Sienese painter, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.: Joannes Guiduccio); Térey 1913<sup>1</sup>, 298, no. (Sienese painter, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.: Joannes Guiduccio); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1903-1915, V (1914), 185 and n. 1 (Cozzarelli, from 1486, formerly in the Ramboux coll.); Petrovics 1935, 15, no. 63 (Guidoccio di Giovanni Cozzarelli); Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 373 n. 1. (Cozzarelli); Pigler 1937, I, 74 (Cozzarelli); Pigler 1954, I, 130, no. 43 (Cozzarelli); Coor 1959, 89, fig. 35 (Cozzarelli, probably 1846); Pigler 1967, I, 160-161, no. 43, II, Pl. 22 (Cozzarelli, 1486); Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, no. 25, colour repr. (Guidoccio Cozzarelli, the later inscription with the date 1486 seems reliable); H. Takács and Nyerges 1973, 5-6, 14, cat. 9, fig. 5. (Cozzarelli); A. Padoa Rizzo, “Cozzarelli, Guidoccio”, in *Dizionario Bibliografico...*, XXX, 1984, 555-56 (Cozzarelli, 1486); Alessandro Angelini, in Zeri ed. 1987, vol. 2, 606 (Cozzarelli, 1486); Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 31 (Cozzarelli, new inscription probably repeats original on the panel); Merzenich 1995, 313, no. 3 (Ramboux’s exportation requests); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 565, no. 148, repr. (Cozzarelli, 1486); Dabell 2002, 14 (on Crowe and Cavalcaselle’s views of Matteo di Giovanni and Cozzarelli); Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 21 (Cozzarelli, about the altarpiece form “ad arco ribassato”); Hiller von Gaertringen 2004, 368-69, fig. 256 (Cozzarelli, reconstruction proposal with a predella); Barkóczi István, in *The Restoration Project...*, 2005, 10-11, cat. 3, repr.; Susanna Buricchi, “Cozzarelli, Guidoccio di Giovanni”, in Bollati ed. 2004, 183-186, esp. 185 (Cozzarelli, 1486); Riccardo Massagli, in Boskovits and Tripps 2008, 181 (Cozzarelli, 1486); Sallay 2008, 15 (Cozzarelli).

<sup>861</sup> The segmental arch-topped form is briefly considered in Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 21 as a derivation from the arch-topped altarpiece form (*pala centinata*). (Among the few known examples of the altarpiece *ad arco ribassato*, Paardekooper mentions Cozzarelli’s altarpiece in Rosia. Since the top of the Rosia altarpiece is mutilated and its original form unknown, this is surely an oversight and the author meant to refer to the Ancaiano altarpiece.)

## **Bernardino Fungai**

**(Bernardino Cristofano di Niccolò d'Antonio di Piero da Fungaia)**

(Siena, 1460 – Siena, 1516)

Bernardino Fungai was active in Siena and the surrounding territories mainly as a panel and wall painter, but is also documented to have executed minor decorative works. The first document relating to his artistic activity is a payment from 1482 for the frescos in the drum of the Sienese Cathedral, which he, identified as Benvenuto di Giovanni's student (*garzone*), collected on his master's order. His hand is not identifiable in this work. Fungai may be identical with the "painter Bernardino from Siena" to whom a payment was made on 14 December 1484, in Rome for temporary festive decoration prepared for the election of Pope Innocent VIII. The artist is next recorded in Siena in 1488, when he married Donna Contessa di Ser Battista di Antonio, the daughter of a notary, who later bore him two sons. In 1494 he is at the head of a *compagnia* of artists painting heraldic banners for the entry of Charles VIII in Siena (lost). In 1497, his first securely datable work, the *Stigmatization of St. Catherine* for the Oratorio della Cucina di S. Caterina in Fontebranda in Siena was brought to completion (later enlarged with side panels, further predella scenes, and an upper register by Bartolomeo Neroni called Riccio). Between April 1498 and September 1501, he executed the high altarpiece of S. Maria dei Servi in Siena. Some time between 1498 and 1505, he painted the predella of the Tancredi altarpiece in S. Domenico, Siena. In 1499, the Opera del Duomo commissioned him and Ghino d'Antonio to gild the organ case over the new sacristy of the Sienese cathedral. Few documents survive from the last decade of his life. From 1512 is his only signed and dated work, the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Sts. Sebastian, Jerome, Nicholas and Anthony of Padua*, painted for the church of San Niccolò al Carmine in Siena (PNS, inv. 431). He died before 18 March, 1516, when the office of the dead were held for him by the Compagnia della SS. Trinità.

Fungai's full artistic production has never been the subject of in-depth critical study, apart from an unpublished thesis by Marcella Parisi (1988-89). Since few of his paintings are datable on documentary basis, the reconstruction of the chronology of his works is based mainly on stylistic analysis and remains hypothetical. Fungai's first formative experience came from his teacher Benvenuto di Giovanni, whose dry and graphic style left its imprint on Fungai's earliest works, especially his signed altarpiece of the *Virgin and Child with Sts. Peter and Paul* at the Accademia of Venice. In the following, Fungai assimilated in his works very diverse stylistic elements in a continuous effort to keep his art pleasing and up-to-date. The visit to Rome – if the document of 1484 indeed refers to Fungai – could have been an

occasion for him to see the most recent achievements of Florentine and Umbrian painting in the Sistine Chapel. In a group of Madonnas created probably in the 1480s under marked Ghirlandaiquesque influence, the firmly modelled, sculptural forms are in an effective contrast with the resplendent tooled gold ground. Fungai's Florentine orientation in this period has been explained with his contact with the Florentine painter Fra Giuliano (†1487), a Gesuate brother in Siena, whose style derives from Domenico Ghirlandaio and Cosimo Roselli, and in whose large, arched panel of the *Assumption of the Virgin with Saints* in a niche of the former cloister of S. Girolamo in Siena Fungai executed large parts.<sup>862</sup> Fungai certainly knew Fra Giuliano's paintings and it is very probable that Florentine influences reached him in other ways as well. Among these are also stylistic elements derived from Verrocchio's circle, perceptible in a group of works probably dating from the late 1480s and around 1490.

In the last two decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and occasionally also afterwards, Fungai executed a large number of devotional works depicting the Madonna and Child (often with saints) and the Adoration of the Child, many of which are based on the same compositional schemes. In the 1490s, Fungai's modelling became softer and his physiognomies gentler under the influence of his townsman Pietro Orioli, while his palette turned darker in the flesh tones, with marked and summary chiaroscuro that often lends a stiff, wooden quality to his portrayals. At the end of the century, his style also showed a debt to Signorelli and his anonymous follower, the Griselda Master, who had received important commissions in Siena in the 1490s. The effects of Orioli's perspectivic spatial constructions and of the Griselda Master's graceful, elongated figural types are particularly evident in the *Stigmatization of St. Catherine* completed in 1497. The grandiose *Coronation of the Virgin* in S. Maria dei Servi

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<sup>862</sup> It is generally hypothesized that Fungai completed this work after Fra Giuliano's death. Fungai's hand is indeed identifiable in the upper areas of this panel, and the very damaged lower zone of the painting shows differences in style. The division of the hands in this panel has, however, never fully been clarified; all that is relatively certain is that Fra Giuliano executed the frescoed decoration in the arch of the niche, which completes the iconography of the Assumption panel. Thus the precise nature and date of Fungai's intervention in this decorative programme remains uncertain, and does not provide enough evidence to date the parts executed by him to 1487, as is often claimed. It also remains to be explained why the supposed intervention of Fra Giuliano in the panel was started in the bottom zone, not the top, as customary. Another work by Fra Giuliano, a *Madonna*-fresco transported from a street tabernacle, is now found inside the church of San Girolamo (Micheli, 1863, 76; De Nicola 1912; 45-50, repr. on p. 47, fig. 41; Angelini 1982<sup>2</sup>, 31; Torriti 2000, 346, with previous bibl.). The information on Fra Giuliano has been left to posterity by the Sienese chronicler Sigismondo Tizio (*Historiarum Senensium ab initio urbis Senarum usque ad annum 1528*, 18<sup>th</sup> c. copy preserved at the BCS, B.II.6). Tizio's account on Fra Giuliano was discovered and studied by Giacomo de Nicola (1912, 45-50), and the question of his activity was discussed by Angelini (1982<sup>2</sup>, 31, with previous bibl.). Fra Giuliano is mentioned in Micheli 1863, 76; Van Marle 1923-38, XIII (1931), 258 and XVI (1937), 469-70, Torriti 2000, 346-347; his relationship with Fungai is referred to by Marcella Parisi, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 521-22. For his tabernacle inside S. Girolamo, see Alessandro Angelini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 368 repr.

(1498-1501) testifies to the superb technical execution and decorative splendour, for which Fungai's production must have been widely appreciated, but in it also the static and stereotyped figures appear which populate most of his large, idealized and rigidly symmetrical compositions. From around the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century or the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> seems to date also most of his surviving production with a profane subject matter: two *spalliere* with standing allegoric female figures (Private Coll., New York; Castle of Pszczyna, Poland), and five panels, probably also *spalliere*, depicting the story of Scipio (Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Pushkin Museum, Moscow; and three pieces, possibly parts of the same panel, in private coll.). The historiated *spalliere* and predella scenes are generally acknowledged as Fungai's best production, where he could fully put forth his narrative talents and paint, in vivacious colours and with a technique of dotted, spontaneous brushwork, docile and animated figures that move gracefully through wide landscapes punctuated by classical buildings. By this time, Fungai had abandoned the use of gold grounds and began experimenting with the oil technique. In his last creative phase, he was more strongly influenced by Umbrian artists, especially by Perugino and Pinturicchio, as is perceivable in the *Nativity with Sts. Vincenzo and Jerome* in the Cathedral of S. Secondiano in Chiusi, which may be placed in the first decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Among his last works are, besides the dated altarpiece from 1512, two large *tondi* in the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, in Coral Gables, Florida. (*Adoration of the Christ Child*) and in the National Gallery of London (*Enthroned Virgin and Child with Cherubs*).

**Select bibliography:**

Romagnoli *ante* 1835 (1976), V, 331-346; Berenson 1897, 143-144; Berenson 1909, 171-173; Jacobsen 1910, 7-12; Berenson 1932, 211-12; Berenson 1936, 181-83; Bacci 1947; Alessandro Angelini, in Zeri ed. 1987, 630; Torriti 1990, 331-338; Peter Anselm Riedl, in Riedl and Seidel ed. 1992, 2.1.1, 202-206, 593-598; Alessandro Angelini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 478-481; Marcella Parisi, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 521-22; Alessandra Ugucioni, "Fungai, Bernardino" in *Dizionario Biografico...*, vol. 50 (1998), 745-48; Dóra Sallay, "Fungai, Bernardino", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 46 (2005), 329-331; Angelini 2005<sup>1</sup>, esp. 94-95; Angelini 2005<sup>2</sup>; Bomford, Roy, and Syson 2006.

## 27.

### Bernardino Fungai

*Virgin and Child*

**Fig. 27/1**

1480s

tempera and gold on poplar wood

panel: 46.4 x 34.7 cm (measured on front side); original painted surface: 44.7-45 x ca. 34 cm;

thickness: 0.9-1.2 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 4209.

**Provenance:** Count János Pálffy Collection, transferred to the Museum from the Pálffy Palace in Pozsony (present-day Bratislava, Slovakia) in 1912.

#### Technical notes:

The support is a single, vertically grained board (Fig. 27/2). It has been thinned and is strongly warped. It has suffered a little worm damage. On the reverse, there are six short horizontal grooves along the vertical edges, three on each side at the top, middle and bottom, related to holding a modern frame in place. Along the edges there are remnants of French newspaper strips glued to the wood (Fig. 27/5 a).<sup>863</sup> There is a large knot in the middle of the panel, which has caused cracks in the paint surface.

The paint surface is in good condition apart from minor scratches, losses, and accumulated dirt. The outlines of the figures and many internal contours (hands of the Virgin) have been incised prior to painting. The Child's dress seems to have been modelled originally in transparent red glaze, which is now almost completely lost. The decoration of the cushion was probably in *sgraffito*; with red paint over gold leaf; its decoration is incised in free hand into the gold. The hem of the Virgin's dress is decorated with mordant gilding. The gold ground is original. There are large repairs in the gold behind the Child's head, between the heads of the Child and the Virgin, and in the right part of the Virgin's halo.

The panel originally had an engaged frame, which was removed and some of the bare wood under it was cut off, leaving unpainted margins around the original painted surface (1 cm on bottom, 0.7 cm on top, ca. 0.3 cm on left and right), which were then newly gessoed and the composition crudely extended over them. The edges of the original painted surface are marked by fragments of a barbe and have separated from the later additions.

Punches: hexa-circle (4.3 mm)<sup>864</sup>, hexa-star (6.7 mm),<sup>865</sup> double concentric (2.5 mm); indented circles (2 mm and 1mm) (Fig. 27/5 c-d).

The panel is inserted in a modern frame.

A general conservation treatment is recorded in 1988.

#### Documentation:

On reverse: “*B or E* (joined with an illegible letter) / *N<sup>o</sup>. 439* (or possibly 489, 409, 49)” (fragmented printed label, of probably pre-20<sup>th</sup> century date, glued over another label of

<sup>863</sup> Nothing is known about where Count Pálffy acquired this painting but since he purchased works at the Paris art market (cf. Horváth 2007, 27), these newspaper strips may be interesting for the consideration of a French provenance (on Pálffy engaging experts in Paris for preparing and packing his works for transport, see Horváth 2007, 28).

<sup>864</sup> According to Frinta (1998, 475), punch no. L14.

<sup>865</sup> Frinta 1998, 528, punch no. Lb22

approximately the same size, Fig. 27/5 b); “Szépművészeti Múzeum tulajdona. / Lelt. sz. 4209. / Sz. n. 777-912. / Át. lelt. 8757. / Gróf Pálffy János hagyománya” (typed on white label); “904/34” (blue chalk, on previous label, postdating it); “882” (pencil, encircled, twice, of which once on previous label, postdating it); “4209 / leltári szám” (pencil, enclosed in pencilled square); “SZÉPMŰVÉSZE TI MŰZEUM / Bernardino Fungai : / Mária gyermekével / Az Esterházy gyűjteményből / Ltsz. 4209” (typed on white label); “4209” (brown felt pen on previous label); “2002” (pencil)

The small, devotional painting portrays the young, fair-haired Virgin in her customary red dress and blue cloak. She supports with her right hand the back of the Christ Child, who sits to the left on a gold-embroidered cushion placed on a marble parapet. He is dressed in a long tunic all executed in gold leaf with simple incised decoration, holds flowers<sup>866</sup> in his right hand, and, with his left, he grasps the hem of his mother’s cloak. On the other side of the parapet, two cherries are laid as symbols of the Passion to which they are associated by their red juice resembling blood.

The composition of this work differs from the popular model established by Sano di Pietro, which lived on, in a modernized form, until the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Mother and Child appear here without saints and angels, and form an asymmetrical, pyramidal group. This composition and several characteristic features of the work – the marble parapet with the lavish cushion on which the Child sits with pulled-up legs, the delicate gesture of the Virgin’s hand, the layout of the punched decoration – were developed the workshop of Fungai’s documented teacher, Benvenuto di Giovanni and appear in several Madonnas painted by Benvenuto’s students and followers (Washington, National Gallery of Art, inv. 1942.9.3; PNS, inv. 284; San Paolo fuori le Mura, Rome; Chapter House, Cathedral, Viterbo).<sup>867</sup> Fungai too, who often recurred to the same compositional schemes, painted several versions of this “Madonna del davanzale”, sometimes with subsidiary figures (*Virgin and Child with Two Angels*, 60 x 41 cm, Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, Fig. 27/6).<sup>868</sup> Other versions are homeless and known only from photographs, so their condition and autography are difficult to judge

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<sup>866</sup> These flowers have defied classification so far. Parisi (1988-89) considered them to be periwinkles, but periwinkles have blue flowers with five petals. I thank Enikő Magyar and her colleagues at the Natural History Museum of Budapest for their efforts to identify the plant.

<sup>867</sup> Bandera 1999, 234, cat. 57-58, repr. p. 125; Laurence Kanter even advanced the symptomatic, though hardly acceptable, suggestion that the author of two of these Madonnas is “more likely to be Bernardino Fungai than Benvenuto di Giovanni” (reported by Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 114 n. 21). For the Madonna in Viterbo, cf. photographs at the Fototeca Zerri in Bologna, inv. 45296-97. Miklós Boskovits too pointed out that in Sienese Madonnas, the Child is usually held by the Virgin. The type where he is seated on a marble parapet is rare and appears relatively late under the influence of Florentine art, for example, works by Filippo Lippi (Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al., 113, 114 n. 5). A distantly related, other Sienese example of a composition where the Child sits on a cushion to the left on a marble ledge is Neroccio’s *Madonna and Child* in the Cleveland Museum of Art (see Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 114-115).

<sup>868</sup> Rossi 1988, 142-43, fig. D33.

(cf. *Virgin and Child holding a flower*, gold ground, 41 x 32 cm;<sup>869</sup> *Virgin and Child holding a bird*, gold ground, 60 x 40 cm with later additions on all sides, Bondi sale, [Lurati?], Milan, 9-20 December, 1929, lot 40<sup>870</sup>; *Virgin and Child in a landscape*, 47,5 x 33,8 cm, Helbing sale, Munich, 28 April, 1932, lot 174 or 179, in 1933 with van Diemen in Berlin<sup>871</sup>).

The Budapest Madonna seems earlier of these pieces and higher in quality. It may date from Fungai's most successful artistic period, when, after the formative period in Benvenuto di Giovanni's workshop approximately in the late 1470s and early 1480s, he worked under a strong Florentine influence. This phase seems to be approximately in the mid- and later 1480s, although the early chronology of Fungai's works remains hypothetical, as we possess no datable works before 1497, when the painter finished his *Stigmatization of St. Catherine*.<sup>872</sup>

Laura Martini has associated MFA 4209 with a group of works created under Verrocchiesque influence, probably dating from the late 1480s and around 1490 (*Virgin adoring the Child, with Two Angels*, Museo Diocesano, Pienza;<sup>873</sup> *Virgin and Child in a landscape*, formerly Ehrich Galleries and Meinhard Coll., New York<sup>874</sup>; *Virgin and Child with Two Angels* in Bergamo, Fig. 27/6). To my mind, MFA 4209 slightly predates these works on account of its marked Ghirlandiaesque features, and is best placed chronologically after an emphatically Florentinizing *Virgin and Child* in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg (with which it shares an identical punched pattern)<sup>875</sup> and before a very damaged *Virgin and Child* in Cleveland, and two, nearly identical paintings in the Victoria and Albert Museum in

<sup>869</sup> A photograph is filed with Fungai at the Fondazione Longhi, Florence, Box 18, nr. 0180404. An annotation records its previous location as formerly Fuschi, Salocchi, June 1963.

<sup>870</sup> A photograph is filed with Fungai at the Fondazione Longhi, Florence, Box 18, nr. 0180406. An annotation says it had been in Rome with Sestieri around 1920 and, at the time of the annotation, in a Lucchese collection. The work, in a heavily repainted condition, was published by Berenson 1930-31<sup>2</sup>, pt. II, 761, right side of page, and a photograph of it is conserved at the Fototeca Berenson filed with the homeless works of Fungai; a photograph is in the Fototeca Zeri in Bologna, inv. 45464, where its location is indicated as formerly with Alfredo Barsanti, Rome.

<sup>871</sup> A cutting preserved at KHI, inv. 177328 filed with Fungai (whereabouts indicated as Benedict and Co., Berlin); a photograph is at the Witt Library, London and at the Fototeca Berenson, Villa I Tatti, filed with the homeless works of Fungai; a photograph is in the Fototeca Zeri in Bologna, inv. 45457, filed with Fungai.

<sup>872</sup> Peter Anselm Riedl, in Riedl and Seidel ed., 2.1.1 (1992), 202-206; Sabelli, ed. 2002, 118-129.

<sup>873</sup> Laura Martini (in *Pienza e la val d'Orcia* 1984, 54-57, with previous bibl.) discussed a group of paintings on the occasion of the restoration of the Madonna in Pienza, dating them to around 1490. Several of these works, including the Pienza Madonna may well date from this period; some others at the same seem earlier, especially the *Enthroned Madonna with Sts. Peter and Paul* (Accademia, Venice) in which Benvenuto di Giovanni's influence is decisive, and the Madonna of Budapest and the closely related *Madonna and Child with Two Male Saints* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Fig. 27/7. For the Madonna of Pienza, see also Martini ed. 1998, 96, 102-03, colour repr. no. 68 on p. 99, where the association with the Budapest and the London Madonnas is repeated.

<sup>874</sup> Repr. in Berenson 1930-31, pt. II, 761, left side of page.

<sup>875</sup> Kustodieva 1994, 176-77; Kustodieva 2002, 78-79.

London (inv. 2764, Fig. 27/7)<sup>876</sup> and in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles (inv. 69.PB.26). In these pieces, the compact forms rendered with great plasticity appear in front of the tooled gold ground as if they were reliefs. The modelling is executed in tightly placed, parallel brushstrokes with a careful attention to light, which lends a hard, sculptural appearance to the faces. These works are also related by a characteristic, complex punched pattern that recurs in all of them almost without variation, and whose most typical feature is the large and slightly irregular hexa-star in a circle formed from many (14-17) concave dots, with smaller hexa-circles placed between these large motifs (Fig. 27/5 d).<sup>877</sup>

Whereas in the works grouped around the Madonna of Pienza the mannerisms typical of Fungai's production are prominent (bulging eyes, full and heart-shaped lips, deformations in the anatomical rendering, insipid facial expressions), these are not so marked in MFA 4209. Although it is not free from errors in the anatomy and in the foreshortening, neither from a certain simplification of the forms, it is distinguished by a more life-like, quiet and intimate atmosphere, a greater precision of drawing, the detailed and carefully worked out modelling, and the artist's search to show the faces from a more difficult angle. The Virgin's head is based on a similar design as the Madonnas in London, Cleveland, Pienza, ex-Metropolitan Museum and ex-Meinhard collection in New York, but it is turned slightly further to the left, resulting in a more extreme three-quarter profile, which required more skill on the painter's part in the foreshortening. In contrast to many other devotional Madonnas by the artist (in Pienza, Bergamo, and formerly Meinhard coll.), Mary's eyes, though pronounced, are more proportionate and do not bulge; her lips are placed closer to the nose and are shown relaxed enough to lend a gentle, half-smiling expression to the face. The face of the sturdy, chubby child also has the characteristic physiognomy of Fungai's children: a flat, snub nose, pursed and heart-shaped lips, puffed cheeks, yet the rendering of these features and the large, bulging skull demonstrate the artist's endeavour to observe children's anatomy, an effort less apparent in his later works in which the Ghirlandaiesque impact waned.

The work was catalogued as an Umbrian piece after its acquisition by the Museum.<sup>878</sup> It was first published by Térey, who ascribed it (1913, 1924) to the school of Benvenuto di Giovanni on the basis of Bernard Berenson's opinion. In 1932, Berenson added the piece to his list of Fungai's works, and the attribution of the painting has not been questioned

<sup>876</sup> Kauffmann 1973, 120-121, with repr. Already Van Marle (1923-38, XVI [1937], 466) proposed a date in the 1480s for this painting.

<sup>877</sup> A further work not far from this group is the very damaged and abraded *Virgin and Child with Two Angels* formerly in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, deaccessioned and sold at Sotheby's, New York, 20 January, 1983, lot 41.

<sup>878</sup> Cited in 1913<sup>2</sup>, 5.

afterwards. There has been less consensus about its date. Boskovits (1968) associated it with the period of the high altarpiece of the Santa Maria dei Servi in Siena, whose execution is documented between 1498 and 1501. Tátrai (1979) suggested the early 1480s, but later (1991) concurred with Boskovits in dating the piece around 1500. Martini (1984, 1998) likened it to the Pienza Madonna which she dated around 1490, whereas Parisi (1988-89) suggested the interval of 1480-85. As I have noted, we do not have enough evidence about Fungai's early works to allow for a precise dating. At the most, a relative chronology established on the basis of a review of Fungai's complete surviving production suggests a dating into the 1480s, with perhaps more probability towards the middle of the decade.

### References:

*Néhai nagyméltóságú Erdődi Gróf Pálffy János ...* 1909, 9, 15, no. 8 (Umbrian school, 16th c.); Térey 1913<sup>2</sup>, 5, no. 8 (school of Benvenuto di Giovanni; reports Berenson's opinion expressed on the basis of a photograph, on which the attribution is based); Térey 1924, 11 (school of Benvenuto di Giovanni, reports Georg Gronau's attribution as "Umbrian school, Fiorenzo di Lorenzo[?]")"; Berenson 1932, 211 (Bernardino Fungai), Petrovics 1935, 34, no. 172 (Bernardino Fungai); Berenson 1936, 181 (Bernardino Fungai), Pigler 1937, I, 105 (Bernardino Fungai); Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 481 (Bernardino Fungai); Pèleo Bacci 1947, 5 (Bernardino Fungai), Pigler 1953, I, 219, II. Pl. 16 (Bernardino Fungai); Pigler 1967, I, 251, II, fig. 23 (Bernardino Fungai); Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, no. 27 (Bernardino Fungai, ca. 1498-1501); Berenson 1968, I, 150 (Bernardino Fungai); Ingendaay 1976, 434 (Bernardino Fungai, describes it as Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist and refers to Boskovits' dating, 1498-1501)"; Tátrai 1979<sup>1</sup>, 81, 269, (Bernardino Fungai, early 1480s); Laura Martini, in *Pienza e la val d'Orcia* 1984, 55 (Bernardino Fungai, ca. 1490); Parisi 1988-89, 274-76 (Bernardino Fungai, 1480-85); Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 44 (Bernardino Fungai, about 1500); Martini ed. 1998, 103 (Bernardino Fungai, ca. 1490); Frinta 1998, 475, 528 (Bernardino Fungai, repertoire of punches); Dóra Sallay, "Fungai, Bernardino", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 46, 2005, 329-331, esp. 330 (Bernardino Fungai, probably 1480s); Radványi 2006, 424 (Bernardino Fungai, list of paintings acquired by Gábor Térey for the MFA); Horváth 2007, 168 (Bernardino Fungai, on provenance); Riccardo Massagli, in Boskovits and Tripps 2008, 186 (Bernardino Fungai); Sallay 2008, 4, 11, 15 (Bernardino Fungai, between 1480-90).

## 28.

### Bernardino Fungai

*Virgin and Child with Four Angels, a Franciscan Saint and St. Francis of Assisi*

#### Fig. 28/1

ca. 1490-95

tempera and gold on wood

panel: 119 x 116.7 cm; painted surface: ca. 117 x 113.5 cm; thickness: 1.1-1.3 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 76.2.

#### Provenance:

Purchased from Mrs. Szilárd Markovics in 1976.

#### Technical notes:

The support consists of vertically grained planks. It has been thinned and cradled (Fig. 28/2). It conserves its original dimensions. The wood is severely worm-tunnelled; it has become fragile and crumbly, and disintegrated in some areas, especially around the edges (Fig. 28/3).

Except from the damaged bottom part, the painted surface has not been reduced in size. The integrity of the paint surface on these three sides is indicated by the punched decoration running along the edges and by the presence of unpainted wood which extends beyond fragments of *barbes* about 0.7-1 cm at the top, about 1.2-1.8 cm on the left, and about 1-1.3 cm on the right. The bottom of the painting does not preserve fragments of a *barbe* and has been extensively reconstructed. The grey strip decorated with leaves at the bottom appears to be of modern origin.

The presence of canvas is perceptible under the gesso at the top and the right edges and in some areas under the paint film elsewhere. The outlines of the figures have been incised into the gesso in the area of the gold background; incisions mark also most of the drapery folds.

The Virgin's dress has been executed gold leaf over red bole, and decorated with multi-prong punches and a red lake design to imitate a brocade pattern. The white robes of the angels flanking the Virgin have been executed in sgraffito over gold leaf; the gold among the sgraffito is decorated with parallel incisions. The embroidery on the hem of Mary's blue cloak is mostly modern but appears to be based on Fungai's original pattern (cf. the same design in Fig. 28/5).

The paint surface is covered by discoloured, yellow varnish. It is in very damaged condition: it is uneven, strongly abraded, and there are many raised areas and losses. Previous restoration interventions masked the damages with extensive retouching, which hardly left any area untouched. The largest retouched areas include the right cheek, nose and forehead of the Virgin, the dress and robe of the Virgin, the right arm of Child, the hand and the right side of the hair and neck of the angel immediately left from the Virgin, the forehead, nose, neck of the angel on the extreme left, the ear and a smaller area on the head of the saint on the left, and the feet of the angels. Serious damages occurred also along the joints of the panels. The heads of the Child and the angel to the right of the Virgin survive in relatively good condition.

Punches: multi-prong, ambiguous, circle (1 mm), double-concentric (2.5 mm), hexa-circle (3.4 mm), penta-circle (4 mm), tetra-circle (5.5 x 6 mm), tetra-lobe pointed (7.3 mm),

hexa-star (6.7 mm), octa-star (6.3 mm)<sup>879</sup> (Fig. 28/3) The haloes of the two male saints are executed in mordant gilding, now mostly abraded, and are formed of dots within a single circle.

Infrared reflectographic examination showed no underdrawing (executed with HAMAMATSU IR-C 2400-03 camera; a Kodak Wratten 87A gelatine filter was mounted on the Micro Nikkor 2.8/55 mm macrolens; sensitivity was set at 1600 nm range).

The painting is enclosed in a richly carved and gilt neo-Renaissance frame.

After its acquisition, Miklós Móré treated the work by consolidating the painted surface through ironing. In 1985, István Bóna and Miklós Gyöpös stabilized and reattached the blistered and flaking paint, and cleaned the surface in some strips to probe into the condition of the original paint under the overpainting.

### **Documentation:**

On cradle on reverse: “SZÉPMŰVÉSZETI MÚZEUM, Olasz festő 1500 körül, Madonna a Gyermekkel, 76.2, Vétel Markovits Szilárdnétól” (typed on white label, inventory number handwritten in ink).

In this middle-sized altarpiece, the Virgin is seated on a backless throne, raised on a step and placed before a stone parapet. The parapet is inlaid with marble panels – a veined black panel on the right and a reddish brown panel, perhaps imitating porphyry, on the left – and decorated with *all’antica* style carving. The Child is naked and stands on his mother’s left thigh, putting his right arm around her neck.<sup>880</sup> In his left, he holds a fruit of difficult identification, which appears in many of Fungai’s works and is most probably a simplified representation of a pomegranate copied from works executed in Benvenuto di Giovanni’s workshop at the time when Fungai himself was trained there.<sup>881</sup> The pomegranate symbolizes the church, in which the members are united, but its red juice also recalls the Passion, the blood of Christ shed for the redemption of mankind.

The Mother and Child are surrounded by four angels, who stand on the marble step. Two of them hold large lilies, symbolic of Mary’s purity. In front of the marble step, two Franciscan saints kneel in adoration. On the right, St. Francis of Assisi can be identified by

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<sup>879</sup> Cf. Frinta 1998, 70 (Aea2c: multi-prong, ambiguous); 473 (L9a: hexa-circle, 3.4 mm); 433 (K13a: penta-circle, 4 mm); 359 (J44: tetra-circle, 6.2 mm, but in reality 5.5 x 6 mm); 386 (Jb50b: tetra-lobe pointed, 7.3 mm, photograph taken from the present work); 528 (Lb22: hexa-star, 6.7 mm); 539 (Nb9: octa-star, 6.3 mm).

<sup>880</sup> Fungai experimented with similar postures for the Child already in his works datable to the later 1480s, see his Madonnas in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Fig. 27/8).

<sup>881</sup> Tátrai (1979, 87-88, 271) called attention to the frequent appearance of this fruit in the master’s works, considering it a motif “almost worth of a signature”. I believe this fruit is the same as the very similar but more carefully executed one – clearly a stylized pomegranate – which appears in Benvenuto di Giovanni’s Madonnas in the church of San Sebastiano in Valle Piatta (Bandera 1999, 120, 233-34, repr. on p. 124) and in the National Gallery of Art, Washington (inv. 1942.9.3) ascribed to Benvenuto di Giovanni by Bandera (1999, 120-21, 234, cat. 58) and to Benvenuto di Giovanni and his workshop by Boskovits (in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 111-114, with previous bibl.). Bandera (1999, 123) notes how the motif of the pomegranate spread in Sieneese art from the 1470s. The most recent proposals for the dating of Benvenuto’s above mentioned two Madonnas range between the 1470s and early 1480s.

the stigma on his hand. At the waist of his gray habit the cord is sketchily painted in dark colour. His companion on the left is similarly haloed and is robed in a darker grey habit, which is held together by a dark grey cord.<sup>882</sup> He holds two brown, crossed sticks approximately of the length of a forearm; there is a small red spot (blood?) under the stick on the left. These rare attributes have not yet been identified and the identity of the saint remains unknown.

The picture is pervaded by a quiet, pensive atmosphere; the static postures of the figures convey a sense of eternity. The rigid bilateral symmetry of the composition – reflected even in the colour scheme – is alleviated only by the differing gestures of the male saints, the slight variation in the grouping of the angels, and the lateral position of the Child. The figures form a compact group and occupy a shallow but clearly organized space in the foreground, backed by the parapet. Beyond the parapet, the space is closed off by a resplendent, punched gold background, in a way similar to many early works of the artist.

The altarpiece was purchased from a Hungarian private collection in 1976 and published by Vilmos Tátrai in 1979. Tátrai correctly inserted the previously unknown work in Fungai's oeuvre, noting the typical physiognomies of the angels and of the male saints, the stereotypical gesture of the saint of the left – which recurs in the posture of St. Catherine of Alexandria in the high altarpiece of Sta. Maria dei Servi in Siena (1498-1501) and in that of the St. Sebastian in the altarpiece of 1512 (PNS, inv. 413) –, and the unusual fruit mentioned above. There can be no doubt about Fungai's authorship. The flat and expressionless faces of the angels (Fig. 28/8), characterized by snub noses and heavy eyelids, are typical of much of Fungai's work that follows his earliest phase. Especially in the face of the male saint on the left, deficiencies in the anatomy characteristic again of Fungai's works are observable, with the eyes falling out of the horizontal axis.

Tátrai (1979) suggested a date after 1500, partly on the basis of what he considered an Umbrian influence in the rigid symmetry of the composition and in the Child's pose. Alessandra Ugucioni (1998), in contrast, saw MFA 76.2 as an early work, from the 1480s, in which the manner of Benvenuto di Giovanni is softened under the influence of Florentine painting. In the light of studies by Alessandro Angelini, Marcella Parisi and the present

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<sup>882</sup> It may be noted that in Quattrocento Italian painting Franciscans friars are often shown in habits of slightly different hues ranging anywhere from brown to grey within the same composition. This has sometimes raised perplexity but – as the neutral iconographical contexts of many works indicate (a random example is the three friars entering an oratory in an unidentified scene, repr. Carl Strehlke in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 171 [It. ed. 185], fig. 26b) – the distinction has no iconographical relevance. The purpose of the variation is more likely to revive the chromatic scheme of the paintings and to better separate visually the various and often closely grouped figures.

writer,<sup>883</sup> a dating between these two time periods seems most likely, and more precisely, at the time of Fungai's early maturity in the first half of the 1490s. The work appears to postdate the artist's strongly Florentine-inspired production datable to the 1480s (see discussion in Cat. 27). Most notable is the loss of the precision of forms and the sculptural treatment of the surface, which characterized Fungai's early Madonnas (Figs. 27/1, 27/6-7). At the same time, the gold background and the tempera technique indicate a not very advanced date, approximately within the middle of the last decade of the century. The panel predates the grandiose and overpowering altarpiece of the Servites in Siena (1498-1501), in which the hard and chiselled forms of glistening elegance are executed in *tempera grassa* or oil, and reveal the self-confidence of the artist who has reached his full maturity. In my view, the MFA 76.2 must also precede the *Stigmatization of St. Catherine* completed in 1497, in which the influence of the Griselda Master is already clearly perceptible (active in Siena around 1493-94, see Cat. 30). In fact, while some Umbrian influence may well be present in the Budapest altarpiece – if Fungai worked in Rome in 1484 or later, he could have become acquainted with the newest achievements of Florentine and Umbrian painting<sup>884</sup> – it is not yet the defining influence that reached Fungai's art after works by Perugino and Pinturicchio came to be visible in Siena in the first decade of the sixteenth century.

Instead of these elements, it is Pietro Orioli's art that perceptibly influenced the Budapest altarpiece, above all in the physiognomies of the Virgin and the angel on the far left, whose mild and gentle expressions bring to mind Orioli's figures. MFA 76.2 has close stylistic and compositional relations with a *Virgin and Child* in Siena (PNS, inv. 385)<sup>885</sup> and a Madonna known to me from photographs only.<sup>886</sup> The Madonna in Siena is a repetition of the central section of the Budapest altarpiece, but with a landscape background (Fig. 28/5). Its identical size indicated that it must be based on the same cartoon (the height of the Child from the middle toe of his right foot to top of head is 40.6 cm in Siena and 40.4 cm in Budapest; the height of the Virgin's head from her chin to the top of the veil is 15.5 cm in Siena and 15.3

<sup>883</sup> Parisi 1988-89, Parisi 1993, Dóra Sallay, "Fungai, Bernardino", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, 46, 2005, 329-331. MFA 76.2 is not mentioned by Angelini and Parisi but their reconstruction of Fungai's artistic development, on which I relied and with which I agree in their broad outlines, support the present conclusion on the date of the altarpiece.

<sup>884</sup> As noted above, Marcella Parisi suggested a payment to a Siennese painter Bernardino in Rome may relate to our painter. Alessandro Angelini recently suggested that Fungai was working with Pinturicchio in the Borgia apartments in Rome, cf. Angelini 2005<sup>1</sup>, 2005<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>885</sup> Torriti 1977-78, II (1978), 70, with colour repr.; Torriti 1990, 334-335, fig. 417 (Torriti dates it to around 1510). Torriti's dating were refused with reason by Parisi (1988-89, 317-319), who felt the small Madonna was painted in the early 1490s.

<sup>886</sup> Fototeca Zeri, Bologna, inv. 45468-69. The dimensions of this work are indicated on these photographs as 72 x 54 cm or as 60 x 45 cm, and its provenance as Rome, Paolini and Rome, Gibellino.

cm in Budapest). Not only are the poses of the Mother and the Child the same; so are many particulars of Mary's dress: in both works she wears a brocaded dress held together by a belt and slit in the lower part of the sleeve (the gold leaf of the dress is worked with a multi-prong punch and painted in red glaze); the blue cloak is decorated in mordant gilding with the same pattern. Although the Sieneſe Madonna, being an object of private devotion, is less formal, more vivacious and expressive, while the calm atmosphere of the Budapest altarpiece harks back to the early works, both works seem to date from the period when Fungai's art was moving away from the early influences by Benvenuto di Giovanni and Fra Giuliano and was closest to that of Pietro Orioli, who – as Alessandro Angelini plausibly hypothesized – may have returned to Siena in 1488 after a four year absence in Urbino and then died there prematurely in 1496.<sup>887</sup>

MFA 76.2 is among the latest altarpieces in the history of Sieneſe painting to make use of a gold ground – a feature that became rare in the last decade of the fifteenth century and definitively disappeared in the first decade of the sixteenth<sup>888</sup> – and the only *pala quadrata* that has come down to us by the hand of Fungai. In making use of a rectangular format, Fungai adhered to one of the most popular formats of Renaissance altarpiece, which began its course in Sieneſe art in the early 1460s with the altarpieces created for the Cathedral of Pienza and remained a popular form all through the last third of the fifteenth century (usually crowned by a lunette or, more rarely, by a pediment). Its use during this period, however, ran parallel with that of the *pala centinata*, the altarpiece with a round-arched top.<sup>889</sup> By the turn of the century, the latter form outdid the rectangular format and became the standard format of early sixteenth-century altarpieces, also due to the strong Umbrian influence that prevailed in Siena as a result of Perugino's and Pintoricchio's activity. Fungai himself painted several *pala centinate* after the Budapest Madonna, and one already at the beginning of his career (*Enthroned Virgin and Child with Sts. Peter and Paul*, Accademia, Venice). The gold ground and the rectangular format could well have been chosen not by the painter but the commissioner or commissioners, who, as the presence of the two Franciscan friars indicate, probably belonged to a Franciscan community.

<sup>887</sup> On Pietro di Francesco Orioli, see Angelini 1982<sup>1</sup>, 1982<sup>2</sup>; Fattorini and Paardekooper 2002.

<sup>888</sup> Other late examples include two altarpieces by Neroccio de' Landi, the *Enthroned Madonna with Six Saints* (PNS, inv. 278), dated 1492, and the Rapolano altarpiece (*Madonna and Child with Sts. Anthony Abbot and Sigismund*, National Gallery of Art, Washington) from the 1490s. The last example of a Sieneſe altarpiece with gold ground known to me Andrea di Niccolò's altarpiece (*Madonna and Child with Sts. Catherine and Jerome*) in the Cincinnati Art Museum, dated 1504.

<sup>889</sup> On the genesis of the *pala centinata*, see Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>.

**References:**

Tátrai 1979<sup>1</sup>, 81-88, 269-71 (Bernardino Fungai, after 1500); Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 44 (Bernardino Fungai); Alessandra Uguccioni, “Fungai, Bernardino”, in *Dizionario Biografico...*, vol. 50 (1998), 745-748 (Bernardino Fungai, 1480s); Frinta 1998, 70, 359, 386, 433, 473, 528, 539 (Bernardino Fungai, repertoire of punches); Dóra Sallay, “Fungai, Bernardino”, in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 46, 2005, 329-331, esp. p. 330 (Bernardino Fungai); Sallay 2008, 4, 11, 15 (Bernardino Fungai, 1490s).

## 29.

### Siene painter close to Bernardino Fungai (?), from Pintoricchio

*The Christ Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist*

#### Fig. 29/1

ca. 1505-1520

tempera and gold on poplar wood

panel: 62.4 x 42.9 cm, painted surface: 61.6 x 41.6 cm, thickness: 1.3-1.5 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 40.

#### Provenance:

Acquired by Johann Anton Ramboux in Italy before 1842;<sup>890</sup> Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 187 (as Bernardino Pinturicchio); sold 1867 at Lempertz, Cologne, no. 187 (as Bernardino Pinturicchio) to Arnold Ipolyi; Arnold Ipolyi, Pest, 1867-72; gift of Arnold Ipolyi to the National Picture Gallery in 1872, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts in 1906.

#### Technical notes:

The support is a single panel of poplar wood, slab-cut from near the centre of the log (Fig. 29/2). The panel is extensively worm tunnelled and seems to have been slightly thinned to its present thickness of about 1.3-1.5 cm. The panel has a vertical grain with a bias from the upper left corner towards the lower right (as viewed from the back), and it is slightly twisted along the diagonal axis. The intact *barbe* on all four sides indicates that the painted surface conserves its original dimensions and was originally enclosed in an engaged frame. The unpainted wood extending beyond the painted surface has a width of ca. 0.5-0.6 cm on the right and on the left, 0.3-0.7 cm at the bottom, and 0-0.3 cm at the top. Modern saw marks and open worm channels indicate that it has been trimmed on the vertical sides and the top.

The haloes of the two children, the dalmatic of the Christ Child, and John's cross and jug were executed in mordant gilding, which is now completely lost together with the underlying tempera layers. The gesso is visible in these areas. Infrared reflectography showed simple, contoured underdrawing without hatching, partly visible also to the naked eye. Inside the figures dotted contours indicating the use of a pricked and pounced cartoon are discernible. Along the main contours of the figures the dots were reinforced with continuous lines. In the paint layer of the jug of the Baptist azurite was found.

The paint surface is very damaged and abraded. The best preserved areas are the flesh areas and the white dress of the Christ Child. The brown fur dress of the Young St. John the Baptist is very abraded, with very little of the modelling surviving in some parts. With the exception of the tree on the left, hardly anything remains of the landscape background and the flower-strewn ground, which is now altered to dark brown and was originally composed of a paint mixed of azurite and some yellow pigment. The left half of the panel is more damaged than the right, and there is extensive damage along the slightly slanting axis that roughly coincides with the location of John's cross. There are large, several cm<sup>2</sup>-wide lacunae on

<sup>890</sup> The work is identifiable in Ramboux's exportation request list handed in to the Director of the Real Galleria in Florence on 7 April, 1842 (published by Merzenich 1995, 312, no. 28), as "*Il Gesù Bamb(ino), con S. Gio(vanni) batt(ista) camminando assieme, l'ultimo tiene una brocca e la croce, con paisetto figure intiere, tav(ola) / 1 [braccio]. 1 [soldi]. 6 [denari]/ - [braccio]. 14 [soldi]. [-] [denari]*", that is, ca. 62.7 x 40.9 cm.

John's cheeks, his right shoulder, dress and legs, on the left shoulder of Christ Child, and in the ground in front of John.

The panel is enclosed in modern gilt moulded frame.

The painting was conserved between 1974-79 by Mrs. György Hódy; in 1986, by Mrs. Margit Borbás Forgó, and restored by Adél Török at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts in 2004-2005.<sup>891</sup>

#### **Documentation:**

“*J.A.Ramboux*” (in red wax seal); “*H. 40*” (?) (in white chalk); “*ORSZÁGOS KÉPTÁR. KÉPTÁR. Az 1888. évi leltározás. 40. sz.*” (printed white label); “*Szépművészeti Múzeum / Pintoricchio műhelye / A gyermek Jézus és Ker. Szt. János / Ipolyi Arnold ajándéka, 1872. / Ltsz. 40*” “*40*” (printed on white label, second inv. no. handwritten).

On reverse of modern frame: “*K 1008*” (inv. of frame, handwritten on white label); “*Szépművészeti Múzeum lelt. sz. 3302*” (printed on white label, inv. handwritten); “*40 Pintoricchio műhely*” (handwritten on white label).

The work is a copy of the group of the Christ Child and the Young St. John the Baptist in the tondo of the *Holy Family with the Young Saint John the Baptist* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena (inv. 495), usually ascribed to Pintoricchio (Fig. 29/4).<sup>892</sup> MFA 40 is an interesting record relating to this Sienese tondo in that it is not a fragment, as was often believed, but a partial copy<sup>893</sup> conceived as an independent piece and once enclosed in an engaged frame.

The copying was not executed on a 1:1 scale, since the figures in the Budapest picture are larger (the height of the Christ Child is 40.2 cm in the Sienese tondo and 53 cm in the Budapest painting). The Budapest version also demonstrates a certain degree of autonomy in its composition and in some details. The painter counterbalanced the rather monotonous, parallel rightward movement of the two figures in the Sienese tondo by tilting Christ's head in the opposite direction. Several details were also changed: Christ's book is replaced by a bird; the pattern of his dalmatic is different; John's jug differs in form and decoration; his sandals and his inscribed scroll are omitted, and his cross was made shorter at the bottom. The halos were changed; the landscape background simplified, and some details such as the fountain

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<sup>891</sup> In writing this entry I relied on Adél Török's help and restoration report archived at MFA, for which I would like to express my thanks.

<sup>892</sup> Carli 1960, 20, 57, 246, pl. 146-7; Berenson 1968, 347; Torriti 1977-78, II, 40-42, figs. 31-32; Todini 1989, I, 295; Torriti 1990, 323-24, with previous bibl.; Nucciarelli 1998, 228, esp. 256 n. 49, pl. 100; Torriti 2000, 199; unsigned entry in Syson et al. 2007, 258-261; Anna Maria Guiducci, in Garibaldi and Mancini ed. 2008, 306, repr. p. 281. A proposal to modify this attribution was advanced by Pietro Scarpellini (in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2003, 225) who believes the work was executed in part by Giacomo Pacchiarotti on the basis of Pintoricchio's design.

<sup>893</sup> This was first clearly noted by Mrávik (1975, 62, 168). Before him, Pigler (1954, I, 447; 1967, I, 543-544) cited Ricci's opinion (Ricci 1902; French ed. 1903) that the work was a partial copy but Ricci in reality never claimed this.

were left out altogether. At the same time, evidence of the use of a pricked cartoon for MFA 40 indicates that its composition is derived from an intermediating work.

There are no documents for the date of the Sieneese tondo, which provides the *terminus ante quem* for the Budapest copy. Scholars unanimously date it to the late period of the artist, who moved from Rome to Siena with his workshop to work in the Sieneese Cathedral in the Piccolomini Library and the Chapel of Saint John in 1503 and died there in 1513.<sup>894</sup> For a date from the Sieneese period of the Pintoricchio speaks also the local provenance of the tondo: it comes from the Sieneese convent of S. Girolamo in Campansi (today Casa di Riposo S. Gerolamo in Campansi).<sup>895</sup>

Apart from Ramboux's historic attributions to Pintoricchio himself, attributions for the Budapest copy mostly fluctuated between the Umbrian and the Sieneese schools, reflecting the two important cultural spheres to which the tondo-model is related. Bernard Berenson first noted a stylistic relationship with the works of Bernardino Fungai in his earliest list of the Central Italian painters (1897), which was cited without comment by Schubring (1916) and Bacci (1947), and accepted by Venturi (1932). After this date, the attribution to Fungai did not elicit further response on the part of critics for a long time, and Berenson himself abandoned this suggestion in the subsequent editions of his work.<sup>896</sup> Pigler (1954, 1967) maintained that MFA 40 was produced in Pintoricchio's workshop; this opinion, however, is unacceptable for stylistic reasons. In 1975, László Mravik attempted an attribution to the Faentine artist Giovanni Battista Bertucci the Elder but his proposal did not find followers. In an unpublished thesis, Marcella Parisi (1988/89) reflected again to Berenson's old attribution by expelling the work from Fungai's catalogue and noting that its state at that time could have been a modern repainting of a copy of Pintoricchio's tondo. Lastly, Tátrai (1991) confirmed the possibility of Sieneese authorship.

In reality, the low quality and the ruinous condition of MFA 40 did not allow a realistic appraisal of the picture before the recent restoration intervention. The seriously compromised painted surface was obfuscated by later repainting, but remained little legible even after cleaning. It was the infrared examination that revealed decisively Fungaiesque features in the underpainting (Fig. 29/3). The bulging eyes, the downcast glance, the little snub nose, puffed-

<sup>894</sup> Carli (1960, 20-21) suggested a dating certainly after the mid-1490s. Nucciarelli (1998, 256 n. 49) concurs with Carli's observations. The claims for this dating are based on the Peruginisque influence perceptible in the coiffures and the similarities of the landscape with those frescoed in the Piccolomini Library (1503-08). Torriti (1990, 323-24) and Scarpellini (in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2003, 225), considered it a late work. Acidini Luchinat (1999, 73) dates the tondo around 1508-09; the author of the unsigned entry in Syson et al. 2007, 258-261, to ca. 1504-08.

<sup>895</sup> Carli 1960, 20-21; Torriti 1990, 323; unsigned entry in Syson et al. 2007, 258-261.

<sup>896</sup> The work is omitted from all the subsequent editions of Berenson's lists (1909, 1932, 1936, 1968).

up cheeks, and the little heart-shaped mouth with pursed lips are so characteristic of Fungai's physiognomies as to bring up once again the question whether the Budapest painting can be inserted in this painter's ambience.

As has been several times noted, the quality of MFA 40 falls below the level of Fungai's autograph works. Although it is based on the same formal language, characterized by the above-mentioned facial types, chubby limbs, and wide, flat hands with short fingers, the heavy figures in the Budapest piece are rendered in coarse, rigid, and summary forms, and lack the modest but supple grace of Fungai's children. Since the upper layers of the paint surface are now completely destroyed, it is difficult to tell how this stiff, wooden appearance may have been alleviated by the original modelling. In any event, the painting is of modest quality and it was probably only due to its relation to Pintoricchio's work that it was chosen as one of the sixty best pieces in Arnold Ipolyi's large collection to be donated to the Gallery in 1872.

Fungai's authorship should be excluded not only for qualitative but for technical reasons as well: the artist began experimenting with oil painting already at the end of the fifteenth century, and in the next decades he worked in a mixed tempera-oil technique or in oil,<sup>897</sup> while MFA 40 is executed in traditional tempera. Most likely it is by a *retardateur* master working in Fungai's circle in the first two decades of the sixteenth-century. During the last restoration of the work no question about the authenticity of the picture was raised and if the possibility that we are dealing with a pre-1842 modern copy were considered,<sup>898</sup> it would be very difficult to explain why, at this date, a partial copy of Pintoricchio's tondo should be executed just in the style of Fungai, who at that time was known to a few local erudite writers only.

The judgment of MFA 40 remains a difficult issue. The fact that it is a partial copy is very unusual, but a new interest rising in the early sixteenth century in the representation of the two holy children together may account for the choice of the subject matter.<sup>899</sup>

#### References:

Ramboux 1862, 32-33, no. 187 (Bernardino Pinturicchio); Ramboux, 1867, 34, no. 187 (Bernardino Pinturicchio); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1873, 5, no. 42 (Sienese

<sup>897</sup> Cf. Parisi 1988-89; Dóra Sallay, "Fungai, Bernardino", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 46, 2005, 329-331; Bomford, Roy, and Syson 2006.

<sup>898</sup> An arch-topped, also Fungaiesque copy of same detail but closer in composition to the Pintoricchiesque model (formerly H. Oelze coll., Amsterdam, 32.5 x 19 cm, photograph at the KHI, inv. 196092) is difficult to judge from a photograph. It may be a modern copy. It shows at least two phases, the composition having been enlarged at a second phase all around and a base with the inscription "GESV E S. GIOVANNI" added.

<sup>899</sup> Cf. Aronberg Lavin 1955, 91 n. 34.

school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1876, 6, no. 80 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.), *Országos Képtár...* 1878, 6, no. 80 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.), *Országos Képtár...* 1879, 6, no. 80 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pulszky 1881, 8, no. 35 (Umbria, 15th c.); Pulszky 1888, 6, no. 40 (Umbrian painter, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Az Országos Képtár...* 1897, 24, no. 40 (Umbrian, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 142, no. 40 (Umbrian, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Berenson 1897, 143 (Bernardino Fungai); Ricci 1902, 16 n. § [French ed. 1903, 17 n. 2] (reports the existence of “an old copy on panel of the two children in the Buda-Pesth Gallery”); Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>, 388, no. 40 (after Bernardino Betti [Pinturicchio], 16<sup>th</sup> c.); Térey 1913<sup>1</sup>, 297, no. 40 (copy after Bernardino Betti di Pinturicchio); Paul Schubring, “Fungai (Fungari, Fongario), Bernardino”, in Thieme and Becker ed. 1907-50, XII (1916), 587 (reports Berenson’s attribution of the work to Bernardino Fungai, referring to the work erroneously as a “Baptism of Christ”); Venturi 1901-40, IX, pt. V (1932), 329 (Bernardino Fungai, reports the work erroneously as “Baptism of Christ”), Bacci 1947, 19 (cites Berenson’s attribution without comment, reports the work erroneously as “Baptism of Christ”); Pigler 1954, I, 447 (workshop of Pinturicchio); Pigler 1967, I, 543-544 (workshop of Pinturicchio, fragment); Mravik 1975, 62, 168, fig. 45 (attributed to Giovanni Battista Bertucci, early work, partial copy); Parisi 1988-89, 455-56 (not Bernardino Fungai); Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 96 (possibly Sienese copy after the tondo by Pinturicchio); Merzenich 1995, 312, no. 28 (publication of Ramboux’s exportation request from Tuscany); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 571, no. 187, repr. (follower of Bernardino Pinturicchio); Anonymous author, “Stílusgyakorlatok – Restaurátor diplomázók” [Stylistic exercises – Restorer Graduates], *Új Művészet*, XVI, no. 9, 2005, 24 (after Pinturicchio, ca. 1500, colour repr. after restoration); Sallay 2008, 15 (Sienese painter close to Fungai).

## Master of the Story of Griselda

(active in Siena in the 1490s)

The anonymous painter received his name (Berenson 1930-31<sup>2</sup>) from three large *spalliera* panels (National Gallery, London, inv. NG 921-914) that depict Boccaccio's story about the obedient wife Griselda. As Luke Syson recently established (2005), the three panels were painted for members of the Spannocchi family, probably around 1494. Approximately at the same time, the same patrons or members of the Piccolomini family ordered a series of eight panels depicting virtuous men and women, of which four were entirely, and two partly, painted by the Griselda Master. Apart from these *spalliere* panels, only a polygonal *desco da parto* showing *A Bacchanalian Scene* can be attributed to the Griselda Master with certainty (private coll., Zurich).

These works reveal a highly original and sophisticated artist, whose figural style has its primary inspiration in Signorelli, but is freely transformed into typically elongated figures with tiny feet and hands, standing in stiff poses or moving with a swaying or dancing movement in vast, airy spaces. The master's landscapes show an Umbrian influence; his architecture may have been inspired by the "ideal city" paintings of the Renaissance. The Griselda Master worked partly in an oil technique, with swift and light brushwork on a small scale, and with rich modelling on a large scale that sometimes lend a metallic shine to the flesh areas (Fig. 30/9). In his more mature works, he combines heavy and angularly creased draperies with fluttering and transparent veils, with dynamic and highly decorative results. The bright colours and the ornateness of the surface in his narrative panels betray the influence of Pinturicchio. The supreme elegance and sensitivity characteristic of his art finds perhaps its highest point of expression in the figure of *Artemisia* (Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan).

The personality of the artist has been a matter of long-standing debate, which focused mostly on his origin, artistic formation, and further activity. Although many suggestions have been advanced, the painter still cannot be traced without doubt anywhere else than in Siena in the 1490s and his historical identity remains uncertain. Most scholars agree in seeing in his art a formative influence of Luca Signorelli but are divided especially over questions regarding his origin, the circumstances of his training, and the precise extent of his *oeuvre*.<sup>900</sup>

Because of the decisive stylistic influences on his art, many critics considered the Griselda Master to be of Umbrian origin. Crowe and Cavalcaselle (1866) noted that his style

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<sup>900</sup> For other works attributed to the Griselda Master, none of which met with scholarly consensus, see Vertova 1984; Laurence Kanter, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 344-351 (It. ed. 358-65); Angelini 2005<sup>1</sup>.

was close to works attributed to Francesco Signorelli, the nephew of Luca. Coor (1961) thought of Luca Signorelli's sons Antonio and Polidoro. Martini (1960) and Longhi (1964) saw in the anonymous master an assistant who worked with Signorelli on the frescos of the Sistine Chapel, the former suggesting that he might be the mature Bartolommeo della Gatta, the latter maintaining that the anonymous artist remained in Signorelli's service to the end of the century. Gilbert (1996) identified him with Marco Zoppo.

Others attempted to identify him with painters active in Siena and Volterra. Angelini (1989) advanced the hypothesis that the young Griselda Master may be the Maestro dei Putti Bizzari, another *anonimo* named after a *Virgin and Child with saints* (PNS. inv. 571) and is identifiable, according to a recent but still tentative proposal by the same author (2005<sup>1</sup>, 2005<sup>2</sup>) with Pietro di Andrea da Volterra, of whom Vasari speaks in the biography of Baldassare Peruzzi.<sup>901</sup> Miller (1993) unconvincingly argued for the identification with Peruzzi himself. Some critics excluded the Umbrian origin of the painter by pointing out his collaboration with many Sieneese artists, the facts that the Griselda Master's hand is not detectable in Signorelli's works before ca. 1490, nor did any painting by Signorelli dating from before ca. 1490 influence the works of the Griselda master (Kanter 1988). Recent investigations by Luke Syson and his colleagues (2005, 2006, 2007) convincingly demonstrated that Francesco di Giorgio appears to have been initially responsible for the series of virtuous men and women, and the involvement of the Griselda master probably occurred at a later phase.

Less founded seems to be the argumentation (Kanter 1988; Syson 2005, Syson 2007) that this collaboration can suggest a training of the Griselda Master with Francesco di Giorgio, and that Signorelli's influence can be explained simply through the Griselda Master's presumed contact with Signorelli through Francesco di Giorgio at the time of the decoration of the Bichi chapel in the church of S. Agostino in Siena (most likely around 1488-90), executed in collaboration by Signorelli and Francesco di Giorgio and their assistants.<sup>902</sup> Even less stylistic connection exists, in my view, between Benvenuto di Giovanni and the Griselda Master. The features resembling the art of Benvenuto and Francesco di Giorgio are

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<sup>901</sup> In the meantime, Angelini put forward (1993) and later revoked (2005<sup>1</sup>) another proposal for identifying the unknown painter with Girolamo di Domenico. This hypothesis was also rejected by Boskovits (2003) on stylistic grounds. More recently, Angelini (2005<sup>1</sup>, 2005<sup>2</sup>) attributed a substantial corpus of paintings and presented a hypothetical reconstruction of the painter's activity. Among other things, he suggested that the Griselda Master, perhaps alias Pietro di Andrea da Volterra, was working with other Sieneese painters under the leadership of Pinturicchio in the Borgia apartment in Rome in 1493-94.

<sup>902</sup> Cf. Seidel 1979 and 1984 (republ. in English 2005).

mostly motivic or easily borrowed stylistic elements,<sup>903</sup> which certainly seem more superficial than the master's overall style that is deeply rooted in Signorelli's art. Until more certain information comes to light, I agree with Boskovits (2003) that the basic point of reference for the Griselda master remains Signorelli's art. At the same, Angelini may well be right in looking for the master's geographical origins in the region of Volterra, where he could perhaps join Signorelli, at the latest, during the latter's stay there in 1490-91 and came to Siena perhaps with Signorelli's intermediation.

**Select bibliography:**

Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1864-66, III (1866), 33; Venturi 1900; De Nicola 1917; Berenson 1930-31<sup>2</sup>, 750-53; Coor 1961, 94-96; Longhi 1964; Russel 1973, 802; Tátrai 1979<sup>2</sup>; Vertova 1984; Alessandro Angelini, "Maestro di Griselda", in Zeri ed. 1987, II, 690-691 (with bibl.); Laurence Kanter, in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 344 (It. ed. 358); Angelini 1989; Angelini in Bellosi ed. 1993, 424-427; Roberto Bartalini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 463-468; Laura Cavazzini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 524; Miller 1993; Gilbert in Turner ed. 1996, XX, 684; De Carli 1997, 178-179; Kanter 2000; Damian 2001, 24-26; Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 496-503, 536-539; Angelini 2005<sup>1</sup>; Angelini 2005<sup>2</sup>; Syson 2005; Dunkerton, Christensen, and Syson 2006; Luke Syson, "Heroes and Heroines", in Syson et al. 2007, 220-245.

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<sup>903</sup> The similarity seems to me superficial between the figures of the Griselda Master and those of Benvenuto. The anonymous master's attenuated, hipshot, and weightlessly gliding figures have little in common with Benvenuto's lean, awkward, and muscular bodies. Francesco di Giorgio does seem to have had an influence on the Griselda master but this is observable in borrowed motifs such as the formation of the mass of blond hair (cf. Dunkerton, Christensen, and Syson 2006, pl. 14 on p. 17) or in the imitating the architectural setting.

### 30. Master of the Story of Griselda

*Tiberius Gracchus*

#### Fig. 30/1

ca. 1493-94

tempera, oil and gold on wood

panel: 107.2 x 51 cm (top) / 51.4 cm (bottom); painted surface: ca. 103.5 x ca. 49.4 cm;

thickness: ca. 3.9 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 64.

#### Provenance:

Esterházy Collection, Vienna, acquired probably after 1812 and certainly by 1820 (as Pinturicchio);<sup>904</sup> sold to the National Picture Gallery in Pest in 1870-71, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts in 1906.

#### Inscription:

On pedestal: "TIBERIVS GRACCHVS / MAS EST QVEM PERIMIT SOSPES SED FOEMINA SERPENS / CONIVGI SIC LAETVS SOSPITE GRACCHVS OBIT / NEC VENIT STYGIAS VXORIVS ARDOR AD VNDAS / CONIVGIS AT CHARO PECTORE SEMPER ERIT"

#### Exhibited:

Church of Sant'Agostino, Siena (25 April – 31 July, 1993): *Francesco di Giorgio e il Rinascimento a Siena, 1450-1500*, cat. 103d; The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal (24 April – 4 August, 2002): *Italian Old Masters from Raphael to Tiepolo: The Collection of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts*, cat. 5; National Gallery, London (23 October, 2007 – 13 January, 2008): *Renaissance Siena: Art for a City*, cat. 68.

#### Technical notes:

The support consists of a single piece of wood, probably poplar, which has a vertical grain and is slightly warped (Fig. 30/2). It retains its original thickness and dimensions. The sides of the panel are intact and the shape of the arched top original. There are two rows of three old, hand-made nails each located approximately at 15.5 cm from the bottom and at 27 cm from the top. The nails, which originally must have held two battens in place, have been cut.

The gesso ground covers the entire panel and is intact. There are dribbles of gesso on the sides of the panel.<sup>905</sup> The area to be painted was marked by an incised line situated at 2.5 cm from the top of the panel, 1.8-2 cm from the left, 0.7-1 cm from the right edge, and 1.7-1.8 cm from the bottom. The painter often overpassed this line in a careless, irregular manner, knowing that the areas beyond the incision would be covered by a frame added afterwards.<sup>906</sup>

<sup>904</sup> The work does not appear in a complete inventory of the collection from 1812 ([J. Fischer]: *Catalog der Gemälde-Gallerie des durchlauchtigen Fürsten Esterházy von Galantha zu Laxenburg bey Wien*. Wien 1812) but is present in an inventory drawn up in 1820 ([J. Fischer and A. Rothmüller]: "Inventarium No. 10 der fürstlich Esterhazyschen Gemälde, 1820", publ. in Meller 1915, 199-237, esp. 219, no. 523.

<sup>905</sup> Repr. Dunkerton, Christensen, and Syson 2006, 27 pl. 32.

<sup>906</sup> This technique is unusual for fifteenth-century Siena and is explainable with the fact that the panels in the series were painted separately and framed together after completion.

The statue of the Apollo, the base and capital of the column, the head of the spear, the hem of Tiberius' mantle the wings of the putti, the inscription and its surrounding decoration (including the semilunettes), and are gilt.

Infrared reflectography has revealed changes in the course of the execution. Two figures standing on the top right corners of the edifice were omitted from the final composition. Changes were effected especially in the hair and the right fingers of the main figure).

The painting is in fairly good condition, with some parts very well preserved, others less. There are minor damages, scratches and intends all over. Cleaning has revealed evenly dispersed losses in the painted surface (Fig. 30/8). The worst affected areas are the left hand, the brown mantle, the red shoulder-cloth of the main figure and the pedestal around the putti (Fig. 30/10 a, b). Larger losses occurred in third to fifth toes of the left foot, in the lip, under the chin, and the upper part of the neck of the main figure. There is a long vertical scratch across the scene in the left background.

The panel is enclosed in modern frame.<sup>907</sup> The work was restored in 1992 by Györgyi Juhász.

### Documentation:

On reverse: “*quarto*” (handwritten, probably 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> c., Fig. 30/3); “*BERNARDINO. PINTV/RICCHIO.DI.PERVGIA / Nato 1469. Morto 1513 / . PASCOLI .*” (in ink on white label, probably 19<sup>th</sup> c., Fig. 30/3); “930/3” (handwritten); “*Szép művészeti Múzeum / A Griselda Legenda Mestere: / Tiberius Gracchus / 64 / Az Esterházy Gyűjteményből*” (typed on white label, inv. handwritten).

Formerly on reverse: “*ORSZ. KÉPTÁR. A leltár száma 64*” (printed on white label).

The story of Tiberius Gracchus is well known as an *exemplum* of conjugal love and self-sacrifice. Various antique and late medieval authors recount how the Roman consul, the son-in-law of Scipio Africanus, found two snakes in his house and asked the soothsayers about the meaning of the event. He was told that he could not slay or let escape both but had to kill one of them. If he chose the kill the male serpent he would bring about his own death; if he killed the female, that of his wife, Cornelia. Since Tiberius Gracchus loved his wife dearly, he killed the male serpent and died shortly afterwards, leaving behind Cornelia and their twelve children (two of whom, Tiberius and Gaius, would become the tribunes of the people).<sup>908</sup>

The protagonist stands on a pedestal whose inscription records his virtuous deed in two Latin distiches. “Male is the serpent he killed and female the one that is saved / Gracchus’

<sup>907</sup> Repr. in Caciorgna and Guerrini 2003, p. 343.

<sup>908</sup> On the various sources of the stories of Tiberius Gracchus and the other heroes and heroines in the cycle (Cicero's *De Divinatione*, Valerius Maximus' *Nove libri di fatti e detti memorabili*, Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia*, Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*; Ovid's *Fasti*, Petrarch's *Trionfi*, Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus*, *Auctor de viris illustribus* etc.) see Tátrai 1979, 45-46; Caciorgna 2001 [2002]; Marilena Caciorgna, in Caciorgna and Guerrini 2003, 341-343; Caciorgna and Guerrini 2005, esp. 159-161. Caciorgna (2005, esp. 154-159) hypothesized that the author of the epigrams was the Marchigian humanist Benedetto da Cingoli, who was professor of poetry in Siena between 1483 and 1495, the year of his death). As noted by Caciorgna (2001 [2002] and in Caciorgna and Guerrini 2003, 342), the sources vary somewhat in their account of the story of Tiberius. According to Plutarch and the *Auctor de viris illustribus*, Tiberius found the snakes in his bed; whereas Valerius Maximus and Pliny the Elder say they were found in his house. Only Plutarch says that Tiberius killed the male serpent himself. On the basis of exegesis of the sources, Caciorgna concludes that the primary sources for MFA 64 were Plutarch and Valerius Maximus.

death is joyful since the wife is safe / the conjugal love will not reach the waves of the Styx / but will always remain in the loved heart of the wife.”<sup>909</sup> Tiberius is shown in the act of piercing the neck of one serpent while the other one quickly escapes. In the background, he appears three times with his wife. Under the arcades of an elegant *all’antica* building on the left, he and Cornelia express their fright upon noticing the two snakes on the ground. In the right background, the couple looks up to the statue of Apollo and gesticulate in apparent distress. In front the building on the left, there is the episode of slaying the male serpent again in the wife’s presence, with the female serpent escaping to the left (Figs. 30/5-6). A continuous landscape of undulating hills and winding roads unites the foreground with the far distance.

The Griselda master portrayed Tiberius Gracchus as a youth of idealized beauty (belying Plutarch’s account according to which Tiberius’ old age was one reason for his self-sacrifice).<sup>910</sup> The hero’s delicate and melancholic face is framed by a mass of silky, curled hair. Bending his head to the left and glancing down, he pierces the coiling snake at his feet with an elegant and light gesture. The sway of his body, his stance (reversed) and his gesture of gathering his copious, heavy drapery owes much to Luca Signorelli’s female figure in the background of the central part of the Bichi altarpiece.<sup>911</sup> The story is told with exaggerated gestures but without a feeling of drama or violence, which lends a pantomime-like effect to the narrative.

The *Tiberius Gracchus* formed part of a cycle of virtuous men and women, which probably consisted of eight panels, portraying four men and four women.<sup>912</sup> The following works composed the cycle,<sup>913</sup> besides the *Tiberius*:

2. Francesco di Giorgio and workshop, and the Griselda Master: *Scipio Africanus* (Museo del Bargello, Florence, inv. 2023, Fig. 30/11 c);<sup>914</sup>

<sup>909</sup> An earlier restoration reinforced the inscription and altered some letters in the process, which hindered the reading and interpretation of the inscription until the restoration of 1992 (cf. Fig. 30/7). The most important misunderstanding regarded a word in the last line, which before the last restoration read as “PICTORE” instead of “PECTORE”. For an analysis of the inscription of by Marilena Caciorgna, see transcription and translation in Caciorgna-Guerrini 2003, 341, 343 n. 3. Caciorgna transcribed CONIVGE instead of “CONIVGI” in the second line of the inscription.

<sup>910</sup> Cf. Marilena Caciorgna, in Caciorgna and Guerrini 2003, 342.

<sup>911</sup> Repr. in Syson et al. 2007, 203, cat. 59.

<sup>912</sup> On the earlier and now universally rejected proposals of the adding further panels to the series, cf Dunkerton, Christensen, and Syson 2006, 64 n. 49.

<sup>913</sup> For a detailed discussion of the all eight panels, see esp. Tátrai 1979; Roberto Bartalini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 462-68; Barriault 1994, 78-82, 148-52; Dunkerton, Christensen, and Syson 2006; and Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 234-244. The following notes will cite essential bibliography relating to the individual panels only.

<sup>914</sup> Weller 1943, 222-25; Toledano 1987, 106-107, cat. 40; Iorio 1993, 207-209 (Iorio inexplicably omits reference to the Budapest panel in his discussion of the series). The *Scipio* measures 106 x 51 cm. Critics concord in attributing the background to the Griselda Master. Opinions are divided about the main figure. Toledano (1987, 108) proposed that Francesco perhaps painted the face of the main figure only. In his review of

3. The Griselda Master: *Alexander the Great* (The Barber Institute of Art, Birmingham, inv. 51.4, Fig. 30/11 a)<sup>915</sup>
4. The Griselda Master: *Joseph of Egypt* (by other believed to be *Eunostos of Tanagra* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, Kress Coll., 1952.5.2, Fig. 30/11 b)<sup>916</sup>
5. The Griselda Master: *Artemisia* (Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan, inv. 1126/473, Fig. 30/12 b)<sup>917</sup>
6. Neroccio de' Landi and the Griselda Master: *Claudia Quinta* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Coll., inv. 1937.1.12, Fig. 30/12 d)<sup>918</sup>
7. Matteo di Giovanni: *Judith or Tomyris of Scythia* (Indiana University Museum, Bloomington, inv. L62.163, Fig. 30/12 a)<sup>919</sup>
8. Pietro Orioli: *Sulpitia* (Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, inv. 37.161, Fig. 30/12 c)<sup>920</sup>

The cycle raised much interest among scholars who sought to answer a long series of questions. Who commissioned it, on what occasion and for what ambience? Is the cycle as we know it complete or did further works belong to it? Who are the personages now deprived of their identifying inscription and what was the concept of the iconographical programme? How were the panels arranged in their original setting? When were they painted? Did the several artists, whose hands are traceable in the works, work on the pieces simultaneously or in succession after one another? Who is the anonymous painter who had the lion's share in the execution? Was he the leading artist in the program, delegating work to the others, or did he take the project over from his colleagues?

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Toledano's book, Angelini (1988, 21) attributed the main figure to an anonymous assistant of Francesco di Giorgio baptized the "Fiduciario di Francesco", an opinion accepted by Roberto Bartolini (Bellosi ed. 1993, 462) but rejected by Dunkerton, Christensen, and Syson 2006, esp. 32, 66 n. 104 and by Luke Syson (in Syson et al. 2007, 234). Stylistically, and in particular in the marked plasticity of the face, the figure is indeed closer to the signed altarpiece of Francesco di Giorgio (PNS, inv. 437) than to the corpus generally attributed to the group "Fiduciario di Francesco".

<sup>915</sup> Borenus 1913; Spencer-Longhurst 1999, 38. The *Alexander* measures 106 x 51.5 cm. The subject of the work was first identified by Mode 1974, 80 n. 7.

<sup>916</sup> Miklós Boskovits in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 496-503, with bibl. The piece depicting *Joseph of Egypt* or *Eunostos of Tanagra* is truncated at bottom and transferred to canvas. It now measures 88.5 x 52.5 cm. The identity of the figure is not entirely certain (cf. Shapley 1968, 98; Parri 1991; Caciorgna 1995, Caciorgna 2000, 58; Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 502 n. 6) and it has been often suggested that the reason for depriving it of its inscription was to render its subject unidentifiable. Caciorgna (1995) argued that the motif that identifies Joseph is his mace (*bastone da comando*), which he holds in quality of the *maior domus* of Potiphar.

<sup>917</sup> Pirovano ed. 1982, 149-151, cat. 184; Federica Armiraglio, in *The Poldi Pezzoli Museum...* 2005, cat. 23. The *Artemisia* is truncated at bottom and measures 87.8 x 46.3 cm. The identity of this figure, earlier thought to be St. Barbara, Mary Magdalene, or Faith, was established by Coor in 1961 (95 n. 331).

<sup>918</sup> Miklós Boskovits, in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 536-539, with bibl. The *Claudia Quinta* measures 104 x 46 cm and retains its original thickness of 3.2 cm. Opinions vary about who was responsible for the landscape in this panel. Kanter (in Christiansen, Kanter, and Strehlke 1988, 344 [It. ed. 358] and Kanter 2000) and Boskovits (2003, 538) argued for Neroccio's authorship. Stylistic evidence and technical examinations seem support those who attribute the background to the Griselda Master (cf. Dunkerton, Christensen, and Syson 2006, esp. 36-40; Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 235).

<sup>919</sup> Trimpi 1987, 113-115.

<sup>920</sup> Zeri 1976, I, 134-138, acquired in 1902 from the collection of Don Marcello Massarenti in Rome. The *Sulpitia* measures 106.7 x 46.3 cm. The thickness of the panel is 2.1 cm.

The compositions clearly follow a pre-established scheme: the figures stand on pedestals inscribed with classical verses relating to their story (this has been cut away in the *Joseph*, the *Artemisia*, and in the *Judith* or *Tomyris* which has been reduced to half length). Filling the entire, arch-topped pictorial field, the protagonists tower before a landscape in which episodes from their stories are shown. This solution but can also be interpreted as a modernized version of the idea used since the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the *vita* retables of saints, and, as noted also by Syson,<sup>921</sup> in this form it is very likely borrowed directly from Signorelli's works (cf. *Portrait of a Man*, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin). All the women hold an attribute, and all the men, a weapon (except *Joseph*, who has a mace). The inscriptions are held by putti, who turn their heads outwards and their legs are either crossed or open.

The virtuous men and women have long been recognized as paragons of the virtues of chastity, conjugal love, marital fidelity, and continence. Such an iconographical program suggests the original function of the pieces as *spalliera* panels in a noble Sienese residence,<sup>922</sup> probably commissioned on occasion of a marriage to decorate the dwelling of the newly wed couple.<sup>923</sup>

No evidence exists for the original location of the panels. After their dispersal, the first documented panel is precisely the *Tiberius Gracchus* which appeared in an inventory of the Esterházy collection in 1820 as a work by Pinturicchio.<sup>924</sup> Critics (Crowe and Cavalcaselle, followed by Crutwell, A. Venturi, and others) soon recognized that, instead of Pinturicchio, the work had strongest stylistic ties with Luca Signorelli, and attributed the work to the students or followers of Signorelli.<sup>925</sup> On occasion of the *Exhibition of the work of Luca Signorelli* at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in London, 1893, where the work was exhibited by way of a photograph, Charles Fairfax Murray was the first to connect the *Tiberius* with another work from the series, *Alexander* (then Cook coll., Richmond), which was present at the exhibition, and remarked that 'two more of the series were seen within the last few years in dealer's hands in Florence'. Murray attributed both the *Tiberius* and the *Alexander* to Luca

<sup>921</sup> Syson et al. 2007, 235.

<sup>922</sup> The decoration of private apartments with the representation of cycles of virtues, heroes and heroines, famous men and women enjoyed a particular vogue in Siena in the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries. For a discussion of Sienese cycles of this type, see Tátrai 1979, 42-44, 46-49; Vertova 1984; Parri 1991, 287 n. 1; Caciorgna and Guerrini 2003.

<sup>923</sup> Tátrai 1979, esp. 44-46. There has been some scepticism about how the representation of Judith would fits into this iconographical programme. It has been suggested that if the work represents Judith, she is included as a paragon of chastity.

<sup>924</sup> Published by Meller 1915, 219, no. 523 "*B. Pinturicchio: Crachus zertritt die Schlange*".

<sup>925</sup> Exceptions were Pulszky (1881, 1888), who believed it to be an autograph work of Luca Signorelli, Berenson (1909), who tentatively proposed Fungai's name, Schubring (1515), who ascribed the work to Amico Aspertini, Mayer (1931) who favoured Neroccio, and Venturi, who followed Berenson's attribution to Fungai.

Signorelli, but was at the same time the first to note the “remarkable resemblances [of these two works] to the three pictures purchased by the National Gallery under the name of Pinturicchio from the Barker collection, “The Story of Griselda”, which he nevertheless attributed to the school of Signorelli.<sup>926</sup> Crutwell (1899) was of the opinion that the *Tiberius* was by an Umbrian follower of Signorelli and affirmed that it was the same hand who painted the three panels with the story of Griselda in London. Perhaps independently, Adolfo Venturi (1900) expressed a similar opinion and connected the *Tiberius* with two other figures (the *Claudia* then in the Dreyfus coll., Paris and the *Sulpitia* then in the Massarenti coll., Rome).<sup>927</sup> He noted the crescents in the hands of the putti and suggested they could be heraldic elements. In 1913 and 1914, Tancred Borenius noted again that *Alexander* belonged to the series;<sup>928</sup> in 1917, De Nicola added the *Scipio* (Bargello, Florence) and another “hero” (the *Joseph* or *Eunostos* then with the Dowdeswell brothers). De Nicola accurately distinguished between the various hands responsible for the six works known to him and noted in particular that the unknown painter – “a confirmed Sieneese, although more Umbrian in style” – was responsible for the backgrounds of the *Scipio* and the *Claudia*. Because of the presence of the crescents, he proposed the Piccolomini family as commissioners, whose coat of arms this motif dominates.

In 1930-31 Berenson baptized the anonymous artist the Griselda Master, enlarged the series with the female figure in Milan (*Artemisia*), and postulated that four of the panels were designed and in varying degree also executed by Signorelli, aided by the Griselda master, whom Berenson considered as a Sieneese painter.<sup>929</sup> His view on the participation of Signorelli in the project had many followers in subsequent literature.<sup>930</sup> Relying on a suggestion from 1941, Coor added the *Judith* or *Tomyris* by Matteo di Giovanni in 1961. Since the bottom half of Matteo’s panel is cut away and the identity of the figure is uncertain, its association with

<sup>926</sup> *Exhibition of the work of Luca Signorelli...* 1893, XV (Alexander), 13, no. 71 (*Tiberius Gracchus*), 23, nos. 125-127 (“The Story of Griselda”). The Griselda panels were also represented in the exhibition by photographs. Murray (*ibid.* XV) noted that the *Alexander* illustrates “the relation of Signorelli to Pinturicchio”. Interestingly, the *Artemisia* was also exhibited through a photograph but its relation with the other two works escaped notice, no doubt in part because of the loss of its pedestal. Identified as “Mary Magdalen”, it was in fact judged as “Assigned to Signorelli, but not by him, or even of his school” (*ibid.* 11, no. 51).

<sup>927</sup> Venturi attributed all of these works to one hand, including the figure of *Claudia*, which is in fact by Neroccio. Together with Murray (*Exhibition of the work of Luca Signorelli...* 1893), he is to be credited with the first step towards the reconstruction of the series, not Giacomo De Nicola, as often claimed in literature.

<sup>928</sup> Borenius 1913, 69-70; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1903-1915, V (1914), ed. T. Borenius, 119 and n. 3.

<sup>929</sup> “Niente del Signorelli è negli sfondi, ed egli dovette lasciare il paesaggio e gli altri particolari a un suo aiuto senese, educato nelle tradizioni di Neroccio e di Benvenuto, che possiamo indicare col nome Maestro di Griselda.” The view that Signorelli was involved in the design of some of the panels was followed by many scholars (Wellner 1943, 222-23; Coor 1961, 94-95; Pigler 1967, 636; Salmi 1967, 77; Shapley 1968, 98, Berenson 1968, 252, 395; Mravik 1983) but is unanimously rejected in recent decades.

<sup>930</sup> Weller 1943, 222-23

the series was often questioned and not definitively proved until 2006 on the basis of technical examinations.<sup>931</sup>

The eight panels and the *spalliere* with the story of Griselda were first studied extensively by Vilmos Tátrai (1979) in a seminal article. Tátrai analyzed the iconography, the sources, the problems of attribution, dating, and the original context of the two cycles, with a special focus on the possible original decoration of the Spannocchi palace. Noting the triumphal arch on which four armed men stand, Tátrai suggested that the Griselda panels, in which this motif appears perhaps symbolizing the triumph of love, were commissioned on occasion of the double marriage of Antonio and Giulio Spannocchi, for whose wedding on 17 January 1494 (Sienese style 1493) a similar triumphant arch was erected in front of the Spannocchi palace.<sup>932</sup> Tátrai cautiously suggested that the cycle of famous men and women were perhaps also painted for the Spannocchi, since these panels too must commemorate an important wedding. As for the crescents, Tátrai pointed out that the Spannocchi were entitled to use this motif in their own coat of arms.<sup>933</sup> Tátrai dated both cycles for the second half of the last decade of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>934</sup>

Tátrai's contribution set the foundations for the further study of the series; yet many questions remained unanswered. Great steps towards resolving the problems of dating and attribution were made with Angelini's (1982<sup>1</sup>) discovery that a large group of paintings, including the *Sulpitia*, were painted not by Pacchiarotti (born 1474) but by Pietro Orioli (died 1496). Equally important was Max Seidel's (1979, 1984, republ. 2005) redating of the decoration of the Bichi chapel to around 1488-89 from 1498, as formerly believed. These modifications established a *terminus ante quem* of 1496 for the *Sulpitia* and allowed an earlier dating of the *Artemisia*, an adaptation from Signorelli's Mary Magdalene in the Bichi altarpiece. Obstacles were thus removed from dating the cycle in the first half of the 1490s (rather than the second, as scholars necessarily believed earlier). Meanwhile, arguments about the date of Matteo di Giovanni's death, traditionally believed to be 1495 but argued by Trimpi (1987, 21-22) to have occurred between May 1497 and March 1499, complicated the

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<sup>931</sup> Dunkerton, Christensen, and Syson 2006.

<sup>932</sup> Ugurgieri 323-24, cited by Tátrai 1979, 54-55. The triumphal arch is mentioned also by the contemporary Allegretto Allegretti, cf. Tátrai, 65, n. 124 and Syson 2005, 205 n. 20).

<sup>933</sup> This was granted by Pope Pius II (Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini) to his treasurer Ambrogio Spannocchi, the father of the two brothers (Tátrai 1979, 58).

<sup>934</sup> Tátrai's hypothesis for the cycle of famous men and women was met with general approval. At the same time, it was often unfavourably distorted by inaccurate later citations, especially as far as the dating and the commissioning was concerned. The author's caution regarding his own hypothesis was often overlooked: Tátrai in fact emphasized (p. 63) that the Griselda-cycle was likely to have been commissioned by the Spannocchi family, whereas the question of patronage in the case of the heroes and heroines had to remain open in the absence of sources.

situation, but Paardekooper and Fattorini recently confirmed the death date of the painter in 1495, giving further support for a pre-1495 dating of the series.<sup>935</sup>

Questions of dating depended also on how critics viewed the relative chronology of the panels. Many thought that the participation of so many different artists indicated a delayed course of an execution, during which the panels were executed one after the other.<sup>936</sup> Others interpreted the collaboration as a sign of haste and argued for a relatively short period of execution when the artists would have worked simultaneously.<sup>937</sup> Signorelli was often supposed to have received the commission (which he would have then delegated to the Griselda master), or the Griselda Master was held to be the leading master of the series.<sup>938</sup> Contrary opinion held that the Griselda master was involved only in the later stages of the execution to finish the series.<sup>939</sup>

Tátrai's suggestion that the Griselda panels were painted for the Spannocchi was received positively but with little critical reflection,<sup>940</sup> whereas his supposition that the sequence of heroes and heroines were part of the same decorative programme was categorically refused by Bartalini (1993), who advanced the alternative hypothesis that the marriage with which the series is connected is that of Silvio di Bartolommeo Piccolomini, which took place on 18 January 1493.<sup>941</sup>

A recent campaign by Luke Syson, Jill Dunkerton, Carol Christensen and their colleagues based on the detailed examination of both cycles brought many interesting new results. First of all, a brilliantly conducted provenance research on the Griselda panels confirmed their origin from the Spannocchi family. Luke Syson discovered that the three *spalliere* were together with two other, Florentine ones in the Barker collection at the middle

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<sup>935</sup> Paardekooper 2002<sup>1</sup>, 31; Gabriele Fattorini, in Alessi and Bagnoli ed. 2006, 43.

<sup>936</sup> De Nicola (1917) Coor (1961), Longhi (1964), Russell (1973), Mode (1974), Tátrai (1979), Barriault (1994, ca. 1493-1500), Kanter (2000). De Nicola suggested Matteo di Giovanni's *Judith* to have been executed first, then Neroccio's *Claudia* and Francesco di Giorgio's *Scipio*, then the works by the Griselda Master (ca 1497-98), and finally "Pacchiarotto". This order was accepted by Tátrai, who pointed out differences in the inscriptions, in which he saw a confirmation of De Nicola's idea. Longhi on one side (1964, 7, dating Neroccio just before Pacchiarotto), and Coor (1961, 95, dating Neroccio to 1494-95) and Russell (1973, 80, dating Neroccio to 1494-95) on the other, disagreed as to the dating of Neroccio's *Claudia*. Trimpi (1987, 115) thought that Matteo was commissioned the series and that it was completed by others after his death. In an amusing article, Kanter (2000) proposed that the successive deaths of the painters caused the project to pass from one to the other until it was completed by the Griselda master.

<sup>937</sup> Berenson 1930-312, 750, 753; Roberto Bartalini, in Bellosi ed. 1993.

<sup>938</sup> Berenson (1930-312, 750, 753), Coor (1961, 94) and others believed the commission was first given to Signorelli. Boskovits (2003, 501) thought the the Griselda Master received the project because Signorelli left Siena. Angelini (2005<sup>2</sup>, 507) is also of the opinion that the Griselda Master coordinated the project.

<sup>939</sup> Kanter 2000.

<sup>940</sup> Barriault 1994, 82, 148; Angelini 2005<sup>2</sup>, 550 n.76.

<sup>941</sup> Another member of the Piccolomini family, the cardinal Francesco Piccolomini Tedeschini was also suggested as a commissioner (Longhi 1964, 8; Caciorgna 2000, 56, 64 n. 7; cf. also Angelini 2005<sup>2</sup>, 550 n. 62.).

of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and recognized that in all five the servants' liveries bear the heraldic colours of the Spannocchi. Moreover, in one of the Florentine panels, the Spannocchi coat of arms appears, removing every doubt of their origin and very probably establishing a date of execution around 1494.<sup>942</sup>

This discovery still left open the question of who commissioned the series of virtuous men and women, but the stylistic and technical investigation of the two cycles revealed some important circumstantial evidence in favour of their common origin. The authors claim on stylistic grounds that two cycles appear to have been painted contemporarily, and the painter's style evolved in the course of their intertwining execution. Importantly, it was found that the small flags have been vandalized the same way in both cycles, which suggests that they were together at least at a certain time in the past. In this light, it is surprising why Syson (2007) eventually favours the hypothesis of the Piccolomini commission and dates the cycle of the heroes and heroines to ca. 1493-95.<sup>943</sup> The problem of the commissioner of the virtuous men and women remains unresolved, but the hypothesis for a Spannocchi commission seems, if anything, more likely than previously, and their date hypothetically related to the wedding of January 1494.<sup>944</sup>

The most important results of the investigation of by Luke Syson, Jill Dunkerton, Carol Christensen (2006, 2007) are the outcome of the detailed technical investigation of the eight panels. The authors convincingly proposed that the prototype panel for the series of virtuous men and women is the one by Francesco di Giorgio, which shows many signs of experimentation in the composition.<sup>945</sup> This suggests that Francesco was initially responsible for the project. Matteo di Giovanni, Pietro Orioli and Neroccio seem to have worked rather independently alongside Francesco di Giorgio on the basis of the established model, to which they adhered sometimes rather loosely.<sup>946</sup> The Griselda master's role appears to have been

<sup>942</sup> Syson 2005, Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 230-233.

<sup>943</sup> Although I find the reconstruction of the relative chronology of the panels plausible (see text below), the dating of the individual panels to different years on this basis (Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 234-44) seems hazardous.

<sup>944</sup> At the same time, many scholars feel that the crescent as an isolated heraldic element could not appear in a Spannocchi commission (see especially the arguments by Caciorgna 1995, 236 and also Bartalini 1993, 464-466; Boskovits 2003, 498).

<sup>945</sup> In the *Scipio*, there is evidence of experimenting about where to place the capitals of the framing structure; the background scenes appear to have been squeezed in later

<sup>946</sup> Neroccio and Orioli seem to have worked rather autonomously from the other painters. Neroccio's pedestal is not in line with others and Claudia steps off it, as if it had been included later. The pedestals in the panels by Neroccio and Orioli are seen from a different perspective, and Orioli's landscape is seen from a higher point of view. His sky, too, is a much stronger blue than in the other panels, and the landscape is not green meadows but deep cityscape vista. Orioli has forgotten to paint the cast shadows by the legs of Sulpitia. Some inconsistencies in the whole cycle are found in the different formats of the inscriptions (the inscription of the *Claudia* consists of four hexameters; the others, of two distiches. *Claudia*'s inscription contains her name, the verse below *Scipio*

subordinate in the beginning and he must have taken full responsibility for the project at a later stage, as hypothesized by many critics earlier.

The physical examination of the panels led to very convincing and logical results about the original physical setup of the series. The authors rightly noted that the now lost framing structure (into which the panels were placed after completion) must have been formed like an arcade, otherwise the laborious arch-formed cutting of the tops would have made little sense. They pointed out that the female figures are all slightly narrower (the male figures are all between 51-52.5 cm wide; the females, 46-46.3 cm); consequently, it is difficult to imagine them all framed within the same structure (in an alternating order, as has often been proposed, or in any other way).<sup>947</sup> Thus the famous figures must have been divided by sex and arranged into two series of four figures. Moreover, on the reverses of three of the male figures, inscriptions designating the order have been found.<sup>948</sup> These date from a later time but still very likely record the original order, possibly written on the panels at the time of their temporary or final dismantling. On the basis of these inscriptions and some other factors such as the positions of the battens and the extent and nature of damage, the original order of the two series was established as follows: *Alexander, Joseph, Scipio, Tiberius, and Judith, Artemisia, Sulpitia, Claudia* (Fig. 30/11-12). As all figures are lit from the right, they may have been placed side by side. Such an arrangement would make sense especially if we imagine a dividing element between the two series of four figures, such as a door. When installed in their original framings, they must have given an impression of a series of statues standing under an arcade.

### References:

Ormós 1864, 123 (Pinturicchio); *Műsorozata* ... 1868, 22, no. 60 (Pinturicchio); Mündler 1869, Hall XI, no. 60 (Pinturicchio, “Ganz ächt und interessant, wenn auch etwas derb”); *Catalog der Gemälde-Galerie...* 1869, 25, no. 60 (Bern. Pinturicchio); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1864-66, III (1866), 33 (follower of Luca Signorelli, similar in character to works attributed to Francesco Signorelli) *Catalog der Gemälde-Galerie...* 1869, 25 (Pinturicchio); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1869-76, IV/1 (1871), 40 (follower of Luca Signorelli, similar in character to works attributed to Francesco Signorelli); *A Magyar Akadémia* ... 1871, 21-22 (Pinturicchio); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1873, 22, no. 60 (Fr. Signorelli); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1876, 8, no. 121 (Fr. Signorelli); *Országos Képtár...* 1878, 8, no. 121 (Fr. Signorelli); *Országos Képtár...* 1879, 8, no. 121 (Fr.

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does not name the hero, and in the rest – *Tiberius, Alexander, Sulpitia* –, the name appears to have been squeezed in on a second thought in a separate, first line).

<sup>947</sup> An alternating succession was proposed by Coor (1961, 94) and others. Interestingly, in Vincenzo Tamagni’s monochrome frescos in Montalcino, apparently inspired in many aspects by this cycle, the famous women and man alternate in couples: two famous men are followed by two women and so on (cf. Guerrini 1991; Alessi 2003, 52, repr.).

<sup>948</sup> The word “primo” on the back of the *Alexander*, “terzo” on the *Scipio* and “quarto” on the *Tiberius Gracchus*.

Signorelli); Pulszky 1881, 10, no. 52 (Luca Signorelli); Pulszky 1888, 9, no. 64 (Luca Signorelli); *Exhibition of the work of Luca Signorelli...* 1893, XV-XVI, 13 (Luca Signorelli, belonged to the same series with the *Alexander*; notes the “remarkable resemblances” of the two panels with the three Griselda panels); *Országos Képtár...* 1897, 39, no. 64; Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 83, no. 64 (workshop of Luca Signorelli); Crutwell 1899, 117, repr. p. 116 (Umbrian follower of Signorelli and Pintoricchio, by the same hand as the Griselda panels in London); Venturi 1900, esp. 226 fig., 237-238, Hung. ed. 53 fig. 32, 66-67 (school of Signorelli, formed part of series with *Claudia* and *Sulpitia*); Térey 1906<sup>1</sup>, 31-32, no 67 (64) (workshop of Luca Signorelli, Umbro-Florentine school); Berenson 1909, 171 (Bernardino Fungai?); Peregriny 1909-1915, I (1909), 52, no. 64 (workshop of Luca Signorelli, print reproduction of pedestal, with early bibl.); Venturi 1901-40, VII/2 (1913), 408, 411 fig. 318 (School of Signorelli); Térey 1913<sup>1</sup>, 216, no. 67 (workshop of Luca Signorelli, Umbrian school); Borenius 1913, 69-70 (Umbrian, ca. 1500, notes that *Alexander* in the Cook coll. in Richmond belongs to the same series with the *Tiberius* and the *Claudia* in Paris); Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1903-1915, V (1914), 119 and n. 3 (follower of Luca Signorelli, similar in character to works attributed to Francesco Signorelli); Meller 1915, 219, no. 523 (inventory of Esterházy coll.); Schubring 1915, I, 135, 202, 347, no. 542, II, Pl. CXXIII fig. 542 (Amico Aspertini, interprets the figures in the background as Eurydike and Orpheus); Térey 1916, 68-69, repr. (workshop of Signorelli); De Nicola 1917, 224-28 (adds the *Scipio* and the *Joseph* to the series, notes division of hands, dates the cycle between 1495-1500 on the basis of the overlapping active period of Neroccio and Pacchiarotti, proposes the Piccolomini as commissioners); Venturi 1921, 61 (school of Signorelli); Berenson 1930-31<sup>2</sup>, Pt. II, 750-753, republ. 1969, 68-69 (*Tiberius* was designed and in large part executed by Signorelli, aided by the artist who could be called the Griselda Master, a Siennese assistant, adds the *Artemisia* to the series); Térey 1924, 158 (workshop of Luca Signorelli); Mayer 1931, 18 (Neroccio); Berenson 1932, 530 (Signorelli and the Griselda master); Pigler 1934, 91 (the source for the *Tiberius* is found in Valerius Maximus’s *Factorum ed dictorum...*, IV/6); Petrovics 1935, 15, no. 62 (workshop of Luca Signorelli); Pigler 1937, I, 240-241, II, pl. 16. (workshop of Luca Signorelli, who is generally referred to as the Griselda Master); Berenson 1936, 282, 456 (Signorelli and the Griselda Master); Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 128 (Griselda Master); Venturi 1901-40, IX/5 (1932), 329 (Bernardino Fungai); Weller 1943, 222-25, esp. 223 (Signorelli and the Griselda master, ca. 1497-1500); Pigler 1954, I, 528-29, II, fig. 20 (workshop of Luca Signorelli, with the involvement of the Master of the Story of Griselda); Coor 1961, 94 n. 329 (Signorelli and the Griselda Master, adds the *Judith* to the series); Scarpellini 1964, 37, 144 (Griselda Master); Longhi 1964, 6 (student of Signorelli and Bartolomeo della Gatta, proposes to add three other figures to the series); Pigler 1967, I, 646-647, II, pl. 41, with further bibl. (workshop of Luca Signorelli); Berenson 1968, I, 252, 395, II. Pl. 907 (Signorelli and the Griselda Master); Mode 1974, 73-83 (Griselda Master); Pope-Hennessy 1976, 229 (Griselda Master, dates the whole cycle to the early 1490s on a stylistic basis); Shapley 1979, 314 (Griselda master); Tátrai 1979<sup>2</sup> (Griselda master, the cycle was probably commissioned for the double marriage of Antonio and Giulio Spannocchi for the Siena palace of the commissioners on 1493 [1494], and executed between ca. 1495-1500); Pirovano ed. 1982, 149-151, cat. 184 (Griselda master); Mravik 1983, no. 5-6 (student of Signorelli, the background is by the Griselda Master, ca. 1495-1500) [all subsequent authors accept the attribution to the Griselda Master]; Vertova 1984, 209 (attributes three further works to the Griselda Master); Seidel 1984; republ. 2005, 698-99 (dates the cycle to ca. 1491-95 on basis of its relation to the decoration of the Bichi chapel); Toledano 1987, 106-108 (cycle dates from 1490-1500); Trimpi 1987, 113-115, esp. 114 (Matteo di Giovanni’s *Judith* belonged to the series and dates from ca. 1495); Gilbert 1989, 190-192, 245-246 nn. 43-48 (painted around 1490); Bruno Santi, in Gaeta Bertelà and Paolozzi Strozzi ed. 1989, 392-393,

esp. 392 n. 2 (painted for Spannocchi wedding of 1494); Alessandro Angelini, “Maestro di Griselda”, in Zeri ed. 1987, II, 690; Angelini 1988, 21 (remarks that the execution of the cycle is in the same years as Bichi chapel and many of the participating artists are the same: a collaborator of Francesco di Giorgio, Orioli, and the Griselda master instead of Signorelli); Parri 1991, 278-98; Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 75 (“commissioned probably on occasion of the double marriage of A. and G. Spannocchi and executed 1493 for the Siena palace of the commissioners”); Caciorgna 1991-92, 48-225; Roberto Bartalini, in Bellosi ed. 1993, 462-469 (the series was executed in the early 1490s, a *terminus ante quem* is the middle of 1493, before Girolamo di Domenico’s *St. Sigismund*, inspired by the *Joseph*, was executed; commissioned perhaps for the wedding of Silvio di Bartolomeo Piccolomini in 1492 and placed in the Palazzo “delle Papesse” in Siena); Miller 1993, 16 n. 46 (identifies the Griselda Master with Baldassare Peruzzi); Barriault 1994, 78-82, 148-52, fig. 10.3 (the cycle dates from ca. 1493-1500); Caciorgna 1995, 235-258, esp. 235, 250-52 (the male hero in Washington represents *Joseph*); Alessandro Angelini, “La seconda metà del Quattrocento” in Chelazzi Dini, Angelini, and Sani 1997, 314, colour pl. on p. 315 (made for marriage of Silvio dei Piccolomini di Sticciano in 1492); Spencer-Longhurst 1999, 38; Caciorgna 2000; Kanter 2000, 147-156 (alternative proposal for the succession of the execution of the panels); Caciorgna 2001 [2002], 227-29, 298-344, esp. 319-24, pl. 116 (main source is the *Life of Tiberius and Caius Gracchus* by Plutarch); Tátrai 2002, 57, no. 62, fig. 62; Vilmos Tátrai, “From the Quattrocento to the Settecento”, in *Italian old masters...* 2002, 16-80, esp. 35, 80, cat. 5, colour repr.; Miklós Boskovits in Boskovits, Brown et al. 2003, 496-504, 536-539; Caciorgna and Guerrini 2003, 340-343, 395-396 (“Piccolomini cycle”, painted before 1493; corrects transcription of “PICTORE” in “PECTORE”); Alessi 2003, 56-57, repr. p. 55 (the cycle was painted in the early 1490s in the workshop of Francesco di Giorgio); Angelini 2005<sup>2</sup>, 499, fig. 17 (proposes identification of the painter with Pietro d’Andrea di Volterra); Caciorgna and Guerrini 2005, 159 (the series was painted in the first years of the 1490s and cannot be related to the Spannocchi wedding of 1494 but was probably executed for the Piccolomini family); Syson 2005 (proves that the three panels by the Griselda Master were painted for the Spannocchi family); Bodnár ed. 2006, 57, fig. 62.; Dunkerton, Christensen, and Syson 2006 (examination and reconstruction of the series); Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 234-245, cat. 68 (examination and reconstruction of the series, ca. 1493-95); Fattorini 2007, 68-69 (exhibition review, repr. of reunited panels); Sallay 2008, 4, 15.

**Girolamo di Benvenuto**  
**(Girolamo di Benvenuto di Giovanni del Guasta)**  
(Siena, 1470 – Siena, 1524)

Girolamo di Benvenuto was trained by his father, Benvenuto di Giovanni, in whose workshop he was active from 1490 the latest. In a tax declaration dated 30 August 1491, Benvenuto reports to have been receiving a little help for only a year,<sup>949</sup> but in reality Girolamo must have carried out at least minor jobs at the shop at an age much earlier than 20 but his father would have been reluctant to acknowledge this officially until inevitable.

Girolamo di Benvenuto has been little studied, and the appraisal of his work has been hindered by the difficulty of separating his hand from that of his father, whom he outlived perhaps by no more than six years and with whom seems to have often collaborated. In some works from the period ca. 1490-1510 it can be arduous to distinguish between father and son but in more general terms Girolamo does have a distinct style (see Benvenuto di Giovanni's biography and Cat. 18 above) and he had independent commissions from early on. A clear artistic profile of Girolamo emerges around 1508 the latest, and a marked stylistic development follows for the rest of his short career.

Girolamo was first paid for independent works, a bier head (*cataletto*) for the Compagnia di S. Giovanni Battista della Morte, and for a banner (*ghonfalone*) for the Compagnia della SS. Trinità (both lost) in 1494. From 1499 on, he painted thirteen Old Testament Figures in almost monochrome fresco in the oratory of the Confraternity of San Bernardino in Santa Maria della Scala of Siena. The cycle was still visible in 1701 but only four, very damaged figures survive today (one attributed to Girolamo's father, Benvenuto). The payments continued until 1504. In the same period, he renewed the polychromy of a crucifix. On 1 January, 1501 he was paid for a *cataletto* for the Spedale. In the same year, he married Alessandra di Benvenuto di Ser Stefano de Cesari.

In his early phase, Girolamo's style closely depends on his father's but his forms are often slacker; his modelling is hard and dull, and his figures have hard-set facial expression and take on stiff and graceless poses. At the same time, compared to his father, Girolamo was more exposed and receptive to the innovations that appeared in Siena at the turn of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, Florentine, Umbrian and northern influences are all perceptible in his works. He showed an interest in naturalistic landscape, classical ruins and motifs in his paintings; he executed many works with a profane subject matter: portraits, drawings of sibyls and prophets, *spalliera* panels and several *deschi da parto*.

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<sup>949</sup> See Benvenuto di Giovanni's biography above (pp. 250-53).

Girolamo's only signed<sup>950</sup> and dated work is the altarpiece of the *Madonna della Neve* from 1508, which originally stood in the Sozzini Chapel in San Domenico in Siena, and is composed of a rectangular central field of the *Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints* (cf. Fig. 31/10), a lunette with the *Lamentation* (PNS, inv. 414a and I.B.S. 19) and five predella pieces, four of which are dispersed in various collections and a fifth, showing the *Resurrection*, was documented in the Casa Sozzini in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>951</sup> Around the same time Girolamo must have painted the *Portrait of a Woman* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, inv. 1939.1.353), in which he already used an oil technique instead of tempera.

Some time between 1507-11 he made a work for the Compagnia of S. Francesco, which is unfortunately mentioned only as "quadro" in the documents. In 1510, together with Giacomo Pacchiarotti, Girolamo del Pacchia, and Girolamo Genga, Girolamo di Benvenuto judged Perugino's *Birth of the Virgin* painted for the Cappella Vieri in San Francesco, and, in 1513, with Pacchiarotti, Bartolomeo di David's ceiling fresco in the Cappella del Manto in the Sienese Spedale.

Girolamo's large fresco lunette of the *Assumption of the Virgin* in the church of Santa Maria in Portico a Fontegiusta, Siena, was completed before August 1515, when Beccafumi and Pacchia judged this work and the ceiling fresco in the church. By this time, Girolamo's artistic language found its own way of expression. Although his compositional principles were still anchored in Quattrocento traditions, his style had absorbed many High Renaissance influences. His fleshy figures have ampler proportions, relate to each other more convincingly in the composition, and act in more vivacious and communicative ways. They are softly modelled due to the artist's newly acquired still of handling subtle chiaroscuro effects in oil medium. A confident and stately mode of presentation becomes dominant.

In this late phase, which covers the last decade of his life, Girolamo art evolved so markedly from his early production that for long his works from this period were grouped under the conventional name "Bagatti Valsecchi Master" named after a Renaissance altarpiece in the Milanese museum (Vertova 1969). Scholarship now concurs in considering the works formerly ascribed to this anonymous master as late works by Girolamo di

<sup>950</sup> Despite its signature as OPUS HIERONIMI BENVENUTI DE SENIS, this work was recently published as the work of "Benvenuto di Giovanni e collaboratori" and termed to be a work "generally attributed to Girolamo (...) on which he wrote his name" (Alessi 2003, 92-99, esp. 94, and caption to colour pl. 45 on p. 93). It is often stated as a fact that Girolamo painted parts of altarpieces signed by his father and his production is sometimes treated as a mere appendix to his father's. While his participation is of course likely in many paternal works, ignoring the signatures is unacceptable, and any attribution based on the separation of their hands in signed works should be backed by a careful and detailed stylistic analysis, which is usually not the case.

<sup>951</sup> Della Valle 1782-1786, III (1786), 58, cf. M. G. Sarti "Girolamo di Benvenuto" in *Dizionario Biografico...* vol. 56, 2001, 545.

Benvenuto, and the altarpiece in Milan, painted for a Franciscan community, as the artist's most important late work (Museo Bagatti Valsecchi, Milan, inv. 1015) .

In 1517 Girolamo was commissioned to make baldachin for Duomo (lost), and in 1518 he valued Bartolomeo di David's "festone" in Cappella degli Organi in Spedale. According sources seen by Ettore Romagnoli, in 1518 he was working in the Palazzo Piccolomini and in the Sala della Pace of the Palazzo Chigi-Saracini. Girolamo died before 28 June 1524, when a posthumous inventory of his possessions was compiled.

Throughout his life, Girolamo seems to have worked extensively for private clients and the mendicant orders, especially the Observant Franciscans at the Church of the Osservanza, where he left frescos showing the *Last Judgment* (originally in the crypt; now transported in the local Museo Aurelio Castelli), the *Crucifixion with a donor*, and a panel showing *St. Elizabeth of Hungary and a Pilgrim*, and at the Church of Nativity of the Virgin near Montalcino, where he painted an *Assumption of the Virgin* altarpiece (cf. Cat. 32). Since the artistic field was dominated by foreign artists in his lifetime, he does not seem to have ever received a major public commission and he died as the last important exponent of Sienese "Quattrocento" painting.

#### **Select bibliography:**

Romagnoli *ante* 1835 (1976) V, 415-426; Milanese 1854-1856, III (1856), 47, 70, 78-80 (doc.); Borghesi and Banchi 1898, 350 (doc.); Berenson 1909, 181-183; Kurt Weigelt, "Girolamo di Benvenuto di Giovanni del Guasta", in Thieme and Becker ed. 1907-50, XIV (1921), 182-83; Berenson 1932, 252-254; Berenson 1936, 216-218; Fredericksen and Davisson 1966; Berenson 1968, 186-188 (list of works); Vertova 1969; Ingendaay 1976, 359-376 (list of works, doc., bibl.); Zeri 1979; Alberto Cornice, "Opere d'arte all'Osservanza," in: *L'Osservanza di Siena...* 1984, 90-94; Alessandro Angelini, in Bellosi and Angelini 1986, 54-57; Alessandro Angelini, "Girolamo di Benvenuto", in Zeri ed. 1987, II, 649-50 (bibl.); Torriti 1990, 307-315; Moro 1992; Bagnoli ed. 1997, 49-50; 61-63; Schmidt 1997, 207-226 (doc.); Bandera 1999; M. G. Sarti, "Girolamo di Benvenuto", in *Dizionario Biografico...*, vol. 56, 2001, 543-547 (with bibl.); Alessi 2003; Alessandro Galli, in Pavoni ed. 2003-2004, I (2003), 260-62; Angelini 2005<sup>1</sup>, 96 n. 44; Luke Syson, in Syson et al. 2007, 200-201; Rudolf Hiller von Gaertringen and Victor Schmidt, "Girolamo di Benvenuto", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 55, 2007, 256-260 (bibl.).

## 31.

### Girolamo di Benvenuto

*Virgin and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist*

#### Fig. 31/1

ca. 1500-1505

tempera and gold on wood

panel and painted surface: 61.8 x 42.4 cm, thickness: 1.6 cm

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.210.

#### Provenance:

Canon Raffaele Bertinelli, Rome, no. 20 (as Andrea del Varrocchio);<sup>952</sup> purchased 1878 by János Simor for his private collection, from where it passed to the Christian Museum.

#### Technical notes:

The support is a single board of vertically grained wood (Fig. 31/2). It has a slight warp and is extensively worm tunnelled, which has resulted in the disintegration of the wood along the edges, especially at the top and at the lower left side (as viewed from the front). There are some vertical cracks in the wood. During an intervention executed when the work was already in Esztergom, two battens were removed from the support, leaving two horizontal grooves (0.3 cm deep on top; 0.2 cm deep at the bottom), and the panel was thinned and cradled. Documentation related to the Bertinelli collection must have been removed from the work at this time.

The panel seems trimmed at the bottom but is uncut on the left and right sides. Along the arched top the edge is repaired and trimmed, but a short curved section at the spring of the arch on the left suggests that it was originally arch-topped as it is now.

The paint surface is in rather poor condition. An early, aggressive cleaning left the paint surface strongly abraded; it is now also somewhat soiled. There are losses and scattered retouchings all over, especially in the sky and the flesh parts. The blue cloak of the Virgin appears to be overpainted. An area over the shoulder of the Virgin on the right is entirely reconstructed in oil paint. The Virgin's face and neck are heavily retouched and her mouth, the right wing of her nose, and the lines running along her upper eyelid are reinforced (Fig. 31/7). There are repairs in the hair of the two children; the curls of St. John are not original. The line of his profile and his eyes are original but his face is strongly retouched. There is a repaired and inpainted strip behind the waist of the Young St. John the Baptist along the edge. The bottom of John's garment is overpainted. The mordent gold in the haloes, in the floral decoration of the Virgin's red dress is generally worn and is mostly reinforced along the hem of her blue cloak. The end of St. John's long cross originally reached up to the level of the Virgin's neck; this part has almost completely disappeared. The landscape background is in relatively good condition. Gold was used to pick out the details of the glistening leaves of the trees; this is now worn. The green of the vegetation has darkened. There are many retouchings around the edges.

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<sup>952</sup> This work does not appear in the inventory drawn up after Bertinelli's death in April 1878, but its provenance is certain on the basis of the list judged by Overbeck and Minardi. In Maszlaghy's catalogue from 1878 it appears with the same attribution as in the Overbeck-Minardi list.

The work is enclosed in modern gilt and carved frame, whose side is painted with an ochre coloured layer characteristic of the frames of pieces coming from the Bertinelli collection.

Although treated more than once in the museum, there is no recorded restoration for this piece.

#### **Documentation:**

On modern cradle: “55.210.” (in black ink); “*ESZTERGOMI KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM*” (stamped); “+ *KERESZTÉNY MÚZEUM / MUSÉE CHRÉTIEN + ESZTERGOM*” (round stamp on white round label); “55.210” (in blue ink over round stamp.)<sup>953</sup>

The theme of the Virgin and Child with the young St. John the Baptist was one of the most popular ones in late Quattrocento Italian art. In Siena, however, few local artists turned to this subject, because the compositional tradition established by Sano di Pietro for devotional Madonna paintings – the half- or three-quarter-length portrayal of the Virgin and Child between a symmetric group of saints and angels – dominated local painting until the early sixteenth century. The iconographic model for the present painting seems to have come from outside Siena and probably reached Girolamo through the foreign – especially Florentine and Umbrian – artists who received the most prestigious artistic commissions in Siena from the late 1480s on.<sup>954</sup> The far-reaching, mountainous landscape rendered in aerial perspective too reveals foreign influence and appears in other works by the master from the early sixteenth century (cf. *Lamentation of Christ*, PNS, inv. 369; *Adoration of the Child*; Museo Civico e Diocesano d’Arte Sacra, Montalcino, inv. 27MC, Figs. 31/11-12). A frequent element in the three-figure group of the Virgin, Child and young St. John the Baptist in contemporary, non-Sienese works is the long, thin golden cross of the young St. John (the top part of which is now destroyed in CM 55.210) whose end the infant Jesus grabs as a sign of a foreknowledge and acceptance of his Passion.<sup>955</sup>

This devotional Madonna has received in little attention beyond Hungarian scholarship. It is not included in any published lists of Girolamo’s works<sup>956</sup> and it was not reproduced in

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<sup>953</sup> For the sake of documentation it is noted that the inventory or exhibition number of the work between the two World Wars was 157, cf. Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 484.

<sup>954</sup> For similar three-figure compositions, in which the young St. John looks up in adoration on the blessing Christ Child, see Pinturicchio’s Madonna in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, inv. 119 (with a comparable landscape background) and Raphael’s Diotallevi-Madonna in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, inv. 147 (where the Virgin places her hand protectively on St. John’s shoulder), cf. Meyer zur Capellen, I (2001), 109.

<sup>955</sup> This motif is found, among others, in Pinturicchio, cf. the Fossi altarpiece (Galleria Nazionale dell’Umbria, Perugia, inv. 274) and many other works, including a tondo with the *Virgin and Child with the Young St. John the Baptist, St. Andrew and Jerome* (formerly London, priv. coll., cf. Todini 1989, I, 535, fig. 1238), which is compositionally related to CM 55.210 except for being reversed and for this reason the Christ Child holds the cross in his left hand so that he can bless with his right.

<sup>956</sup> Cf. Berenson 1909, 1932, 1936, 1968, Ingendaay 1976; M. G. Sarti “Girolamo di Benvenuto”, in *Dizionario Biografico...*, 56, 2001, 543-547; Rudolf Hiller von Gaertringen and Victor Schmidt, “Girolamo di Benvenuto”, in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 55, 2007, 256-260.

print until 1975. Its first known photographic documentation is an early 20th-century postcard, in which it appears heavily overpainted (Fig. 31/3).<sup>957</sup> After the removal of this overpainting, the surface remained strongly abraded. Both the earlier repainted condition and the damaged one revealed (or caused?) by a museum restoration rendered difficult the judgment of the painting, which had a tortuous attribution history. After various attributions to the Florentine (Verrocchio), Romagnan (Giovanni Battista Bertucci), Sienese (Fungai?), and the Northern Italian schools, Tátrai (1983<sup>2</sup>, 1993) convincingly suggested the name of Girolamo di Benvenuto or his circle and, later, the Master of the Bagatti Valsecchi altarpiece, who is now unanimously considered to be the mature Girolamo di Benvenuto. The attribution to Girolamo di Benvenuto was confirmed by Boskovits (1989, 1999) and is convincing.

At the same time, I would date CM 55.210 considerably earlier than the late phase proposed by Boskovits and Tátrai. Its stylistic characteristics indicate that it falls into a period when Girolamo's figural types still depend very closely on those of his father, that is, definitely before the fresco in Santa Maria in Portico a Fontegiusta (completed by 1515), and probably also before the Madonna delle Nevi altarpiece from 1508. The Virgin's perfectly smooth, oval face, with clean-cut features – a long, straight nose, small mouth, a pronounced chin –, and the melancholic or self-composed expression is typical of the works of both father and son around 1500 and in the first decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as in the *Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome and Mary Magdalene* in the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin (inv. 839, Fig. 31/6)<sup>958</sup> and in the *Annunciation* in Buonconvento,<sup>959</sup> both variously attributed to Benvenuto and Girolamo, and Girolamo's *Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome and Bernardino* in the Museo Diocesano d'Arte Sacra in Grosseto, *Virgin and Child with Two Angels* (whereabouts unknown),<sup>960</sup> and his already mentioned *Adoration of the Child* in Montalcino (Figs. 31/11-12).<sup>961</sup> The latter work perhaps slightly predates CM 55.210 but is closely related in many features: the figure types, the northern landscape, the rendering of the trees and bushes, and the typical mordent-gilt halos consisting of concentric, broken lines and often shown in foreshortening.

<sup>957</sup> The photograph was taken by Rudolf Balogh. A copy of the postcard is archived at the CM and at the Fototeca Berenson (with the annotation “with Pinturicchio”).

<sup>958</sup> The analogy with this work was first noted by Tátrai 1983<sup>2</sup>, 149, both paintings repr. p. 150.

<sup>959</sup> Guiducci ed. 1998, 132-135, colour repr. on pp. 131, 135 (Girolamo di Benvenuto); Bandera 1999, colour repr. on p. 189 (Benvenuto di Giovanni).

<sup>960</sup> Berenson 1930-31<sup>2</sup>, pt. I, 645. A photograph is filed with Girolamo di Benvenuto at the KHI.

<sup>961</sup> Bagnoli ed. 1997, 49 and colour repr. 45 on p. 61 (with a proposal of dating to the end of the 15th or the beginning of the 16th century); Alessi 2003, 87, 89, colour repr. 41 on p. 88 (agrees with Bagnoli's dating to the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries).

The pose of the Child in CM 55.210 derives from the cited Madonna in Dublin, with only a slight change in the position of right leg and right hand (Figs. 31/5-6). This pose recurs, with slight variation, in another and later Madonna in private collection, executed with workshop assistance (Fig. 31/8), where the little St. John hands the cross to the infant in a similar way.<sup>962</sup> Another related composition, which resembles CM 55.210 especially in the grouping of the Virgin and the young St. John the Baptist, is the *Virgin and Child, the young St. John the Baptist and Saints Jerome and Magdalene* from the late period of the artist (Fig. 31/4).<sup>963</sup>

The importance of CM 55.210 lies in its novel iconography, composition, and the northern landscape background which attest to Girolamo's nascent interest and ability to integrate new models and ideas into his art, probably in the first half of the first decade of the Cinquecento.

#### References:

Maszlachy 1878, 16, no. 108 (Andrea del Verrocchio); Z[ádori?] 1885, 763 (Andrea del Verrocchio); Maszlachy 1891, 32, no. 108 (Andrea del Verrocchio); Gerevich 1928, 236 (painter from Romagna); Van Marle 1923-38, XVI (1937), 484 (Bernardino Fungai, doubtful); Gerevich ed. 1948, 68 (Upper-Italian, 15<sup>th</sup> c., height erroneously indicated as 12 cm instead of 62 cm), Boskovits, Mojzer, and Mucsi 1964, 82-83, no. 84 (North-Italian painter, second half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Mucsi 1975, 47, no. 230 (North-Italian painter, second half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Mravik 1975, 62-63, and n. 17, 169 and n. 17), fig. 47 (attributed to Giovanni Battista Bertucci; reports oral communication of Miklós Mojzer, who had suggested Bertucci's authorship earlier); Tátrai 1983<sup>2</sup>, 148-149, fig. 6 (Girolamo di Benvenuto or his circle or workshop, first quarter of 16<sup>th</sup> c.); Miklós Boskovits, verbal communication, 1989, confirmed in 1999 (Girolamo di Benvenuto, late work); Vilmos Tátrai, in Cséfalvay ed. 1993, 247-248, no. 126, colour pl. 126 (Master of the Bagatti Valsecchi Altarpiece, who is possibly identical with the older Girolamo di Benvenuto, between 1510-20); Sallay 2008, 5, 16 (Girolamo di Benvenuto).

<sup>962</sup> Formerly Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, repr. Vertova 1969, 11, fig. 12.

<sup>963</sup> A photograph of this work is filed at the Fototeca Zeri (inv. 45828) as an anonymous Siense work; on its reverse it is indicated "Bernardino Fungai, 43 x 67, in cornice antica" "1946, Milano, Coll. Canto".

## 32.

### Girolamo di Benvenuto

*The Virgin Appears to Saint Bernardino of Siena*

#### Fig. 32/1

ca. 1510

tempera (in part with tempera grassa) and gold on wood

panel: 33.4 x 44 cm; painted surface: 30.4-30.5 cm (with gesso border: 31 cm)

thickness: 3-3.2 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 38.

#### Provenance:

Purchased in Siena by Johann Anton Ramboux before 1842; Johann Anton Ramboux, Cologne, until 1866, no. 191 (as Giovanni Spagna); sold 1867 to Arnold Ipolyi at J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz), Cologne, no. 191 (as Giovanni Spagna); Arnold Ipolyi, Pest (1867-72); his donation to the National Picture Gallery in 1872, from where it passed to the Museum of Fine Arts in 1906.

#### Exhibited:

Josef-Haubrich-Kunsthalle, Cologne (28 October, 1995 – 28 January, 1996): *Lust und Verlust: Kölner Sammler zwischen Trikolore und Preussenadler*, cat. 204a.

#### Technical notes:

The panel consists of a single piece of horizontally grained poplar wood (Fig. 32/2). It has a slight warp. There are two modern strips of wood applied to the panel at the top (width : 0.7 cm) and the bottom (width: 0.5 cm). The reverse shows original, diagonal saw marks and is partly covered with very fine, bordeaux-coloured textile (silk?) applied with animal glue. In the areas where this fine silk has been abraded, the wood appears in clean and perfect condition. There are some intact worm exit holes. There is a nail hole at the centre top and a candle burn in the centre of the reverse. The panel has been cut on the two vertical sides, and, it seems, also at the top. It may be intact at the bottom, but the modern wooden strips make its examination difficult. The reverse has been treated with wax in some areas.

The paint surface conserves its original dimensions at the top and bottom, where 0.15-0.2 cm thick *barbes* mark its original edges and the panel extends beyond them in both directions by ca. 1.5-2 cm. At some time in the past, the composition was enlarged over these bare extensions of wood. These inpaintings have been removed between 1968 and 1985 but survive in fractions.

The paint surface is in satisfactory condition but worn, especially in the landscape. There is a prominent craquelure with islands of paint often with slightly raised edges. At the joints of these paint islands the gesso preparation shows through. The lacunae between the islands have been inpainted in a large part of the sky and of the mantle of Bernardino (Fig. 32/3). This inpainting has subsequently discoloured. The haloes of the Virgin and San Bernardino, the rays around the Virgin, the IHS sign and the vegetal motifs on the decorative borders have been applied in mordant gilding and are rather worn. The IHS sign is covered with remnants of darkened varnish. There are small losses, scratches, and inpainted worm exit holes.

#### Documentation:

On reverse: “211” (large, 19<sup>th</sup> c. handwriting on white label); “J.A.Ramboux” (in red wax seal); “ORSZÁGOS KÉPTÁR. KÉPTÁR. Az 1888. évi leltározás, 38. sz.” (printed on white label); “SZÉPMŰVÉSZETI MÚZEUM, BUDAPEST. Girolamo di Benvenuto: Sienai Szt. Bernát. 38. Ipolyi Arnold ajándéka, Budapest, 1872.” (printed on white label).

On modern frame: “Szépművészeti Múzeum. Lelt. sz. 3409” (printed on white label, number handwritten in ink), “15” (impressed, in pencil?); “K 1001” (inv. of frame, in blue ink on white label).

In the foreground of a wide-reaching landscape, St. Bernardino of Siena kneels in adoration in front of a vision of the Virgin. He is dressed in a greyish white Franciscan habit; his identity is indicated by his spectacle-case hanging from his *corda*, the YHS symbol, and his characteristic physiognomy, the sunken cheeks, toothless and downturned mouth, and pointed chin.<sup>964</sup> The Virgin appears enclosed in gold rays, without the Christ Child, and dressed in a white tunic and a celeste blue mantle. She is borne in the air by five red-winged cherubs. Both Bernardino and the Virgin join their hands in a prayer-like gesture. In the background, there are imaginary, wild rocks with slender towers and a valley with a towered city. The vegetation consists of slender trees, thick bushes and long leafed grass. The scene is framed on the vertical sides by bisected strips decorated with all’antica motifs.

The iconography of this panel seems to be very rare; in fact, not a single example of this scene – not even the Budapest panel – is recorded in the vast bibliography on San Bernardino’s iconography.<sup>965</sup> In previous literature, the scene has been described as the apparition of the Virgin to Bernardino but it has not yet been brought into connection with any written source and it has not been examined whether a specific event is depicted.

Bernardino’s fervent devotion to the Virgin – in which he imitated Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, after whom he claimed to have been named – is amply documented by contemporary sources. It is possible that the iconography of the Budapest panel

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<sup>964</sup> For St. Bernardino’s appearance, see discussion in Cat. 7.

<sup>965</sup> The most complete compilation of Bernardinian imagery is the *Enciclopedia Bernardiniana* 1980-85, esp. II (1981). For other extensive studies on the iconography of Saint Bernardino, see Cyril 1991. None of these mention the Budapest scene (cf. *Enciclopedia Bernardiniana* 1980-85, III, 481), and the iconography discussed here does not appear in the most extensive cycles on the saint’s life (Gian Giacomo da Lodi’s fresco cycle in the Cappella di San Bernardino, S. Francesco, Lodi (1477); Pinturicchio’s fresco cycle in the Bufalini Chapel, Sta. Maria in Aracoeli, Rome (1486); Pinturicchio’s panels, Galleria Nazionale dell’Umbria (1473); Anonymous artist, fresco cycle, Piancastagnaio, San Francesco, Monte Amiata (ca. 1445-55); Agostino di Duccio’s reliefs, Oratory of San Bernardino, Perugia (1457-62); Mezzastris, San Francesco, Montefalco (1461); Sano di Pietro’s St. Bernardino predella (1470s?); Neri di Bicci’s predella in the Pinacoteca, Arezzo, inv. 23 (1456); predella of triptych by anonymous artist, Matelica (Macerata), San Francesco (repr. *Rassegna d’Arte*, VI, 1906, 54). It should be noted that the Franciscan saint kneeling in adoration in front of the Virgin of the Assumption in a privately owned, small panel is St. Francis of Assisi, as the presumably original (though never technically examined) stigmata on his hands indicate. The panel was shown at the Sienese exhibition in London in 2007-08 as “The Virgin of the Assumption with a Franciscan saint”, attributed to Matteo di Giovanni (Luke Syson, in Syson et. al. 2007, 132-133). Consequently, this work cannot be related to the iconography of MFA 38.

commemorates Bernardino's devotion in general terms, but it seems more probable that it is related to specific events recounted in the saint's hagiography.

Later sources on Bernardino's life, whose 15<sup>th</sup>-century origins remain to be traced, recount how the Virgin revealed to Bernardino how his gifts of preaching and making miracles were of divine origin. A series of prayers called the "corona", which the Virgin herself taught to a Franciscan novice (who was later assumed to Heaven) was practiced fervently also by Bernardino, and the Virgin appeared to him privately to assure him of how dear his prayer was to her.

*"Era invalso nell'Ordine de' Minori circa l'anno 1422 il pio costume di recitare la Corona composta di sette Pater noster e di settantadue Ave in onore dei settantadue anni che secondo la più probabile opinione visse la Vergine in carne mortale, ed in memoria eziando delle sette principali allegrezze da lei provate [...] Recitava anche Bernardino ogni giorni dopo di ciò con grande affetto di pietà la predetta corona, e si dice che una volta fra le altre mentre stava applicato ad offerire alla Vergine questo tributo di lode, la gran Madre di Dio gli apparisse consolandolo con dolcissime celesti parole, e gli dicesse che ella molto si compiacere in questa sua divozione, per la quale aveva ad esso impetrato dal suo divin Figliuolo la grazia di predicare e far miracoli, e che lo assicurava che in ricompensa di simile offerta sarebbe stato finalmente partecipe in Cielo delle sue allegrezze."*<sup>966</sup>

It would seem that the apparition of the Virgin shown in the Budapest panel is related to this hagiographic element; that is, to the practice of this "corona francescana" (or "seraphic rosary", as the prayer is also known), so the fact that Bernardino is shown in prayer before the Virgin and that the Virgin's gesture echoes that of Bernardino seems to have a special meaning in this context.<sup>967</sup>

From Ramboux's catalogue (1862) it turns out that this panel was a predella fragment, of which the collector had three other fragments: the *St. Louis of Toulouse*, the *St. Elizabeth of Hungary* (both 33 x 44 cm, (Figs. 32/5-6), and the *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* (33.3 x 44.5 cm, Fig. 32/4), now all in private collection. The *St. Louis* and the *St. Elizabeth* were first published in auction catalogues 1984 and 1985, with the correct attribution to

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<sup>966</sup> The citation is taken from the *Vita di San Bernardino...1854*, 262-268 (based on Amadio Maria da Venezia, *Vita di S. Bernardino da Siena*. Venice, 1744); for the story of the apparition, see also Alessio 1899, 362. On the corona francescana of the seven joys of the virgin, of 15<sup>th</sup>-century origin, cf. Lothar Hardick, "Spiritualité Franciscaine" in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, V (1964), coll. 1315-1401, esp. col. 1325, with bibl.

<sup>967</sup> The objection could be raised that Bernardino does not hold a rosary in this depiction. The rosary was, however, primarily associated with the Dominicans, and it is uncertain whether the recital of this series of prayers would have necessarily required the presence of a rosary.

Girolamo di Benvenuto.<sup>968</sup> The Budapest panel had already been attributed to Girolamo by Boskovits (1968), who knew of the other three pieces from Ramboux's documents only. The *St. Louis* and the *St. Elizabeth* were published together with the *St. Bernardino* by Franco Moro in 1992.<sup>969</sup> The fourth documented scene with the *Presentation of the Virgin* came to light during the exhibition *Lust und Verlust* in 1995.<sup>970</sup> In the entry written on that occasion, Roland Krischel noted that the strange iconographic and compositional differences between the *Presentation of the Virgin* and the three Franciscan saints remain to be explained.

The support of all four panels is 33-33.4 cm high. The predella was originally framed at the top and the bottom by engaged mouldings, after the removal of which the remaining bare extensions of wood were inpainted with the enlargement of the composition. This modern extension at the top and bottom has been removed in the *St. Bernardino* only,<sup>971</sup> whereas in the other three fragments they are still present (and significantly alter the overall impression of the compositions). The painted surface of the predella was thus originally only about 30.5 cm high.

The predella fragments were originally separated by brown painted strips decorated with *all'antica* motifs (palmettes and vine) to imitate Renaissance lesenes. Their black and pink borders are an uncomplicated effort, commonly used in Benvenuto's and Girolamo's works, to create a three-dimensional effect.<sup>972</sup> They are consistent with the light source that comes from the left.

The original order of the predella scenes is suggested by the postures of the saints and by the matching fragments of the decorative strips, whose decoration is very similar but not exactly identical. The *St. Louis* and probably another, now lost Franciscan saint was on the left (the order of these two scenes is uncertain). *St. Bernardino* was on the extreme right, with

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<sup>968</sup> The two panels, with a provenance from the collections of The Late Mrs. Charles B. Scully and The Late Samuerl T. Peters, the property of Peter Tcherepnine, were sold at Christie's, New York, 8 November, 1984, lot 93. They were subsequently exhibited by Luciano Funghini in Florence in 1985 at the *14<sup>a</sup> Biennale Mostra Mercato Internazionale dell'Antiquariato di Firenze*, see catalogue, Florence, 1985, repr. on p. 333 (cited by Moro 1992, 33), in both occasions with an attribution to Girolamo di Benvenuto and the proposal that they are perhaps belonged to the pala della Madonna delle Nevi (1508). The two predella pieces were exhibited already in 1854 by Ramboux.

<sup>969</sup> This article mentions the existence of the *Presentation of the Virgin* and contains useful observations but fails to credit properly the previous exhibition catalogues with attributing the *St. Louis* and the *St. Elizabeth* to Girolamo di Benvenuto (see note 968).

<sup>970</sup> Roland Krischel, in Kier and Zehnder ed. 1995, 588-599, cat. 24 b, colour repr. CXIV; Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 571-72. The work was on deposit to the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, between 1988-98 (inv. no. dep. 554), then sold at Sotheby's, London, 9 July 1998, lot 60 (see this catalogue for information on the earlier provenance of the work). It is strange that St. Anne is represented without a halo in this scene.

<sup>971</sup> For a pre-restoration photograph with some cleaning probes, cf. Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, no. 26 (reproduced without the decorative strips).

<sup>972</sup> Girolamo used the same type of decorated lesenes, bordered by black line on left and a pink one on the right, in his predella for the Madonna delle Nevi altarpiece from 1508.

*St. Elizabeth* on its left. The *Presentation of the Virgin* must have been in the middle (probably contiguous with the *St. Elizabeth*), probably together with another Marian scene. As will be argued below, it is probable that the series consisted of six scenes only. With the completion of the missing half lesenes at both ends of the predella and allowing for the small losses that occurred during the dismembering, the original width of predella would have been around 270 cm without its engaged frame and about 275 with it.

There has not yet been any suggestion for the original provenance of this predella. It is here proposed that the predella belonged to Girolamo di Benvenuto's large, arched panel showing the *Assumption of the Virgin* in Montalcino (317.5 by 243.5 cm<sup>973</sup>, Museo Civico e Diocesano d'Arte Sacra, inv. 17MD), in which St. Francis of Assisi and St. Anthony of Padua appear kneeling on the two sides of Mary's sepulchre and St. Thomas.<sup>974</sup> The predella matches this altarpiece perfectly in style, iconography, and dimensions too, since one must allow for the now-lost frame (Fig. 32/11). In the first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, large Sieneese *pala centinate* were still usually furnished with a predella.<sup>975</sup>

The *Assumption of the Virgin* in Montalcino was for long believed to date from 1498 but this was the result of a confusion with the *Assumption* signed by Benvenuto di Giovanni and dated 1498.<sup>976</sup> I agree with Bagnoli and Schmidt that the Montalcino *Assumption* was in fact executed around 1510,<sup>977</sup> which is also the most likely date for the predella scenes. Already Boskovits noted the stylistic similarities of MFA 38 with the *Madonna delle Nevi* from 1508 and the Montalcino *Assumption* (then still believed to date from 1498). The figures, the complicated, arbitrarily serpentinizing draperies, and a more evolved landscape style suggest that the Montalcino *Assumption* and the ex-Ramboux predella fragments slightly postdate the altarpiece from 1508 but are earlier than the *Assumption* fresco in Santa Maria in Portico a Fontegiusta from 1515. In both the *Assumption* panel and the predella, the airy

<sup>973</sup> Bagnoli ed. 1997, 63. The dimensions provided by Bandera (310 x 245 cm) appear to be based on those furnished by Brogi.

<sup>974</sup> Bandera 1999, 208, n. 134; Bagnoli ed. 1997, 49-50, 63, fig. 48 (colour repr.); Alessi 2003, 97-98, fig. 48 (colour repr.).

<sup>975</sup> The *pala centinata* had a predella since its appearance in Sieneese art around 1460. From the time around 1510, *pala centinati* with predellas include Benvenuto di Giovanni's *Madonna and Child with Sts. Sebastian and Fabian*, 1509 (Collegiata, Sinalunga); Bernardino Fungai's altarpiece in Chiusi, and Sodoma's *Deposition from Cross*, ca. 1510 (PNS, inv 413). For the continued use of the predella in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Sieneese altarpieces until ca. 1590, see Ingendaay 1876, 30, with a list of examples on pp. 30-31.

<sup>976</sup> As pointed out by Alessandro Bagnoli (ed. 1997, 49-50, 63, fig. 48) and Victor Schmidt (1997, 214-215, fig. 16).

<sup>977</sup> Bagnoli (ed. 1997, 49-50, who rightly noted the participation of an assistant in the group of saints in the upper left area); Schmidt (1997, 215). Bandera (1999, 208, n. 135), on the other hand, preferred a dating around 1500, agreeing with André Chastel (1993, It. ed. 214) but noting at the same time (1999, 185) that the work is "improntata a uno spirito più cinquecentesco." Franco Moro's dating to advanced years of 2<sup>nd</sup> decade of 16<sup>th</sup> c. seems implausible to me on the basis of a comparison with the *Assumption* fresco in Santa Maria in Portico a Fontegiusta.

landscape is painted with loose and spontaneous brushwork; its sparsely placed bushes and trees, tufts of grass hanging from sketchily worked out cliffs, the ground dispersed with pearl-like pebbles reveal a fresh impact of Pintoricchio and Sodoma, who both started important frescoes in Siena and its territory – the Piccolomini Library and the refectory of the convent of Sant’Anna in Camprena near Siena, respectively – in 1503. The similarity in the figural types (Figs. 32/7-8) or in the drapery neatly arranged in angular folds around the kneeling saints further underpin the hypothesis that the predella belonged to the Montalcino *Assumption*. Importantly, the Virgin is shown in a very similar way in the main panel and in MFA 38: amidst golden rays, she is born in the air by the same five red-winged cherubs and wears the same white dress with a light blue cloak and a white veil that covers her head and shoulders (Figs. 32/9-10).<sup>978</sup>

The *Assumption of the Virgin* in Montalcino has a provenance from the church of the Observant Franciscan convent dedicated to Nativity of the Virgin near Montalcino, where Francesco Brogi documented it in June 1862 over the door of church.<sup>979</sup> The ex-Ramboux predella fragments complement this altarpiece well: two scenes with Franciscan saints can be placed under each of the kneeling Franciscans in the main panel, and two Marian scenes in the middle, under the Assumption. This arrangement would explain why the *Presentation of the Virgin*, so different in composition and iconography, is included among the Franciscan saints in the predella.<sup>980</sup> Both for iconographical reasons and because of the *titulus* of the church of

<sup>978</sup> The only difference in the Virgin’s dress is the lack of gold pattern on the white dress in the predella, but this pattern is difficult to execute on a very small scale. In the numerous other Assumptions painted by Benvenuto di Giovanni and Girolamo di Benvenuto, the Virgin’s dress is different and the number of cherubs is more.

<sup>979</sup> Brogi 1897, 264-65: “*Sopra la porta di Chiesa – L’Assunzione di M.[aria] V.[ergine] che viene portata in cielo da due Angeli e tre Serafini posti sotto i piedi di Lei. Vedesi al di sopra il Padre Eterno discendere dal cielo colle braccia aperte circondato da Serafini. Stanno quindi in due schiere i Profeti e gli antichi Padri. Ai lati della Vergine sono due gruppi di Angeli volanti, che suonano istrumenti. Finalmente inginocchiati presso il sepolcro stanno S. Francesco, S. Giacomo [sic] che raccoglie la cintola, ed altro Santo Minorita, che tiene un cuore in mano. Tavola semicircolare nel lato superiore, dipinta a tempera con figure un poco minori del vero, alta 3,10 larga 2,40. – Primordii del Secolo XVI. Girolamo di Benvenuto. Scuola senese. (n. 1: Moltissimo danneggiata dall’umidità, riscontrandosi molte scrostature, e qualche fenditura verticale).*” An old Alinari photograph no. 18947 documents the panel as “Montalcino – Prov. di Siena, Parrocchia della Natività. Assunzione della Vergine. (Giovanni di Benvenuto)”. The provenance is mentioned in Bagnoli ed. 1997, 49-50, 63. To the reverence of the convent for St. Bernardino, naturally widespread among Franciscan Observants, testifies a large, standing image of the saint by Sano di Pietro that also comes from this church and is now similarly in the Montalcino museum (Brogi 1897, 264; Bagnoli ed. 1997, 66, 69 (colour repr.), 74).

<sup>980</sup> Two other, arch-topped altarpieces to which a Franciscan predella must have belonged can be excluded on the basis of incompatibility of dimensions. One is the already mentioned *Assumption* by Benvenuto di Giovanni, originally painted for Franciscan Observant convento della Grancia near Grosseto, signed and dated 1498 (295 x 220.5 cm, sold to the Metropolitan Museum, deaccessioned and sold at Sotheby’s New York, 1 June, 1978, no. 133; then at the Galleria Benucci in Rome), a large *pala centinata* that shows the *Madonna della Cintola* with the Saints Francis of Assisi and Anthony of Padua kneeling on the sides of the empty sepulchre. The format, composition and iconography of the Montalcino *Assumption* is clearly based on this model. Girolamo made another version of this subject, in a similar format, which shows St. Jerome and St. Francis of Assisi kneeling by the empty tomb (272 x 178 cm, Santa Fiora, Convento della Santa Trinità).<sup>980</sup> The predella discussed here is later

provenance it seems feasible to hypothesize that it was preceded by a scene of the Nativity of the Virgin.

It is interesting to note how the principal feast day of the church, the Nativity of the Virgin on 8 September, had a special significance for the life of St. Bernardino, who was born on 8 September in 1380, entered the Franciscan order on the same day of the year in 1402, professed precisely one year later in 1403 and celebrated his first mass again one year later, on 8 September in 1404.<sup>981</sup> His biographers recorded that the Virgin revealed her favour to him also publicly through a miracle during a sermon he gave again on 8 September, in 1438, in the Piazza di S. Maria di Collemaggio in L'Aquila.<sup>982</sup>

### References:

Ramboux 1862, 33, no. 191 (Giovanni Spagna); [Ramboux] 1867, 35, no. 191 (Giovanni Spoletino do. La Spagna); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1873, 4, no. 38 (Sienese school, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Catalog der Landes-Gemälde-Galerie* 1876, 6, no. 85 (Sienese, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Országos Képtár...* 1878, 6, 85 (Siena, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); *Országos Képtár...* 1879, 6, 85 (Siena, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pulszky 1881, 6, no. 19 (Umbrian, 15<sup>th</sup> c.); Pulszky 1888, 5, no. 38 (Fiorenzo da Lorenzo); *Országos Képtár...* 1897, 23, no. 38 (Follower of Fiorenzo da Lorenzo), Wlassics and Kammerer 1897, 142, no. 38 (Follower of Fiorenzo da Lorenzo); Térey 1906<sup>2</sup>, 388, no. 38 (Follower of Fiorenzo da Lorenzo); Térey 1913<sup>1</sup>, 297, no. 38 (Follower of Fiorenzo da Lorenzo); Pigler 1954, 587 (Umbrian, early 16<sup>th</sup> c.); Pigler 1967, I, 720 (Umbrian, early 16<sup>th</sup> c.); Boskovits 1968 and 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1978, no. 26 (Girolamo di Benvenuto, from the decade between 1498-1508); Vilmos Tátrai, in Tátrai ed. 1991, 50 (Girolamo di Benvenuto), Moro 1992, 33-39 (Girolamo di Benvenuto, advanced years of 1510s); Kier and Zehnder ed. 1995, 588-89, cat. 204a, Pl. CXV (Girolamo di Benvenuto); Schmidt 1997, 210 (Girolamo di Benvenuto); Roland Krischel, in: Kier and Zehnder ed. 1998, 572, no. 101; Sotheby's, London, 9 July 1998, lot 60 (Girolamo di Benvenuto); Rudolf Hiller von Gaertringen and Victor Schmidt, "Girolamo di Benvenuto", in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon...*, vol. 55, 2007, 258 (Girolamo di Benvenuto); Sallay 2008, 9 colour repr., 11-13 (Girolamo di Benvenuto, ca. 1510, the predella probably belongs to the *Assumption of the Virgin* in Montalcino, visual reconstruction of the altarpiece).

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than Benvenuto's altarpiece from 1498 and its width of 275 cm is too large for both (measuring in width 220.5 cm and 178 cm, respectively).

<sup>981</sup> J. Heerinckx, "Bernardin de Sienna", in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, I, 1937, coll. 1518-1521, esp. col. 1518; *Vita di San Bernardino...* 1854, 13, 56, 63, 66.

<sup>982</sup> See the biography by Bernabò Senese from 1445 (AASS, Mai XX, Antwerp 1685, reprinted 1969, 280); *Vita di San Bernardino...* 1854, 260-262; Alessio 1899, 360-362. According to the chronology published by Carlo Delcorno (1989, 57) Bernardino preached at this place in Aquila in August 1438, and in September he was already in Monteripido, but it is not recorded exactly when he left Aquila. It may have been after September 8.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest and the Christian Museum in Esztergom – the two Hungarian museums that collect European old masters – conserve an unusually large number of Sienese paintings. The purpose of this thesis was to examine the most coherent group of works among these, those dating between about 1420 and 1520, in which nearly all the known Sienese masters from that period are represented. The chronological boundaries are those of the Sienese Quattrocento taken in a stylistic sense, and range from the activity of Sassetta, the first great master of the new style to masters like Bernardino Fungai and Girolamo di Benvenuto whose activity reaches into the Cinquecento but who never truly abandoned the artistic principles of the Quattrocento.

The collection history of the Sienese paintings now conserved in Hungary is worthy of interest for several reasons. The great majority of the 33 works now separated in the two museums originally formed part of a single private collection, that of Bishop Arnold Ipolyi (1823-1886), who in turn purchased most of them from the painter and restorer Johann Anton Ramboux (1790-1866), the former owner of one of the largest private collections of early Sienese paintings that ever existed. A smaller number of paintings belonged to a hitherto unknown Roman collector, Canon Raffaele Bertinelli (1802-1878), whose entire gallery was purchased by Cardinal János Simor (1813-1891), the founder of the Christian Museum. The analysis of the collecting interests and methods of these private owners threw light on many connections and similarities between them. Nearly all the paintings now in Hungary came into private hands in the first half or at the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; that is, in a very early phase of the collectionism of early Sienese art: soon after these works lost their original function due to the suppression of religious houses and confraternities in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and much before the collection of early Sienese paintings began on a large scale at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ramboux and Ipolyi were connoisseurs who seriously studied and catalogued their own collections. Ramboux's and Bertinelli's precocious interest in early Italian paintings seems explainable by their contact with the Nazarene movement that turned to the early Italian masters for artistic and religious inspiration. The same type of interest formed the taste of Cardinal Simor, who however primarily admired the works of the Nazarenes, and only secondarily the early Italian masters. The ecclesiastic intellectuals Ipolyi and Simor shared the idea to form a collection of Christian art, a *museum christianum*, for the religious and aesthetic education of the public.

The Sieneſe Quattrocento paintings in Hungary have not yet been the object of in-depth ſtudy. On the whole, Sieneſe Quattrocento art raised general interest among art historians and the wider public only in recent decades, although ſpecialiſts have ſtudied it comprehenſively for more than a century. A great amount of new information has recently come to light in this field, and the appreciation and understanding of fifteenth-century Siena has deepened and matured to a great extent. My purpoſe was to examine this group of paintings in the light of theſe new reſults.

In addition, I placed ſpecial emphasis on a methodology that too is rather recent in art hiſtorical ſcholarſhip but is indiſpenſable for the understanding of the type of works found in Hungary: panel paintings, moſt of which once formed part of larger ſtructures. I ſubjected every work to a careful technical examination and interpreted the obtained information in the light of fully or partially ſurviving larger ſtructures, mainly altarpieces. This approach brought unexpected reſults in the majority of caſes, which I tried to viſualize, wherever applicable, in digital reconſtructions. In the courſe of the technical examinations, every work was examined and documented from the ſides and the back; inſcriptions, inventory numbers, collectors' ſeals, and other types of documentation were recorded. I analysed reſtoration interventions and ſcaled punchmarks. Theſe data yielded a wealth of information for the hiſtory and the interpretation of the paintings.

I uſed this methodology together with the traditional methods of art hiſtory. The reſults of the reſearch include new attributions (Cat. 14), the refinement of earlier attributions, eſpecially where workshop participation is at iſſue (Cat. 5, 6, 10, 24) and taking a ſtandpoint in the caſe of debated attributions (Cat. 16, 18, 25, 29). Datings were reviewed in every caſe ſave the two ſecurely datable pieces (Cat. 1, 23): they were often reſiſed (Cat. 22, 26, 27, 28, 29), ſometimes in a ſignificant degree (Cat. 12, 20, 21), and occaſionally propoſed for the firſt time (Cat. 14, 15). In ſome caſes, an individual patron (Cat. 4) or religious orders (or people affiliated with them) could be identified as probable commiſſioners (Cat. 10, 16, 18, 28, 32). Iconographic reſearch was relevant eſpecially for Cat. 3, 4, 8, 18, 21, 22, 25, 32; the identification of compoſitional prototypes, for Cat. 7, 10, 12, 13, 21, 24 and 31. In the caſe of an altarpiece, I reinterpreted an inſcription previously believed to be a ſignature and a date ſo far conſidered as reliable (Cat. 26).

As far as the original context of fragments is concerned, two works ſometimes identified as predella fragments were found to be a furniture fragment (Cat. 8) and an independent piece for private devotion (Cat. 19), reſpectively. Another work hitherto unaniſmouſly believed to be the fragment of a predella turned out to have formed part of a vertical ſtructure once

decorated with narrative scenes (Cat. 9). A fragment whose function escaped definitive interpretation so far was identified as an unusually large pilaster base of an altarpiece (Cat. 20).

Several dismembered predellas were reconstructed. In some of them the original sequence of the fragments could be determined by matching the fragments of the decorative strips that formerly divided the scenes (Cat. 4, 22, 32) or on an iconographical basis (Cat. 16). For two predellas, hitherto unknown or lost companion pieces were found (Cat. 4, 13, 18); for two, the central fragment of the predella was identified through technical examinations: in one case by examining the wood grain (Cat. 4), in another, by rediscovering decorative borders hidden by the modern frame (Cat. 22).

The most interesting discovery of a companion fragment came by way of iconographic considerations: two angel heads that belonged to a Baptism of Christ-composition. The association was confirmed by technical examinations, which also suggested the original function of the dismembered work as the lunette of an altarpiece (Cat. 25). The original aspect of another lunette was modified on the basis of the technical examination of its fragments, helped by the discovery of an integral version of the composition by a student of the painter (Cat. 23). A previous hypothesis about the common origin of the central part of a triptych (or polyptych) and two laterals could be confirmed through the examination of the altarpiece structure and the joining marks on the reverses of the panels (Cat. 11). In two cases, reconstructed predellas were associated with their respective main registers: in one case, an earlier hypothesis could be confirmed by way of the study of iconography, structure, and style (Cat. 4); in another case, I proposed it for the first time, on the same grounds (Cat. 32).

For an easy review of earlier opinions, I provided a complete, annotated bibliography for every piece.

On the whole, this research contributed not only to the better understanding of a group of works conserved in Hungarian museums, but also to our knowledge of Quattrocento Sieneese art in general, into which these pieces fit, sometimes literally, as the pieces of a puzzle.

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1/1. Sassetta: *Saint Thomas Aquinas in Prayer*. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 32.



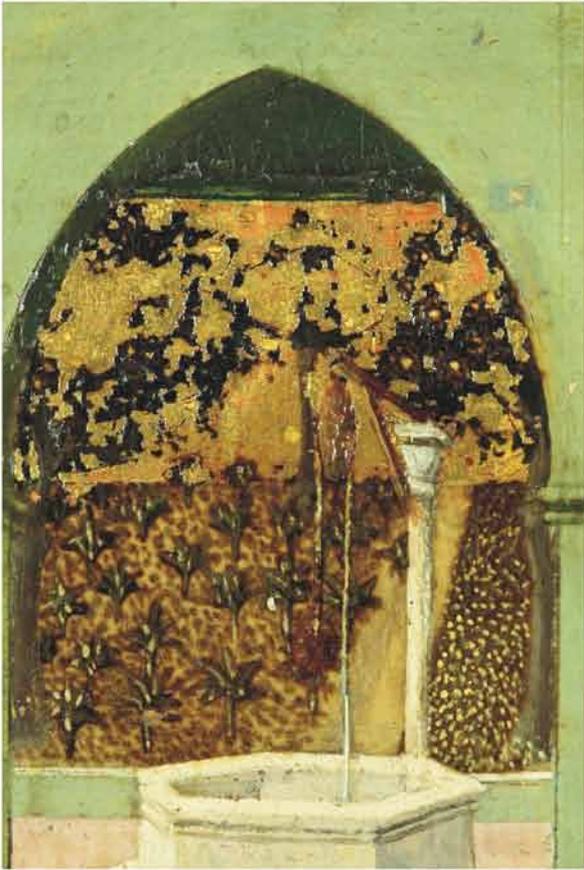
1/2. Sassetta: *Saint Thomas Aquinas in Prayer*. Reverse. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 32.



1/3. Sassetta: *Saint Thomas Aquinas in Prayer*. Detail of the heavenly vision.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 32.



1/4. Sassetta: *Saint Thomas Aquinas in Prayer*. Detail of the polyptych in raking light.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 32.



1/5-6. Sassetta: *Saint Thomas Aquinas in Prayer*.  
Detail of the cloister and of the library. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 32.



1/7. Sassetta: *Saint Thomas Aquinas in Prayer*.  
Detail of the reverse of the panel .  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 32.



1/8. Sassetta: *Saint Thomas Aquinas in Prayer*. Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 32.



1/9. Sassetta: *Saint Thomas Aquinas in Prayer*. UV photograph.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 32.



1/10 a-j. Parts of Sassetta's *Arte della Lana* altarpiece:  
*Prophet Elijah*, *Prophet Elisha* (PNS, invv. 87, 95),  
*St. Victor*, *St. Savinus*, *St. Ansanus*, *St. Crescentius* (PNS, inv. 168),  
*St. Ambrose*, *St. Jerome*, *St. Augustine*, *St. Gregory the Great* (PNS, inv. 169).



1/11. Reconstruction of the predella of Sassetta's *Arte della Lana* altarpiece.



2/1. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*Assumption of the Virgin.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.185.



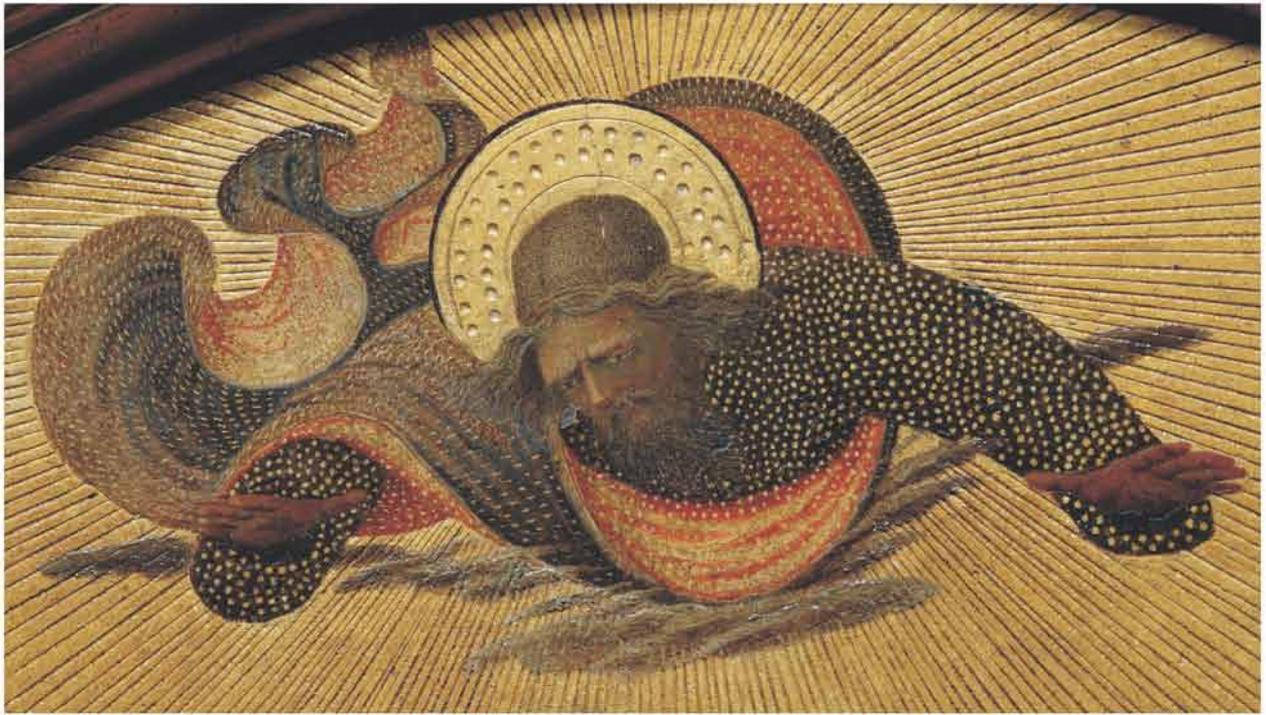
2/2. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*Assumption of the Virgin.* Reverse.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.185.



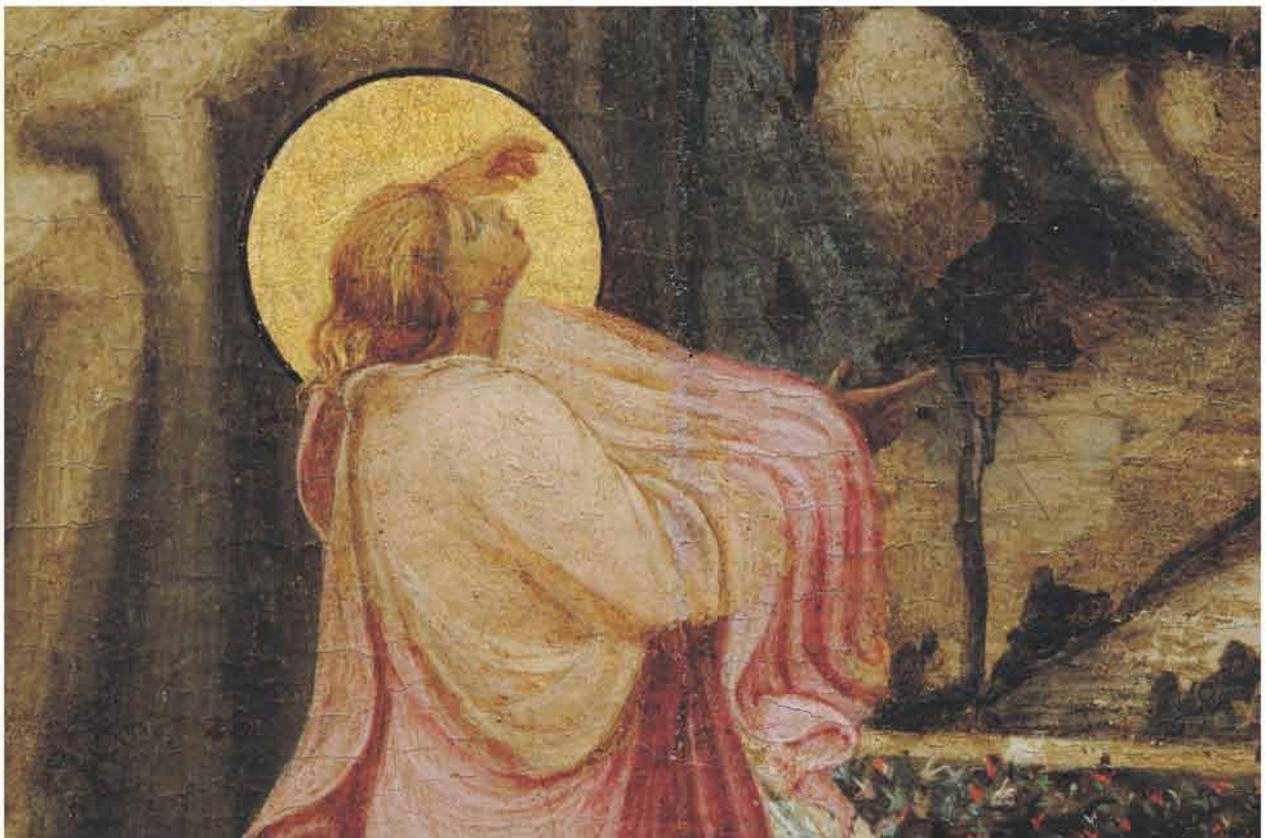
2/3. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*Assumption of the Virgin.*  
Detail of modern gilding and punchwork.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.185.



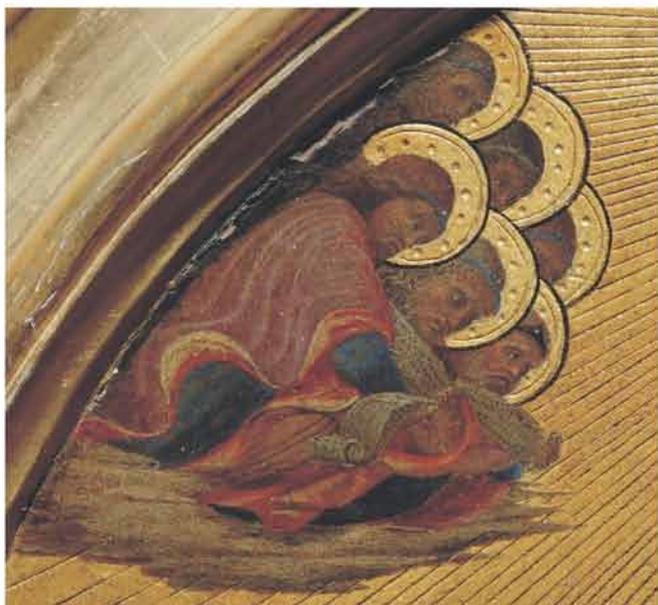
2/4. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*Assumption of the Virgin.*  
Documentation on the reverse.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.185.



2/5. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*Assumption of the Virgin*. Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.185.



2/6. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*Assumption of the Virgin*. Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.185.



2/7 a-f. Pietro di Giovanni d' Ambrogio:  
*Assumption of the Virgin*. Details.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.185.



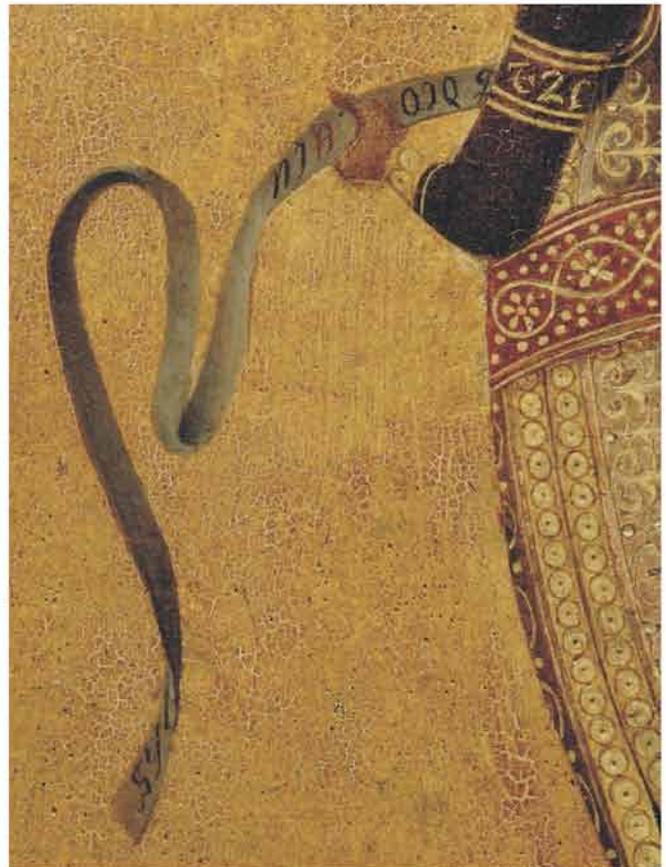
2/8. Attributed to Lippo Memmi:  
*Assumption of the Virgin.*  
Alte Pinakothek, Munich, inv. WAF 671.



2/9. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*Assumption of the Virgin.*  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Cagliari, inv. 3.



2/10. Sassetta (and others):  
*Assumption of the Virgin.*  
Formerly Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin.



2/11. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*Assumption of the Virgin.* Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.185.



3/1. Pietro di Giovanni d' Ambrogio:  
*The Bust of the Virgin.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.186.



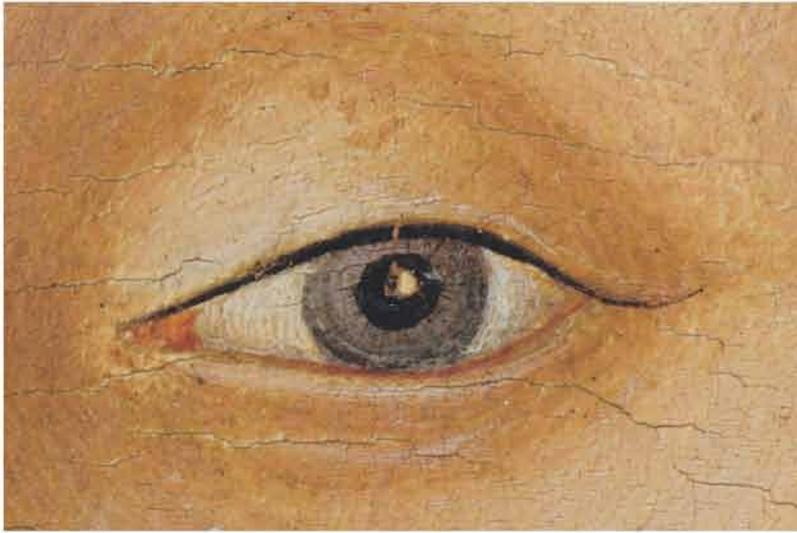
3/2. Pietro di Giovanni d' Ambrogio:  
*The Bust of the Virgin. Reverse.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.186.



3/3. Pietro di Giovanni d' Ambrogio's  
*The Bust of the Virgin* as it appeared in 1865  
in J. A. Ramboux's *Trostspiegel*.



3/4. Detail of wall decoration,  
left side chapel of the sanctuary,  
Church of Sant' Agostino, San Gimignano.



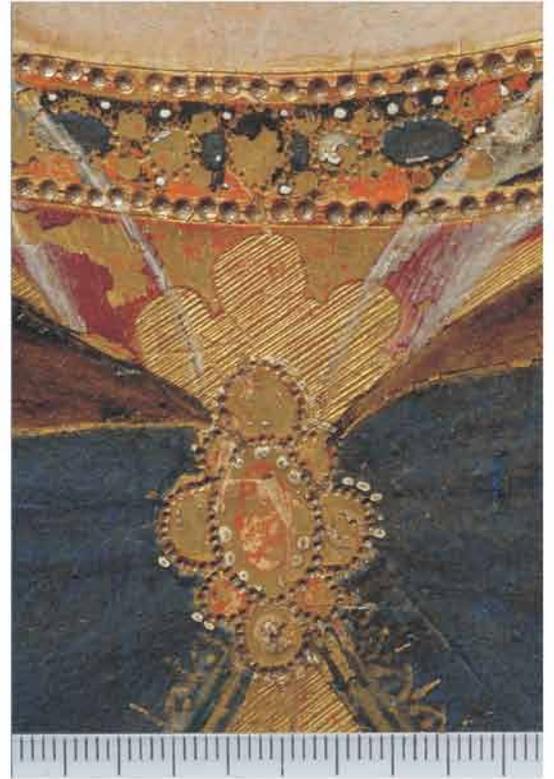
3/5. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*The Bust of the Virgin*. Detail of the left eye.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.186.



3/6. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*The Bust of the Virgin*.  
The lower left corner of the painting showing the *barbe*.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.186.



3/8. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*The Bust of the Virgin*.  
Side view of the panel.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.186.



3/7. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*The Bust of the Virgin*. Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.186.



3/9. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*The Bust of the Virgin*.  
Detail of the side of the panel.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.186.



3/10. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*The Bust of the Virgin.*  
Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.186.



3/11. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*St. Catherine of Alexandria in Glory.* 1444.  
Detail.  
Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris.



3/12. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*St. Galgamus*, detail from the  
*Adoration of the Pastors* altarpiece.  
Museo Civico Archeologico e d'Arte Sacra,  
Asciano.



3/13. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*St. Catherine of Alexandria in Glory.* 1444.  
Detail.  
Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris.



3/14. Attributed to Lorenzo Monaco:  
*Bust of the Virgin.*  
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam,  
inv. SK-A-4004.



3/15. *St. Luke writing.*  
Book of Hours from Toul.  
Priv. Coll., Paris (after Kovács 1997).



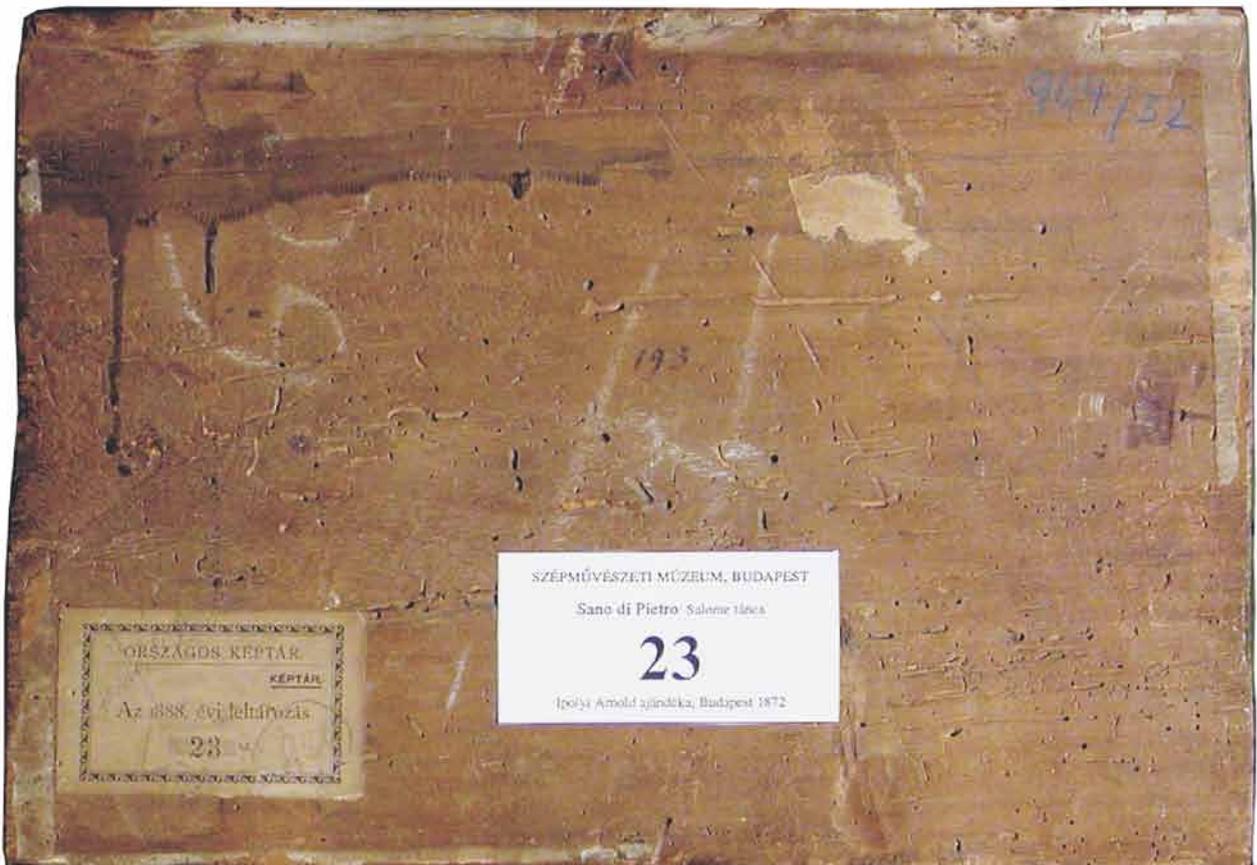
3/16. Bartolomeo Caporali:  
*St. Luke.*  
Detail of  
*St. Francis of Assisi, St. Herculian,  
St. Luke, and the apostle St. James the Elder*  
State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.



3/17. *St. Luke.*  
Illustration from Dorothee Klein's  
"St. Lukas als Maler", Diss. Hamburg 1933,  
Plate XII/1, line drawing  
after J. Bourdichon(?)'s miniature  
in the book of hours of Frederick III.



4/1. Sano di Pietro: *Banquet of Herod*. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 23.



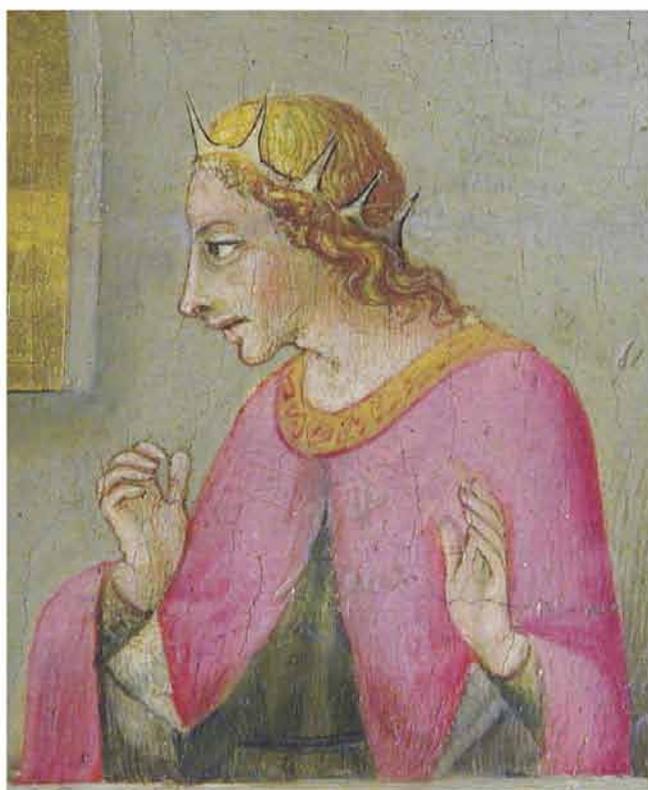
4/2. Sano di Pietro: *Banquet of Herod*. Reverse. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 23.



4/3. Sano di Pietro:  
*Banquet of Herod. Detail.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 23.



4/4. Sano di Pietro:  
San Giovanni all'Abbadia Nuova  
altarpiece, detail.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 231.



4/5. Sano di Pietro:  
*Banquet of Herod. Detail.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 23.



4/6. Sano di Pietro:  
*Marriage of the Virgin. Detail.*  
Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome, inv. 138.



4/7. Sano di Pietro: *Banquet of Herod*.  
Side view of panel.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 23.



4/8. Sano di Pietro: *Banquet of Herod*.  
Detail of lower right side of panel.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 23.



4/9. Sano di Pietro:  
San Giovanni all'Abbadia Nuova altarpiece,  
detail of Bartolomea di Domenico di Francesco.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 231.



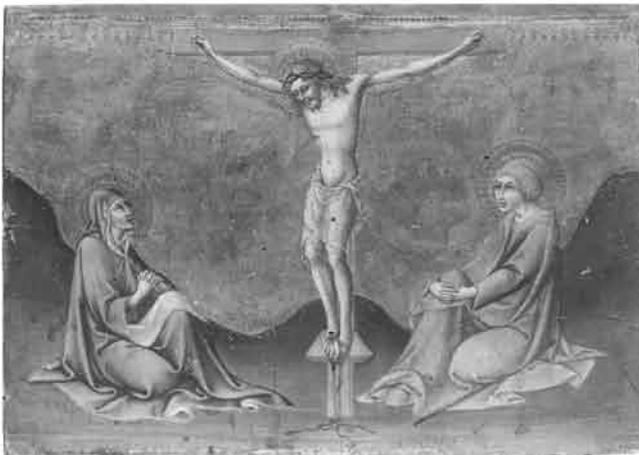
4/10. Bartolo di Fredi and workshop:  
*Decapitation of the Baptist and Banquet of Herod*,  
detail of a predella.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 130.



4/11. Sano di Pietro: *St. Jerome Writes to St. Paola as St. Blesilla Appears to him*. Kolumba Diözesanmuseum, Cologne, inv. M 5-101.



4/12. Sano di Pietro: *The Five-year Old St. John the Baptist Returns to his Parents from the Woods*. Whereabouts unknown.



4/13. Sano di Pietro: *Crucifixion*. National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., inv. 1945.1.45.



4/14. Sano di Pietro: *Decapitation of St. John the Baptist*. Pushkin Museum, Moscow, inv. 248.



Budapest

Moscow

Washington

Location unknown

Cologne



Cologne

Location unknown

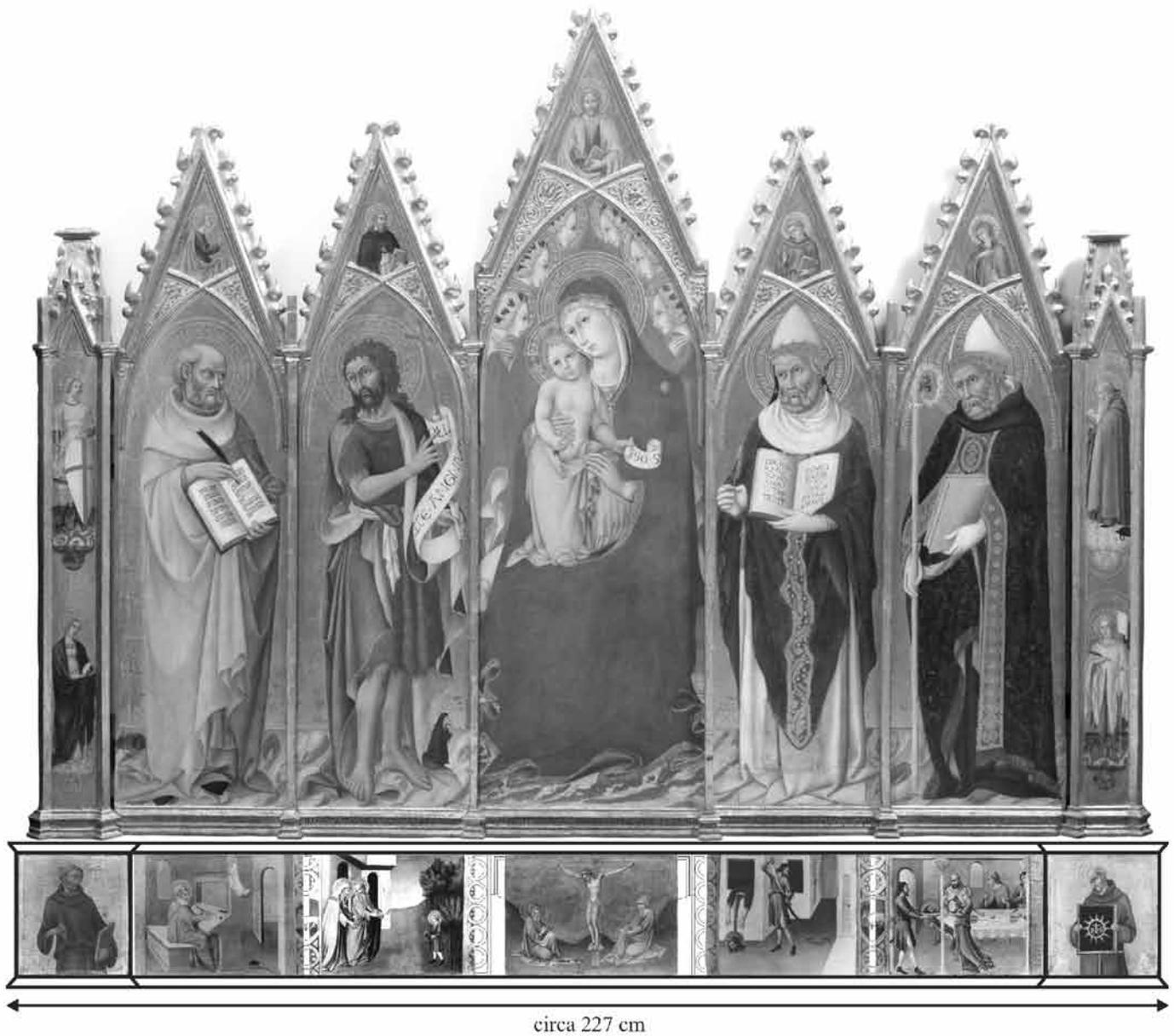
Washington

Moscow

Budapest

Ca. 180 cm

4/15 a, b. Reconstruction of the reverse and the front of Sano di Pietro's predella for the San Giovanni all'Abbadia Nuova altarpiece.



4/16. Reconstruction of Sano di Pietro's San Giovanni all'Abbadia Nuova altarpiece.



4/17. Reconstruction of the coat of arms shown in the predella.



5/1. Sano di Pietro and workshop:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome,  
Bernardino of Siena and Two Angels.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 1210.



5/2. Sano di Pietro and workshop:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome,  
Bernardino of Siena and Two Angels.* Reverse.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 1210.



5/3. Sano di Pietro and workshop:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome,  
Bernardino of Siena and Two Angels.*  
Scaled punchmarks.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 1210.



5/4. a, b. Sano di Pietro and workshop:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome,  
Bernardino of Siena and Two Angels.*  
a. View of panel from below;  
b. Detail of engaged frame.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 1210.



5/5. Sano di Pietro:  
*Virgin and Child*. Detail of altarpiece, 1458.  
Church of San Giorgio, Montemerano.



5/6. Sano di Pietro:  
*Virgin and Child*. Detail of altarpiece.  
Museo d'Arte Sacra di Val d'Arbia, Buonconvento.



5/7. Sano di Pietro:  
*Virgin and Child with Two Angels, a Donor,  
and God the Father above*.  
Central part of the Caccialupi triptych.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. 1907.07.515.



5/8. Sano di Pietro:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome,  
Bernardino of Siena and Four Angels*.  
National Gallery of Art, Washington,  
inv. 1939.1.274.



5/9. Sano di Pietro:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome,  
 Bernardino of Siena and Four Angels.* Detail.  
 National Gallery of Art, Washington,  
 inv. 1939.1.274.



5/10. Sano di Pietro and workshop:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome,  
 Bernardino of Siena and Two Angels.*  
 Detail.  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 1210.



5/11. Sano di Pietro:  
*Virgin and Child,* detail of the  
 central panel of the Caccialupi triptych.  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



5/12. Sano di Pietro:  
 Detail of altarpiece, 1471.  
 Church of Ss. Salvatore e Cirino,  
 Abbazia a Isola.



6/1. Workshop of Sano di Pietro:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome  
and Bernardino of Siena.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.180.



6/2. Workshop of Sano di Pietro:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome  
and Bernardino of Siena.* Reverse.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.180.



6/3. The *Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome  
and Bernardino of Siena*  
by Sano di Pietro's workshop, as it appeared in  
J. A. Ramboux's *Trostspiegel* of 1865.



6/4. Workshop of Sano di Pietro: *Virgin and Child  
with Sts. Jerome and Bernardino of Siena.*  
Scaled punchmarks.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.180.



6/5. Workshop of Sano di Pietro:  
*Virgin and Child with Two Angels*. Detail.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 252.



6/6. Workshop of Sano di Pietro:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome  
and Bernardino of Siena*. Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.180.



6/7. Sano di Pietro and workshop:  
*Virgin and Child with Two Angels*.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 252.



6/8. Sano di Pietro (and workshop?):  
*Virgin and Child with Six saints*. Detail.  
Christ Church Picture Gallery, Oxford.



7/1. Workshop of Sano di Pietro:  
*St. Bernardino of Siena*.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 39.



7/2. Workshop of Sano di Pietro:  
*St. Bernardino of Siena*. Reverse of modern support.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 39.



7/3. Workshop of Sano di Pietro:  
*St. Bernardino of Siena*. Photograph in ultraviolet light.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 39.



7/4. Workshop of Sano di Pietro:  
*St. Bernardino of Siena*. X-ray.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 39.



7/5. Workshop of Sano di Pietro:  
*St. Bernardino of Siena.*  
 View of panel from below.  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 39.



7/6. Workshop of Sano di Pietro:  
*St. Bernardino of Siena.* Detail.  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 39.



7/7. Pietro di Giovanni d'Ambrogio:  
*Blessed Bernardino of Siena.* 1444.  
 Church of the Osservanza, Siena.



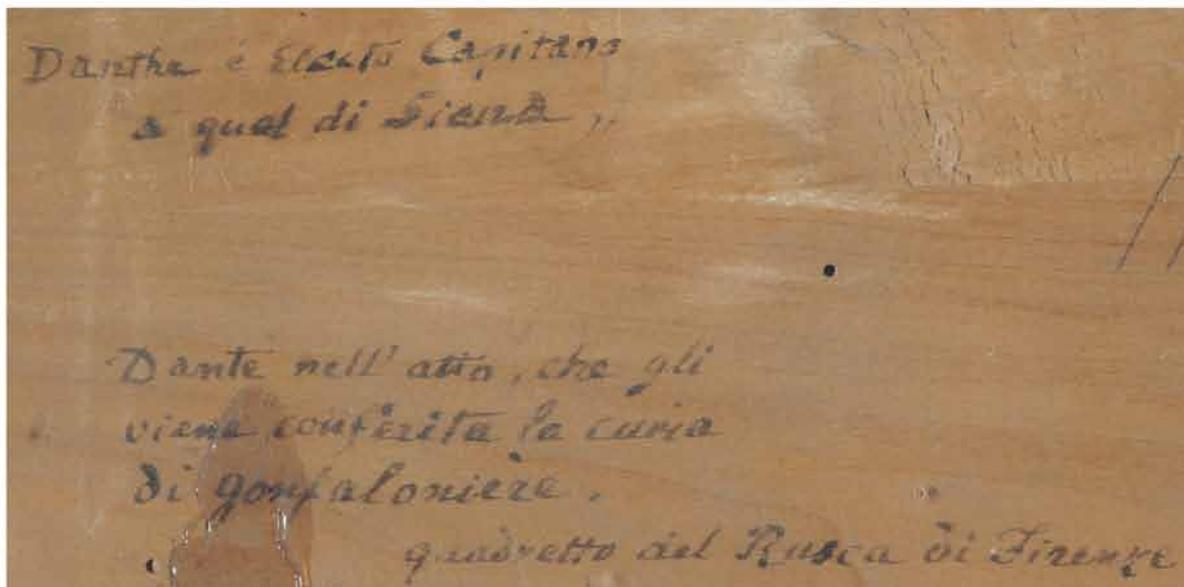
7/8. Attributed to Sano di Pietro:  
*St. Bernardino of Siena.*  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



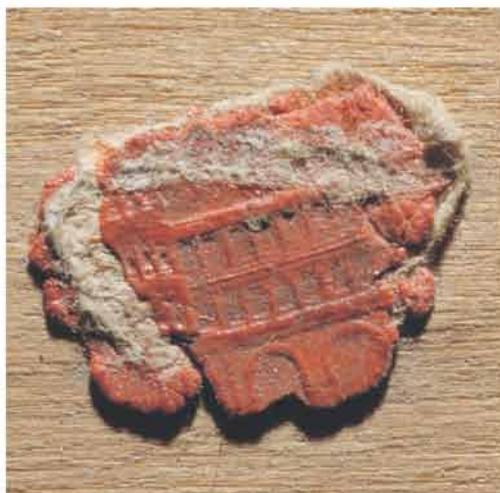
8/1. Circle of Vecchietta:  
*Conferral of the Flag of Siena.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.161.



8/2. Circle of Vecchietta:  
*Conferral of the Flag of Siena. Reverse.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.161.



8/3. Circle of Vecchietta:  
*Conferral of the Flag of Siena*. Inscription on reverse.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.161.



8/4 a, b. Circle of Vecchietta:  
*Conferral of the Flag of Siena*. Seals on reverse.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.161.



8/5. Circle of Vecchietta: *Conferral of the Flag of Siena*.  
Detail of the upper edge, showing remnants of pastiglia border with punched decoration.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.161.



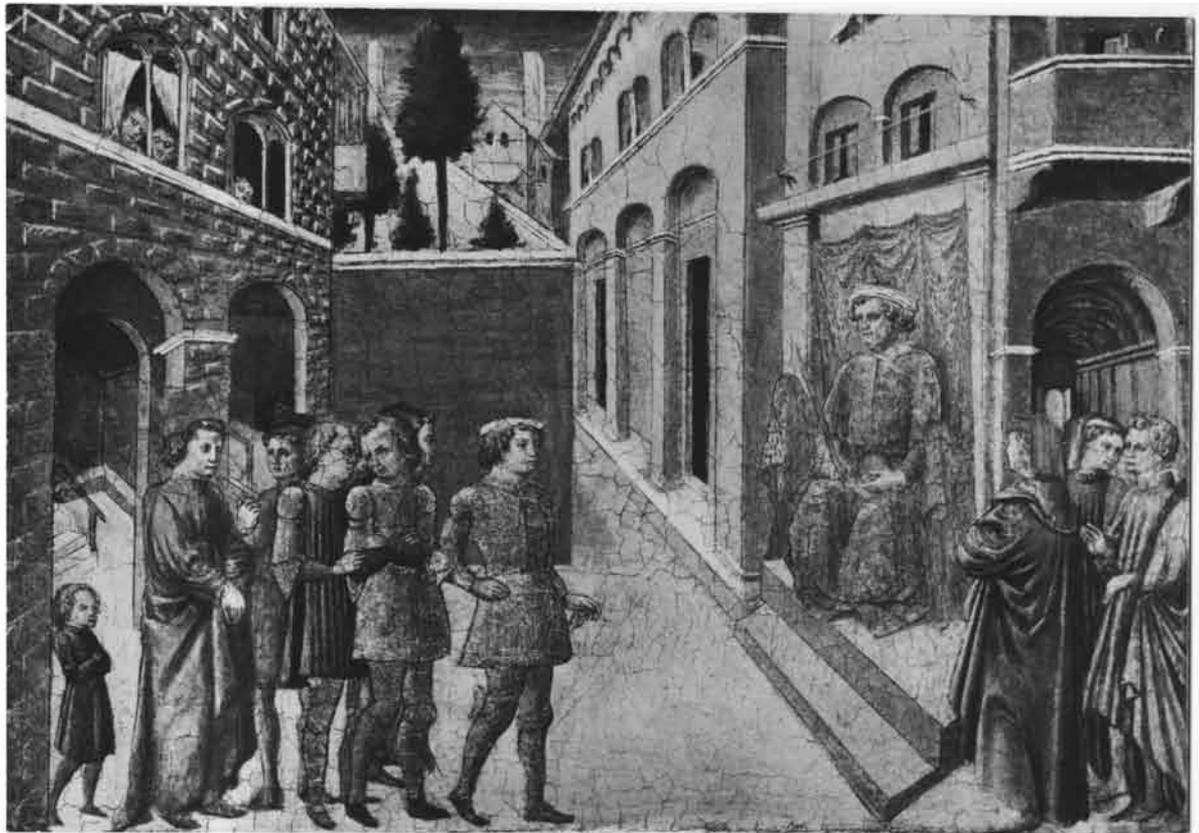
8/6. Circle of Vecchietta: *Arrival of a knight at the city gates of Siena.*  
The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania, inv. BF 868.



8/7. Circle of Vecchietta: *Duel scene outside a city gate.*  
Formerly private collection, Geneva.



8/8. Circle of Vecchietta: *A knight kneeling in front of a ruler.*  
Private Collection.



8/9. Circle of Vecchietta: *A knight standing in front of a bearded ruler.*  
Private Collection, Scotland.



8/10. Circle of Vecchietta:  
*Conferral of the Flag of Siena. Detail.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.161.



8/11. Circle of Vecchietta:  
*Conferral of the Flag of Siena. Detail.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.161.



8/12. Circle of Vecchietta:  
*Conferral of the Flag of Siena. Detail.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.161.



8/13. Circle of Vecchietta:  
*Conferral of the Flag of Siena. Detail.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.161.



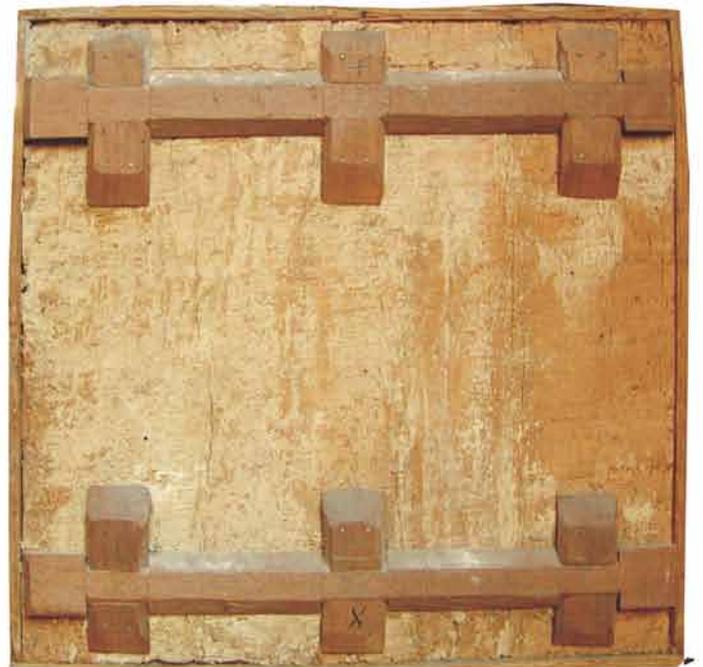
9/1. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Ansanus Baptizes the People of Siena.*  
 Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.181.



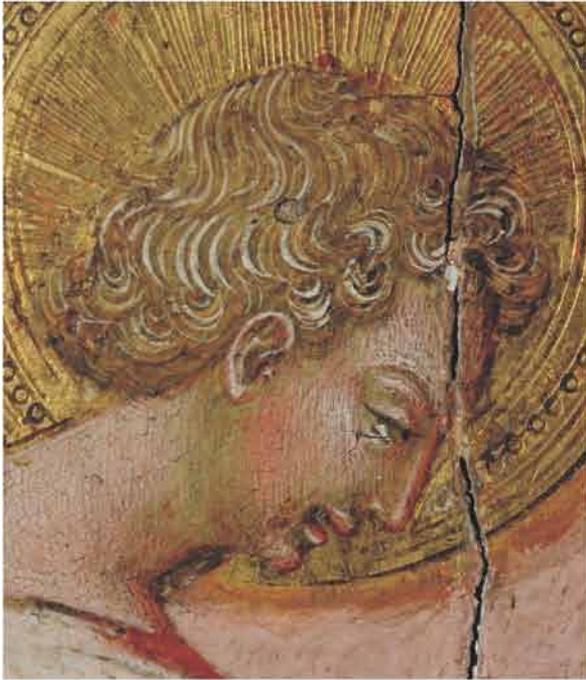
9/2. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Ansanus Baptizes the People of Siena.*  
 Reverse of the modern support.  
 Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.181.



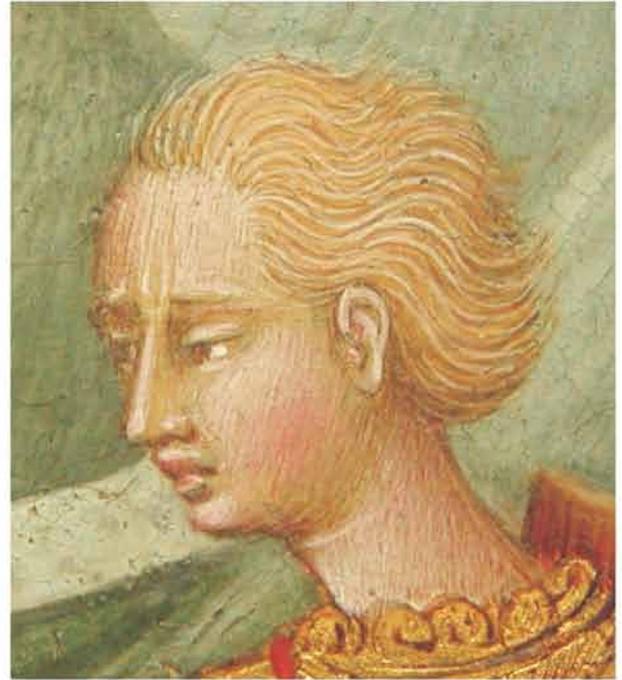
9/3. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Decapitation of St. Ansanus.*  
 Carrand Coll., Museo Nazionale del Bargello,  
 Florence, inv. 2019c.



9/4. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Decapitation of St. Ansanus.*  
 Reverse.  
 Carrand Coll., Museo Nazionale del Bargello,  
 Florence, inv. 2019c.



9/5. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Ansanus Baptizes the People of Siena.*  
Detail. Christian Museum,  
Esztergom, inv. 55.181.



9/6. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Decapitation of St. Ansanus.* Detail.  
Museo Nazionale del Bargello,  
Florence, inv. 2019c.



9/7. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Ansanus Baptizes the People of Siena.*  
Detail. Christian Museum,  
Esztergom, inv. 55.181.



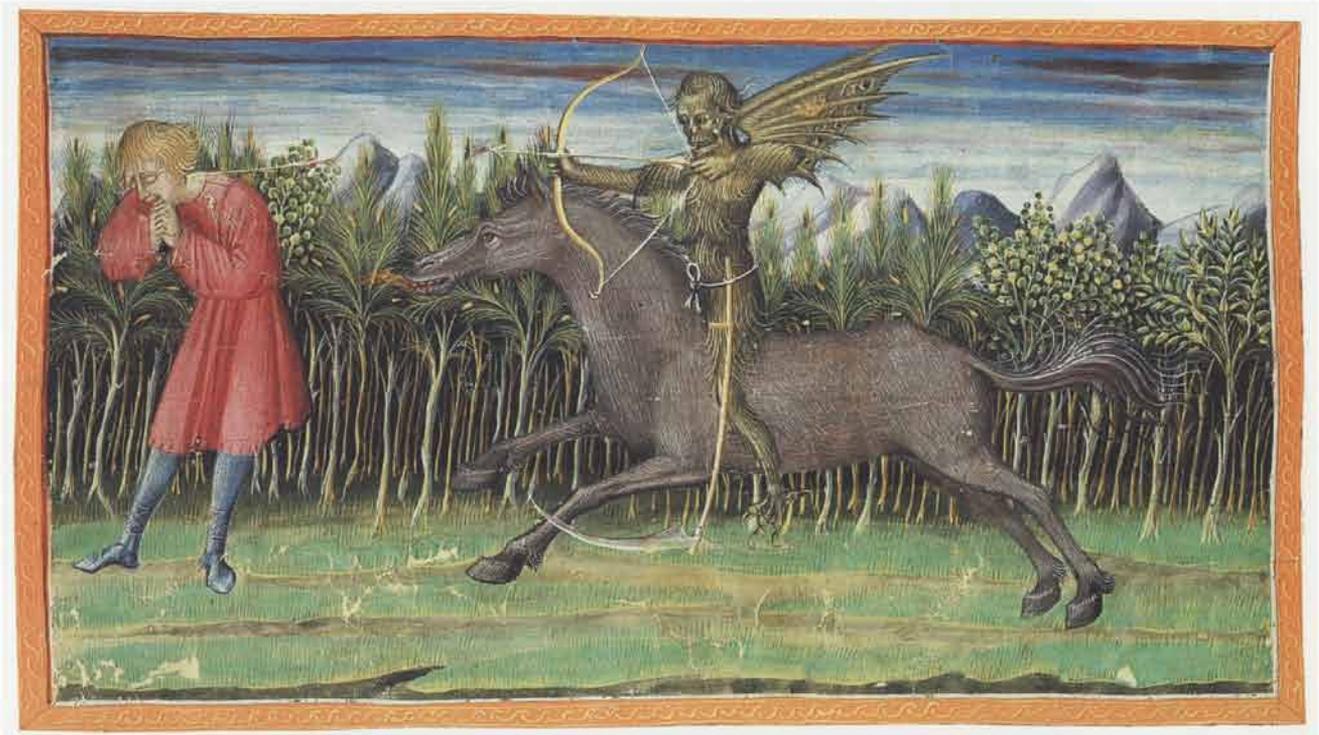
9/8. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Ansanus Baptizes the People of Siena.*  
Scaled punchmarks.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.181.

9/10. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Ansanus Baptizes the People of Siena.*  
Detail. Christian Museum,  
Esztergom, inv. 55.181.



9/11. Workshop of Pisanello,  
after Gentile da Fabriano:  
*Baptism of Christ.* Detail.  
Louvre, Paris, RF 420r.

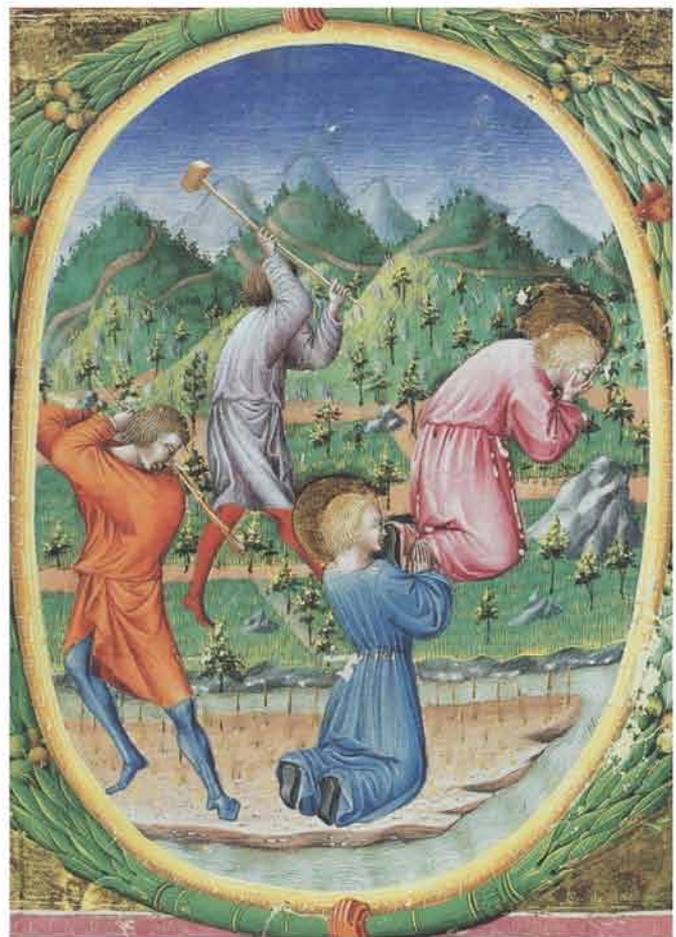




9/12. Giovanni di Paolo: *The Triumph of Death*. BCS, cod. G. I. 8, f. 164r.



9/13. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Decapitation of St. Ansanus*. Detail.  
Museo Nazionale del Bargello,  
Florence, inv. 2019c.



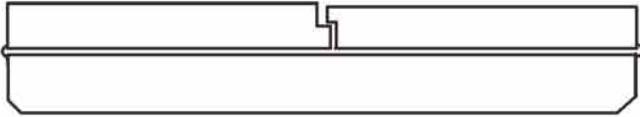
9/14. Giovanni di Paolo: *Execution scene*.  
BCS, cod. G. I. 8, f. 62v.



10/1. Giovanni di Paolo:  
Triptych: *Madonna and Child, with Sts. Ansanus, Anthony Abbot, Bernardino, and Francis of Assisi.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.182.



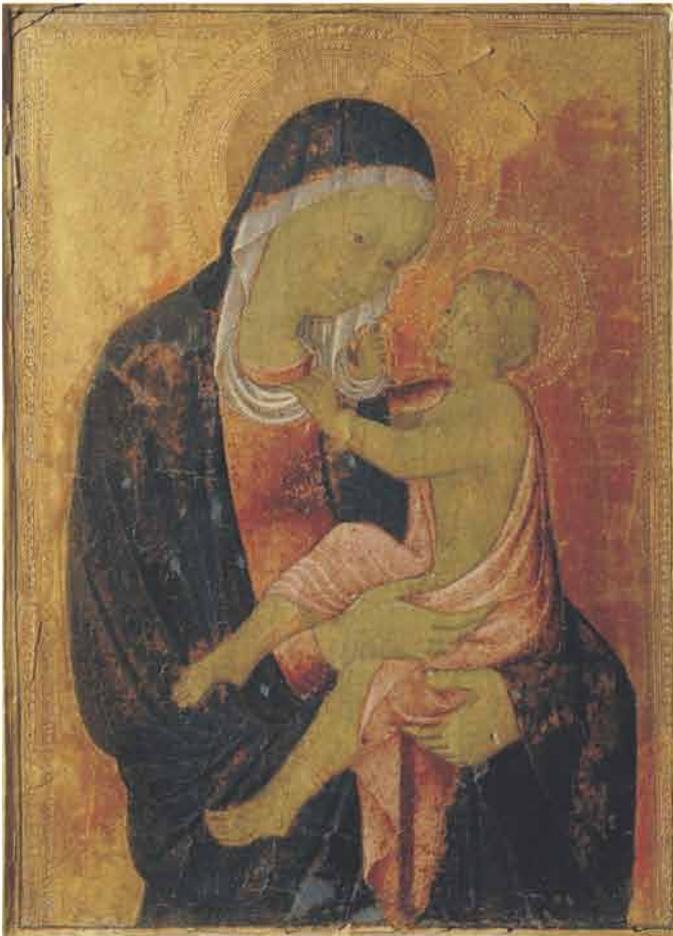
10/2. Giovanni di Paolo:  
Triptych: *Madonna and Child, with Sts. Ansanus, Anthony Abbot, Bernardino, and Francis of Assisi.*  
Reverse.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.182.



10/3. Giovanni di Paolo: Triptych.  
Photo from above and scheme of the structure from below.  
in a closed state,  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.182.



10/4. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Madonna of Humility*.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. 30.772.



10/5. Giovanni di Paolo:  
Triptych, detail: *Madonna and Child*.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom,  
inv. 55.182.



10/6. Giovanni di Paolo (and workshop?):  
*Madonna and Child with  
Sts. Bartholomew and Jerome*, detail.  
New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery,  
inv. 1943.255.



10/7. Giovanni di Paolo:  
Triptych (detail): *St. Ansanus*.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.182.



10/8. Giovanni di Paolo:  
Triptych (detail): *St. Bernardino*.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.182.



10/9. Giovanni di Paolo:  
Triptych (detail): *St. Anthony Abbot*.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.182.



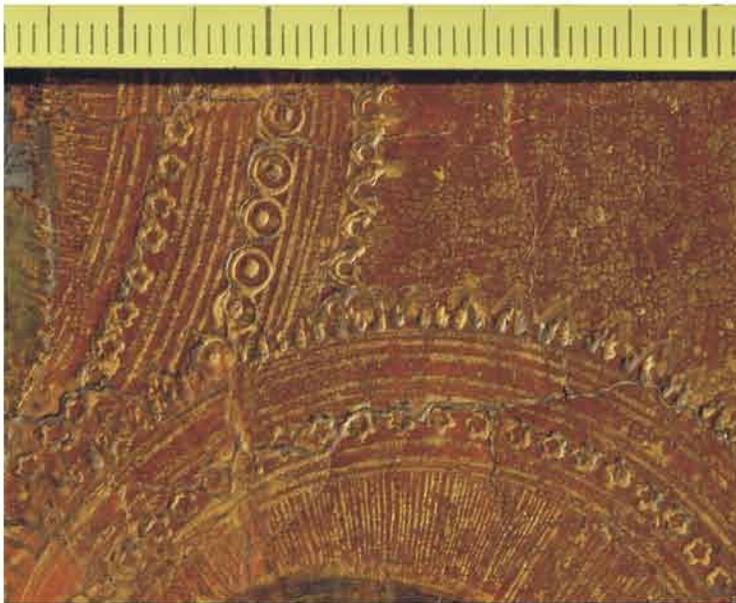
10/10. Giovanni di Paolo:  
Triptych (detail): *St. Francis of Assisi*.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.182.



10/11. Giovanni di Paolo:  
Triptych (detail): *Head of the Virgin*.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.182.



10/12. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Virgin Annunciate* (detail)  
Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie.



10/13-14. Giovanni di Paolo:  
Triptych. Details: scaled punchmarks.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.182.





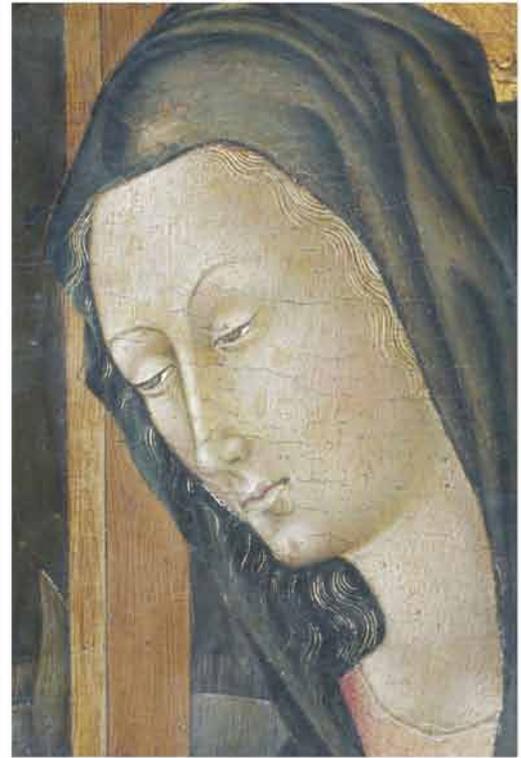
11/1. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.183.



11/2. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child.*  
Reverse.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.183.



11/3. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child*. Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.183.



11/4. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child*. Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.183.



11/5. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child*. Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.183.



11/7. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child*.  
Detail of the reverse, showing  
the rectangular sawed indent and oblique  
saw cut along the lower left edge.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.183.



11/6. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child*. Photograph of the  
reconstructed upper part in raking light.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.183.



11/8. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child.*  
Musée de Petit Palais, Avignon, inv. 20283.



11/9. Giovanni d'Alemagna:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child.* Detail of a polyptych.  
National Gallery, Prague.



11/10. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child.*  
Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Mass.,  
Inv. 1943.112.



11/11. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Adoration of the Magi.*  
Metropolitan Museum, New York,  
inv. 1982.60.4.



11/12 a, b. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Victor*. Front and reverse  
 Musée de Petit Palais, Avignon.

11/13 a, b. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Ansanus (?)*. Front and reverse.  
 Musée de Petit Palais, Avignon.

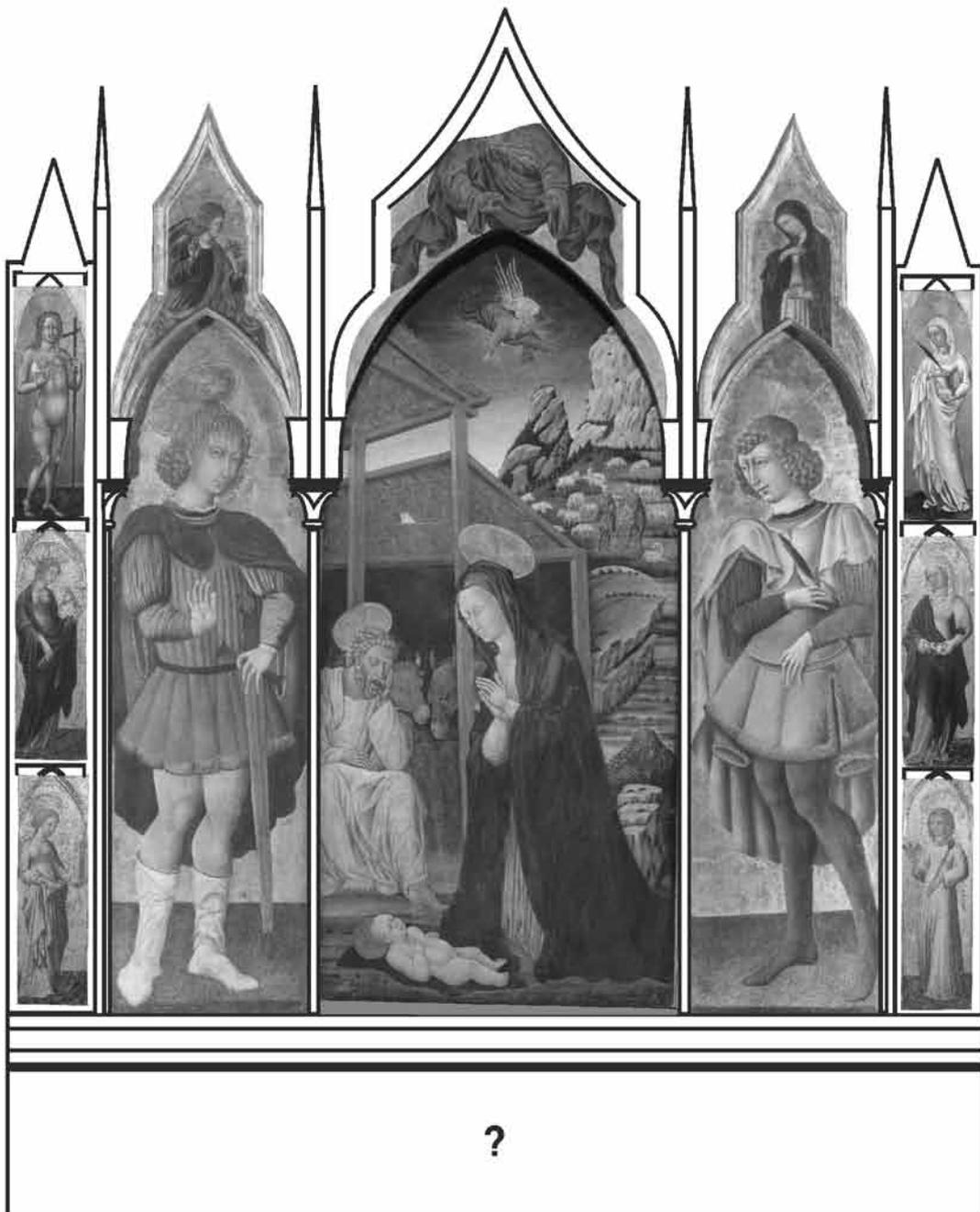


11/14 a-f. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Sts. Catherine of Alexandria, Barbara, Mary Magdalene, Agnes, Agatha, Martha (?)*  
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 32.100.83.A-D (a, b, e, f); Salini Coll., Siena (c, d)



11/15. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Ansanus (?)*. Detail.  
Musée de Petit Palais, Avignon.

11/16. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Galgamus*. Detail.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 199.



11/17. Hypothetical reconstruction of Giovanni di Paolo's Avignon-Esztergom altarpiece.



12/1. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Matthew*.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 21.



12/2. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Matthew*. Reverse.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 21.



12/3. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Matthew*. Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 21.



12/4. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Matthew*. Detail of reverse,  
showing label related to J. A. Ramboux's  
exportation request of 1838.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 21.



12/5. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Luke* (old state with 19th c. Frame).  
 Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, inv. 61.154.



12/6. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. John the Evangelist*.  
 Stichting Collectie P. en N. de Boer,  
 Amsterdam.



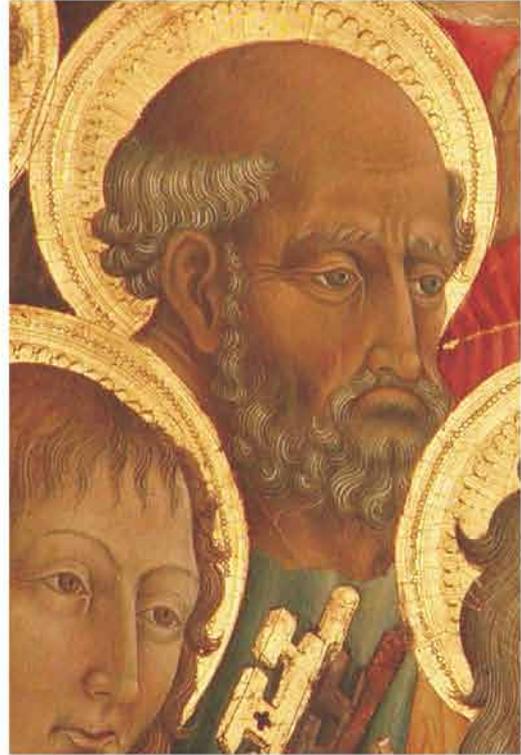
12/7. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Mark*.  
 Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 195.



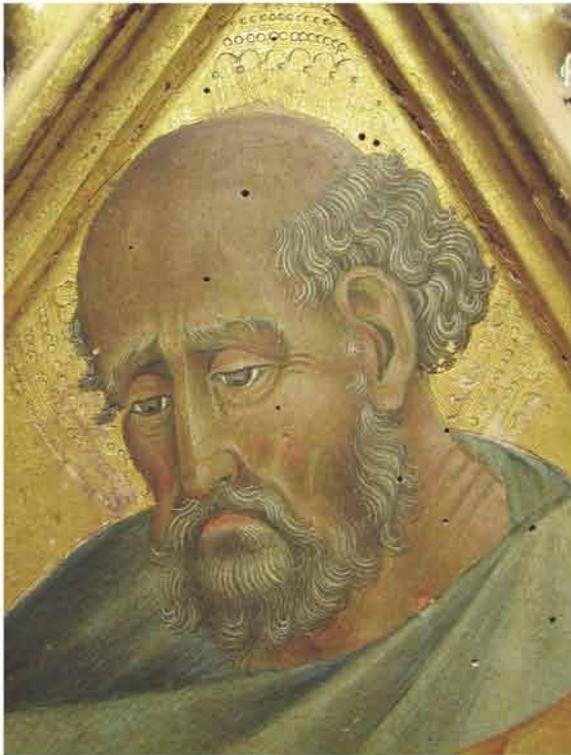
12/8. Johann Anton Ramboux:  
 Drawing of Giovanni di Paolo's *St. Mark*.  
 Städel Museum, Frankfurt.



12/9. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. John*. Detail.  
Stichting Collectie P. en N. de Boer,  
Amsterdam.



12/10. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Peter*. Detail from the "*Large Maesta*".  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 575.



12/11. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Mark*. Detail.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 195.



12/12. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*King David*. Detail from the "*Large Maesta*".  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 575.



12/13. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*Blessing Christ and the Four Evangelists*  
 Chiamonte Bordonaro Coll., Palermo.



12/14 a, b, c, d. Giovanni di Paolo and workshop:  
*St. Luke* (Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, inv. 61.154);  
*St. John* (Stichting Collectie P. en N. de Boer, Amsterdam);  
*St. Matthew* (Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 21);  
*St. Mark* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 195).



13/1. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*St. Catherine of Siena.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.173.



13/2. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*St. Catherine of Siena. Reverse.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.173.

13/3. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*St. Catherine of Siena.*  
Documentation on upper side of the support.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.173.



13/4. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*St. Nicholas of Tolentino.*  
Huis Bergh Foundation, 's Heerenberg, inv. 031.



13/5. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*St. Nicholas of Tolentino.*  
Reverse.  
Huis Bergh Foundation, 's Heerenberg, inv. 031.

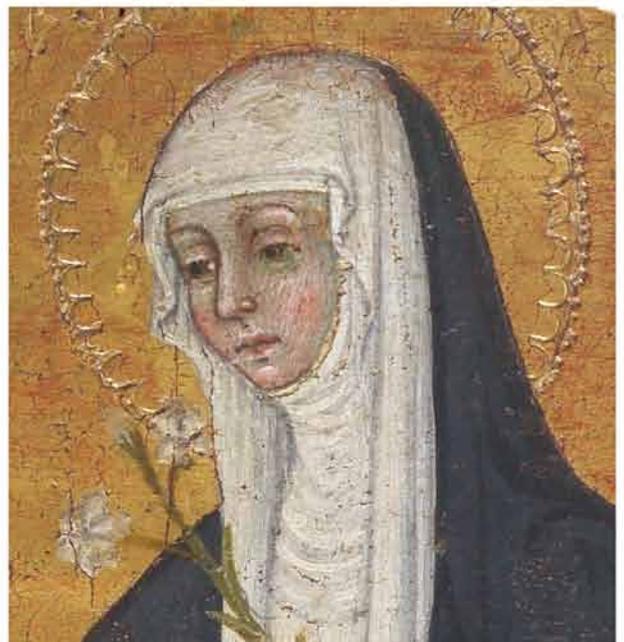


13/6. Pellegrino di Mariano: Predella. Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 331.



13/7. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*St. Catherine of Siena*. Detail of a predella.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 331.

13/8. Sano di Pietro:  
*St. Catherine of Siena*. Fragment of a predella.  
Bonnenfantemuseum, Maastricht, inv. 3454.



13/9. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*St. Catherine of Siena*. Detail of a predella.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 331.

13/10. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*St. Catherine of Siena*. Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.173.



13/11. Il Vecchietta:  
*St. Catherine of Siena*.  
Sala del Consiglio,  
Palazzo Pubblico, Siena.



13/12. Giovanni di Paolo:  
*St. Catherine of Siena*.  
Fogg Art Museum,  
Cambridge (Mass.),  
inv. 1921.13.



13/13. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*St. Catherine of Siena*.  
Detail of the *Assumption of  
the Virgin* altarpiece.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale,  
Cagliari, inv. 3.



13/14. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*St. Catherine of Siena*. Detail: scaled photograph of punchmarks.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.173.



14/1. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. John the Baptist  
and Anthony Abbot.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.179.



14/2. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. John the Baptist  
and Anthony Abbot. Reverse.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.179.



14/3. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. John the Baptist  
and Anthony Abbot.*  
State before restoration of 1996-97.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.179.



14/4 a, b. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. John the Baptist  
and Anthony Abbot.*  
Details: scaled photographs of punchmarks.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.179.



14/5. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. John the Baptist  
and Anthony Abbot (detail).*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.179.



14/6. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*St. John the Evangelist (detail).*  
Museo Diocesano, Pienza, Cod. G.I, f. 67v.



14/7. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. John the Baptist  
and Anthony Abbot (detail).*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.179.



14/8. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*St. John the Baptist (detail).*  
Libreria Piccolomini, Siena,  
Cod. 107-1, f. 72v.



14/9. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*Virgin and Child*  
with *St. Nicholas and another Bishop Saint,*  
and a predella.  
Le Mans, Musée de Tessé, inv. 5327.



14/10. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*Virgin and Child with Two Angels.*  
Museo d'Arte Sacra, Asciano.



14/11. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*Virgin and Child.*  
Whereabouts unknown.



14/12. Pellegrino di Mariano:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Jerome and Bernardino.*  
(Bottom part reconstructed)  
Whereabouts unknown.



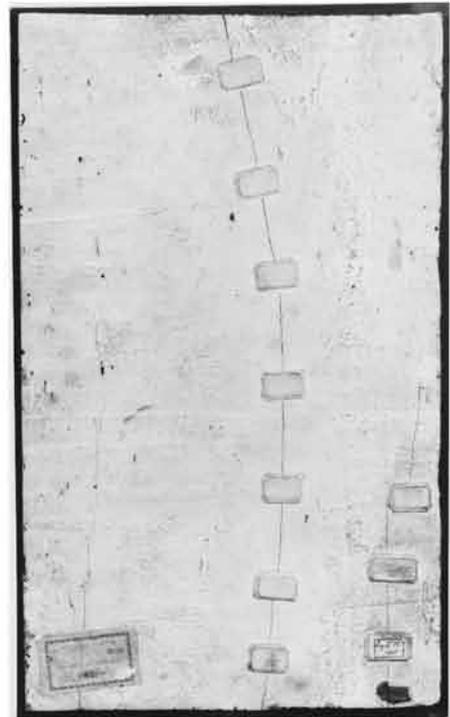
15/1. Follower of Francesco di Giorgio Martini:  
*Madonna and Child with Two Angels.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 42.



15/2. Follower of Francesco di Giorgio Martini:  
*Madonna and Child with Two Angels.*  
Before restoration of 1986-88.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 42.



15/3. The *Madonna and Child with Two Angels*  
by a follower of Francesco di Giorgio Martini,  
as it appeared in  
J. A. Ramboux's *Trostspiegel* of 1865.



15/4. Follower of Francesco di Giorgio Martini:  
*Madonna and Child with Two Angels.*  
Reverse of support before restoration of 1986-88.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 42.



15/5. Follower of Francesco di Giorgio Martini:  
*Madonna and Child with Two Angels.*  
Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 42.



15/6. Follower of Francesco di Giorgio Martini:  
*Madonna and Child with Two Angels.*  
Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 42.



15/7. Follower of Francesco di Giorgio Martini:  
*Madonna and Child with Angels.*  
Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 42.



15/8. Francesco di Giorgio Martini  
and workshop:  
*Madonna and Child with an Angel.*  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 288.



15/9. Francesco di Giorgio Martini  
and workshop:  
*Madonna and Child with Sts. Jerome,  
Bernardino and an Angel.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. 41.921.



15/10. Francesco di Giorgio Martini  
and workshop:  
*Adoration of the Child.*  
High Museum of Art, Atlanta.



15/11. Francesco di Giorgio Martini:  
*Adoration of the Child.*  
Detail of an illuminated page.  
Museo della Cattedrale, Chiusi, Cod. B, f. 3v.



16/1. Neruccio de' Landi: *St. Francis of Assisi*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.171.



16/2. Neruccio de' Landi: *St. Francis of Assisi*.  
Reverse of the modern support.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.171.



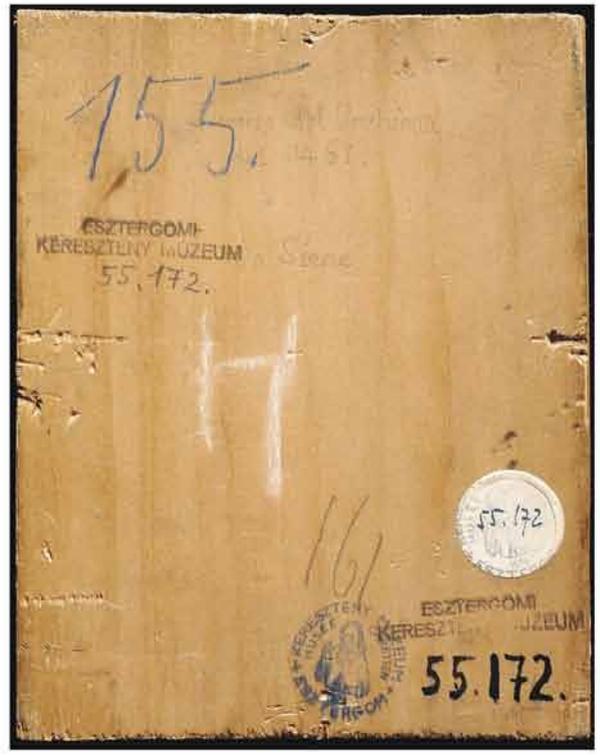
16/3. Neruccio de' Landi:  
*St. Francis of Assisi*, detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.171.



16/4. Neruccio de' Landi: Predella with scenes  
from the life of Saint Benedict, detail.  
Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890.1602.



16/5. Neroccio de' Landi: *St. John the Evangelist*.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.172.



16/6. Neroccio de' Landi: *St. John the Evangelist*.  
Reverse of the modern support.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.172.



16/7. Neroccio de' Landi: *St. John the Evangelist*,  
detail. Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.172.



16/8. Neroccio de' Landi: Predella with  
scenes from the life of Saint Benedict, detail.  
Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890.1602.



16/9-10. Neruccio de' Landi: *St. John the Evangelist, St. Francis of Assisi*.  
X-ray (frontal view, side view of both panels)  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.172, 55. 171.



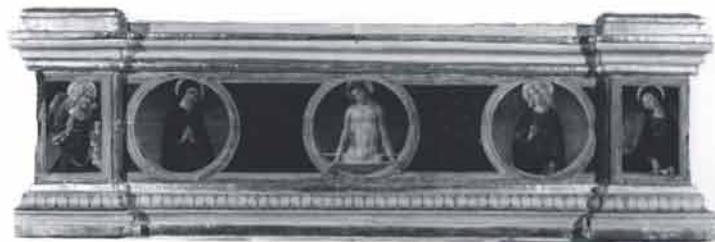
16/11. Vecchietta: Predella of the Altarpiece of the *Assumption of the Virgin*. Duomo, Pienza.



16/12. Vecchietta: *Mater Dolorosa*.  
Predella detail. Duomo, Pienza.



16/13. Vecchietta: *St. John the Evangelist*.  
Predella detail. Duomo, Pienza.



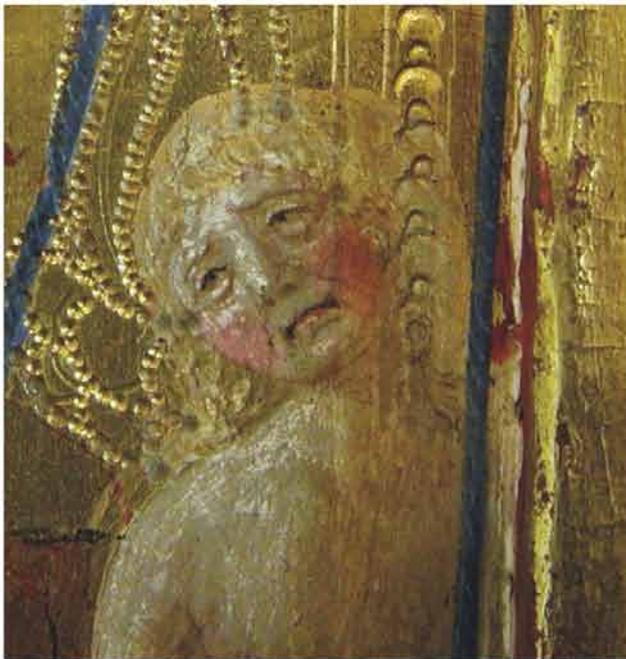
16/14. Neruccio de' Landi: Predella of a tabernacle. Private Coll., Siena.



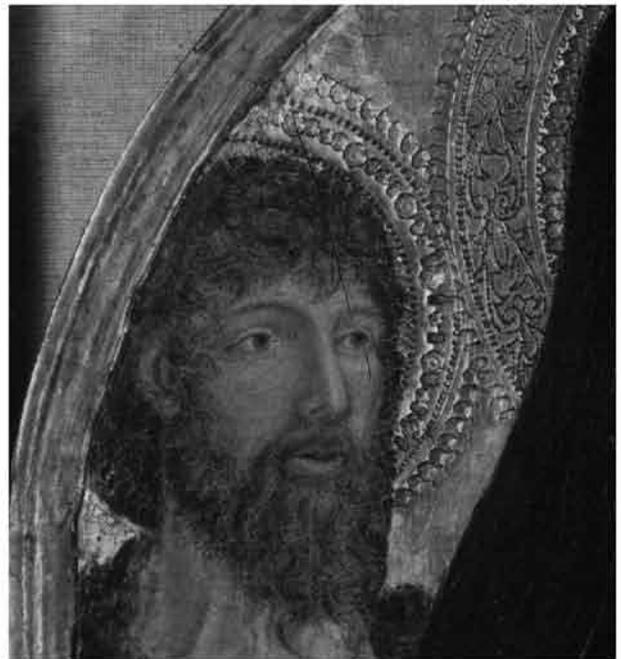
16/15. Neruccio de' Landi: *St. Francis of Assisi*.  
Detail of head (macrophotograph).  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.171.



16/16. Neruccio de' Landi: *St. John the Evangelist*.  
Detail of head (macrophotograph).  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.172.



16/17. Neruccio de' Landi: *Madonna and Child with Sts. Michael and Bernardino*, detail. 1476.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 282.



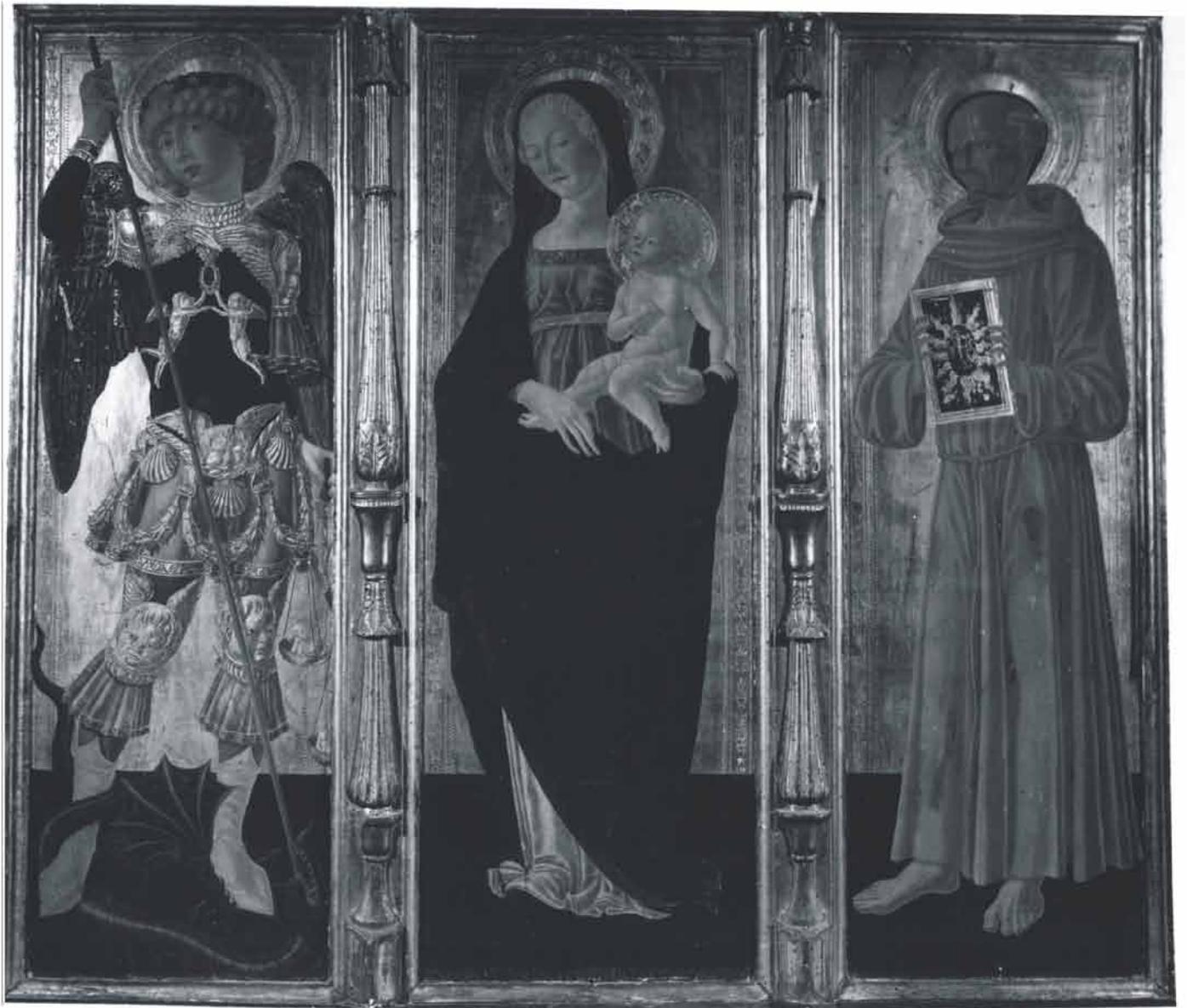
16/18. Neruccio de' Landi: *Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist and a Female Saint*, detail.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 295.



16/19. Neruccio de' Landi:  
*St. John the Evangelist*.  
Detail of punched decoration.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.172.



16/20. Neruccio de' Landi: *Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist and a Female Saint*.  
Detail of punched decoration.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 295.



16/21. Neroccio de' Landi: *Madonna and Child with Saints Michael and Bernardino*. 1476.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 282.



16/22. Hypothetical reconstruction of Neroccio de' Landi's Franciscan predella.



17/1. Neroccio de' Landi:  
*Virgin and Child with  
Sts. Sebastian and Catherine of Alexandria.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.200.



17/2. Neroccio de' Landi:  
*Virgin and Child with  
Sts. Sebastian and Catherine of Alexandria.* Reverse.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.200.



Neroccio 1483: Madonna Szent Sebestyén és Szent Katalinnal

17/3. Neroccio de' Landi:  
*Virgin and Child with  
Sts. Sebastian and Catherine of Alexandria.*  
Repainted condition recorded in a postcard.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.200.



17/4. Neroccio de' Landi:  
*Virgin and Child with  
Sts. Sebastian and Catherine of Alexandria.*  
UV photograph.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.200.



17/5-6. Neruccio de' Landi: *Virgin and Child with Sts. Sebastian and Catherine of Alexandria*.  
Detail and infrared reflectogram of the Virgin's head.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.200.



17/7. Workshop of Neruccio de' Landi:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Peter and Paul*.  
Detail of the Virgin's head.  
Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt, inv. 980.

17/8. Neruccio de' Landi:  
*Virgin and Child with  
Sts. Paul and Mary Magdalene*.  
Detail of the Virgin's head. Salini Coll., Siena.



17/9-10. Neruccio de' Landi: *Virgin and Child with Sts. Sebastian and Catherine of Alexandria*.  
Infrared reflectogram details.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.200.



17/11. Neruccio de' Landi:  
*Virgin and Child with  
St. John the Baptist and a female saint.*  
Formerly Stoclet Coll., Brussels.



17/12. Neruccio de' Landi:  
*Virgin and Child with  
Sts. Paul and Mary Magdalene.*  
Salini Coll., Siena.



17/13. Neruccio de' Landi:  
*Virgin and Child with  
Sts. John the Baptist and Andrew.*  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 294.



17/14. Workshop of Neruccio de' Landi:  
*Virgin and Child with Sts. Peter and Paul.*  
Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt, inv. 980.



18/1. Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*St. Angelus of Licata.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 29.



18/2. Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*St. Angelus of Licata.*  
Reverse of the support  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 29.



18/3. Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*St. Angelus of Licata.*  
Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 29.



18/4. Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*St. Angelus of Licata.*  
Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 29.



18/5. Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*St. Jerome.*  
J. H. van Heek Collection, 's Heerenberg, inv. 14.



18/6. Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*Carmelite saint.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. 44.831.



18/7. Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*St. Vincent Ferrer.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. 44.8321.

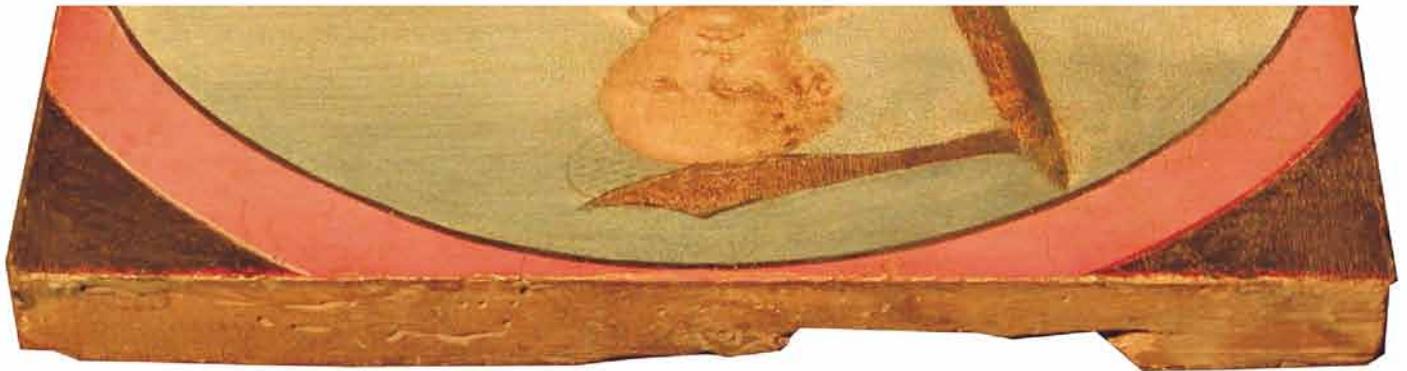


18/8. Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*St. Sigismund.*  
Whereabouts unknown.



18/9. Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*St. Angelus of Licata*.  
 UV photograph.  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 29.

18/10. Sicilian school, late 15th c. (?):  
*St. Angelus of Licata*.  
 Church of the Carmine,  
 Palermo.



18/11. Benvenuto di Giovanni: *St. Angelus of Licata*.  
 View of the top side of the panel. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 29.



← 100 cm →

18/12. Hypothetical reconstruction of Benvenuto di Giovanni's Carmelite predella.

19/1. Workshop of  
Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*Adoration of the  
Christ Child.*  
Museum of Fine Arts,  
Budapest, inv. 24.



19/2. Workshop of  
Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*Adoration of the  
Christ Child.*  
Reverse.  
Museum of Fine Arts,  
Budapest, inv. 24.





19/3. Workshop of Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child. Detail.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 24.



19/4. Workshop of Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child. Detail.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 24.



19/5. Workshop of Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child. Detail.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 24.



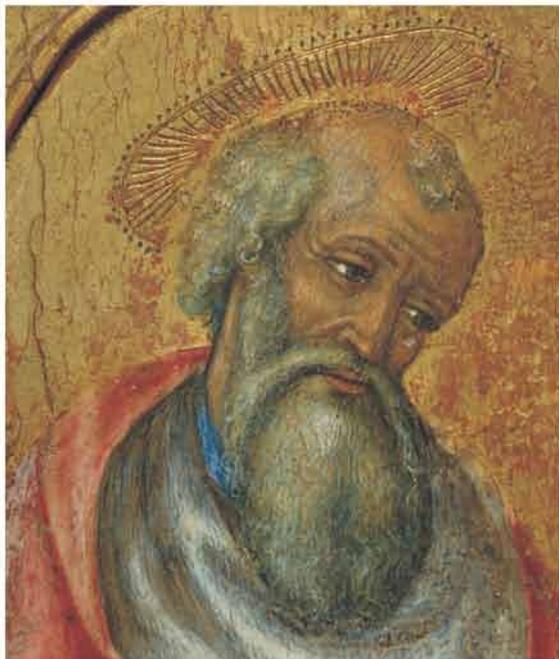
19/6. Workshop of Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*Adoration of the Christ Child. Detail.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 24.



20/1. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Jerome.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.177.



20/2. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Jerome.* Reverse.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.177.



20/3. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Jerome.* Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.177.



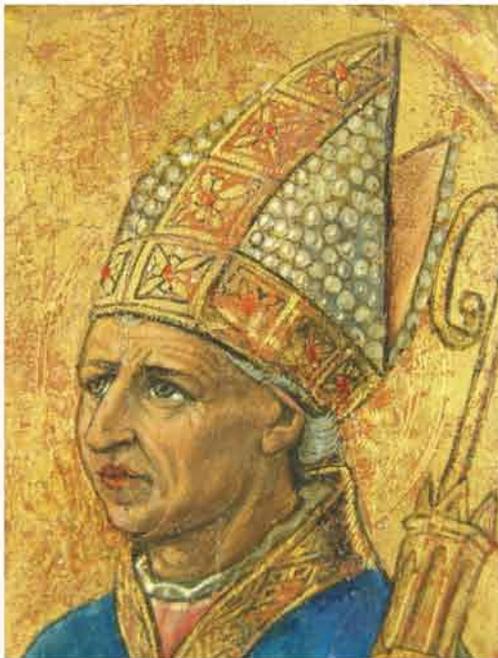
20/4. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Jerome.* Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.177.



20/5. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Nicholas of Myra.*  
Lindenau-Museum, Altenburg, inv. 81.



20/6. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Nicholas of Myra. Reverse.*  
Lindenau-Museum, Altenburg, inv. 81.



20/7. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Nicholas of Myra. Detail.*  
Lindenau-Museum, Altenburg, inv. 81.



20/8. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Nicholas of Myra. Reverse, detail.*  
Lindenau-Museum, Altenburg, inv. 81.



20/9. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Jerome, St. Nicholas of Bari*, photographed side by side.  
 Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.177., Lindenau Museum, Altenburg, inv. 81.



20/10-11. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Jerome*. Details of the gilding and  
 dark claret paint on the sides of the panel.  
 Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.177.



20/12-13. Matteo di Giovanni: *St. Jerome, St. Nicholas of Bari*.  
 The sides of companion pieces photographed together,  
 showing the gilding (left) and dark claret paint (right).  
 Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.177.,  
 Lindenau Museum, Altenburg, inv. 81.

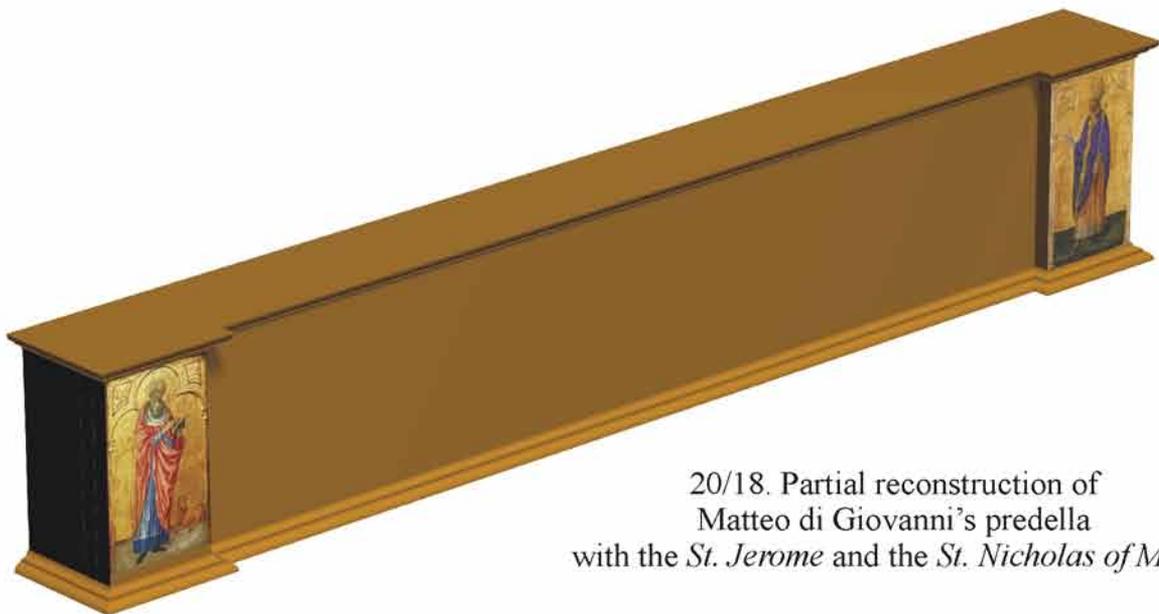
20/14. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Jerome*. Details of the documentation  
 on the reverse of the panel.  
 Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.177.



20/15. Matteo di Giovanni: *St. Monika prays for the conversion of Augustine*. Berenson Coll., Villa I Tatti, Florence.



20/16-17. Matteo di Giovanni: *Assumption of the Virgin*. Probably 1474. Full view and detail of the group of male saints on the left. National Gallery, London, inv. NG1155.



20/18. Partial reconstruction of Matteo di Giovanni's predella with the *St. Jerome* and the *St. Nicholas of Myra*.



21/1. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Bartholomew.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 1211.



21/2. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Bartholomew. Reverse.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 1211.



21/3. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Bartholomew.*  
Scaled punchmarks.  
Museum of Fine Arts,  
Budapest, inv. 1211.



21/4. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Bartholomew.*  
Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts,  
Budapest, inv. 1211.



21/5. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Bartholomew.*  
Detail from the St. Matthew  
altarpiece. Cathedral,  
Pienza.



21/6. Tuscan painter:  
*St. Bartholomew*. Fresco.  
San Francesco, Asciano, nave wall.



21/7. Pietro di Francesco Orioli:  
*St. Bartholomew*.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 366.



21/8. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Sebastian*.  
National Gallery, London, inv. 1461.



21/9. Guidoccio Cozzarelli:  
*St. Sebastian*. Detail of detached fresco.  
Villa Bartolini, Monastero (near Siena).



22/1. Matteo di Giovanni: *Crucifixion of St. Peter*.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.167.



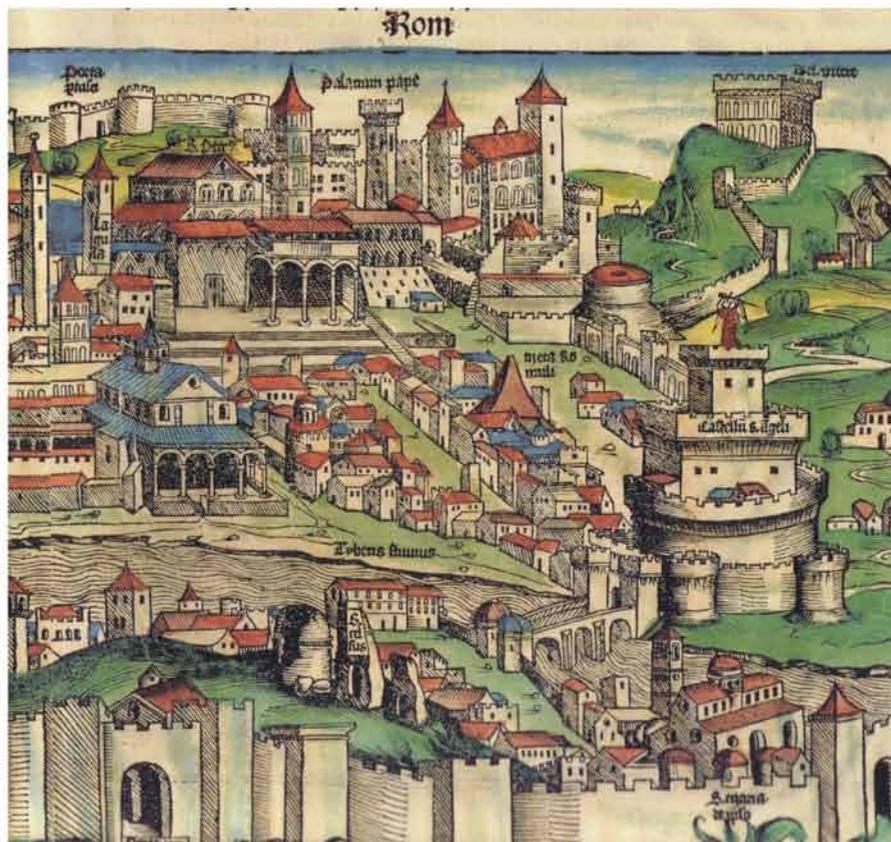
22/2. Matteo di Giovanni: *Crucifixion of St. Peter*. Reverse.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.167.



22/3. Giovanni Bellini: *Crucifixion of St. Peter*.  
Detail from the predella of the Pesaro altarpiece.  
1470s.  
San Francesco, Pesaro.



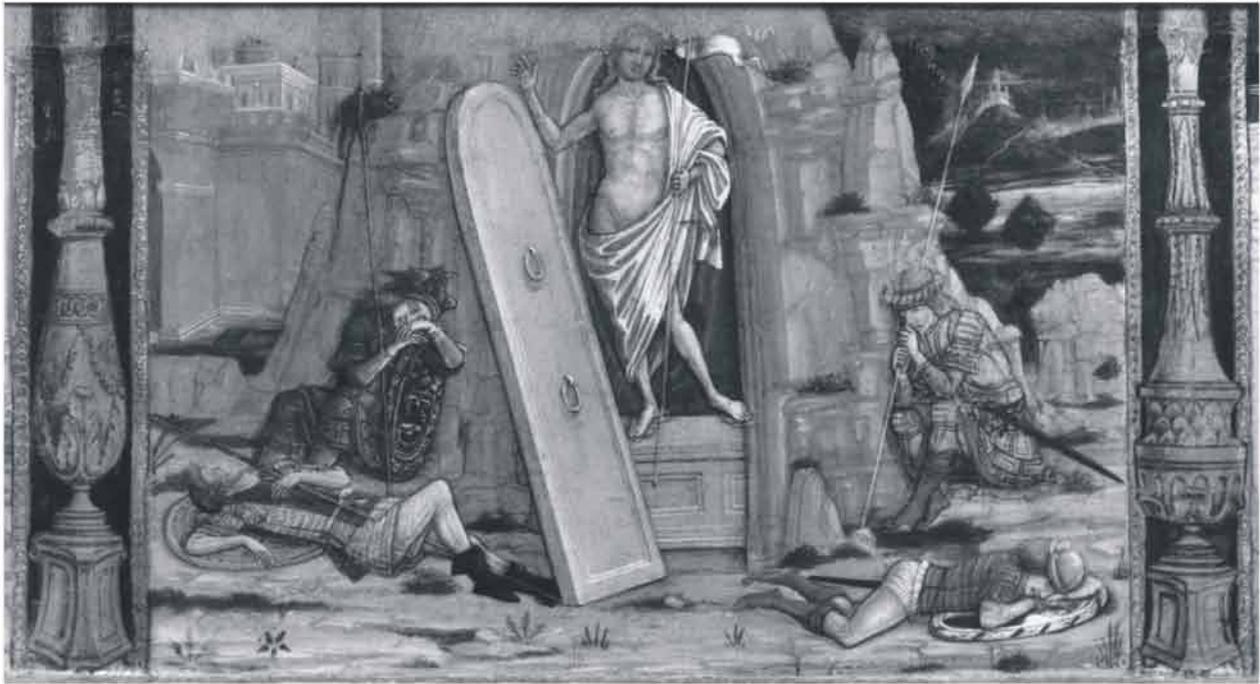
22/4. Matteo di Giovanni: *Procession of St. Gregory*.  
Detail from the predella of the Celsi altarpiece.  
1480.  
Museo dell'Opera, Siena.



22/5. Hartmann Schedel: *View of Rome*.  
From the *Liber Chronicarum*,  
LVIIv- LVIIIr, detail.  
Published in 1493 on the basis of a model  
dating from ca. 1480-90.



22/6. Reconstruction of the ground plan of medieval Rome by Roberto Valentini and Giuseppe Zucchetti. Detail. After Armando Pietro Frutaz: *Le piante di Roma*. Rome 1962. Vol. 2, fig. 175.



22/7. Matteo di Giovanni: *Resurrection*. Detail from the predella of the Celsi altarpiece, 1480. Museo dell'Opera, Siena.



22/8. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*The Crucifixion of St. Peter*. Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom,  
inv. 55.167.



22/9. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Martyrdom of St. John the Evangelist*, detail.  
Detail from the predella of the Celsi altarpiece, 1480.  
Museo dell'Opera, Siena.



22/10. Matteo di Giovanni: *Crucifixion*.  
City Art Gallery, Manchester, inv. 1951.2.



22/11. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Saint Bernardino Restoring a Child to Life.*  
 Coll. Fabrizio Moretti, Florence.



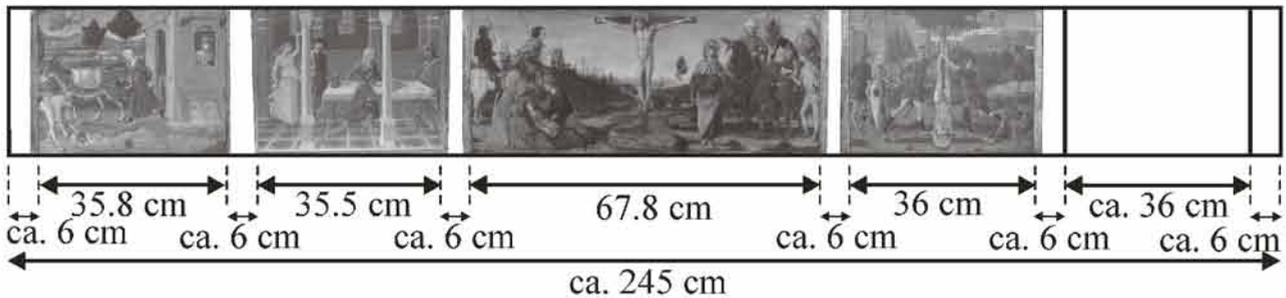
22/12. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Banquet of Herod.*  
 The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York.



22/13. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Saint Bernardino Restoring a Child to Life.*  
 Reverse.  
 Coll. Fabrizio Moretti, Florence.



22/14. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Banquet of Herod.*  
 Reverse.  
 The Hyde Collection, Glens Falls, New York.



22/15. Matteo di Giovanni:  
 Hypothetical reconstruction of the predella.



23/1. Matteo di Giovanni: *Virgin and Child with Angels*.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.175.



23/2. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Virgin and Child with Angels*. Reverse.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.175.



23/3. Wax seal  
of the Papal States,  
Dogana di Terra.  
Detail of Fig. 23/2.



23/4. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Virgin and Child with Angels*. Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.175.



23/5. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Virgin and Child with Angels*. Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.175.



23/6. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Virgin and Child with Angels*. Detail.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.175.



23/7. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Virgin and Child*.  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 283.



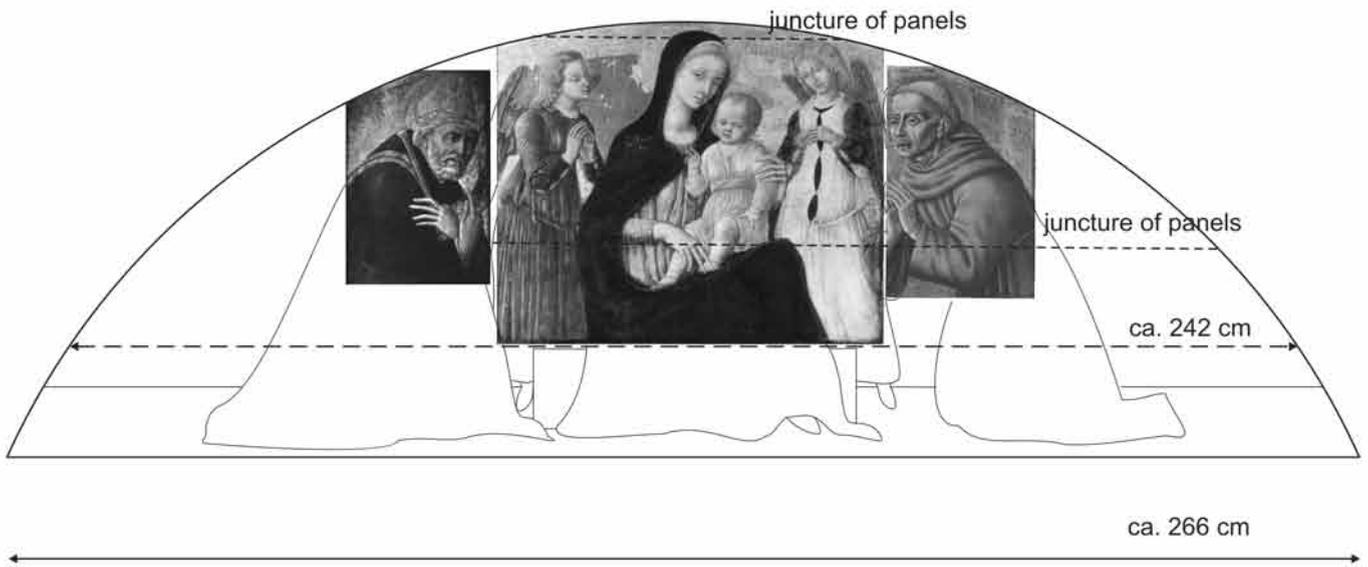
23/8. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Augustine.*  
Formerly Lord Allendale Coll., London.



23/9. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Francis of Assisi.*  
Private collection, Milan.



23/10. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*St. Francis of Assisi. Reverse.*  
Private collection, Milan.



23/11. Hypothetical reconstruction of the lunette of Matteo di Giovanni's Altarpiece of the Innocents in Sant'Agostino, Siena.



23/12. Guidoccio Cozzarelli:  
*Virgin and Child with Angels, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Bernardino.*  
Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, inv. 41.45.



23/13. Antonio del Massaro (Il Pastura):  
*Virgin and Child with Angels, St. Jerome and St. Francis of Assisi.*  
Museo Civico, Viterbo.



← 100 cm →

23/14. Hypothetical reconstruction of Matteo di Giovanni's Altarpiece of the Innocents in Sant'Agostino, Siena.



24/1. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Virgin and Child with Angels.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.176.



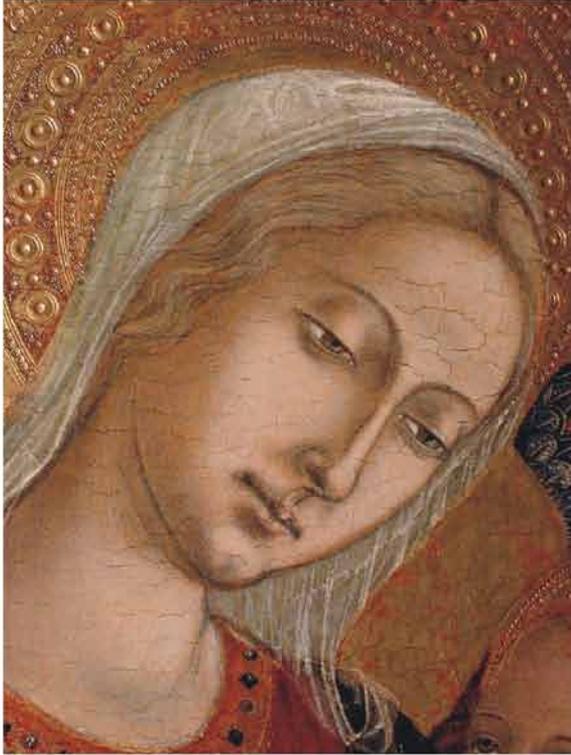
24/2. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Virgin and Child with Angels.*  
Reverse of the panel.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.176.



24/3. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Virgin and Child with Angels.*  
State before restoration in 2001.  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.176.



24/4. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Virgin and Child.*  
Staatliches Museum, Schwerin,  
inv. G 567.



24/5. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Virgin and Child with Angels.*  
Detail.

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.176.



24/6. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Virgin Annunciate.*

Detail of the Sansepolcro altarpiece.  
Santa Maria dei Servi, Sansepolcro.



24/7. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Virgin and Child with Angels.*  
Detail.

Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.176.



24/8. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Cherub.*

Detail of the Sansepolcro altarpiece.  
Santa Maria dei Servi, Sansepolcro.



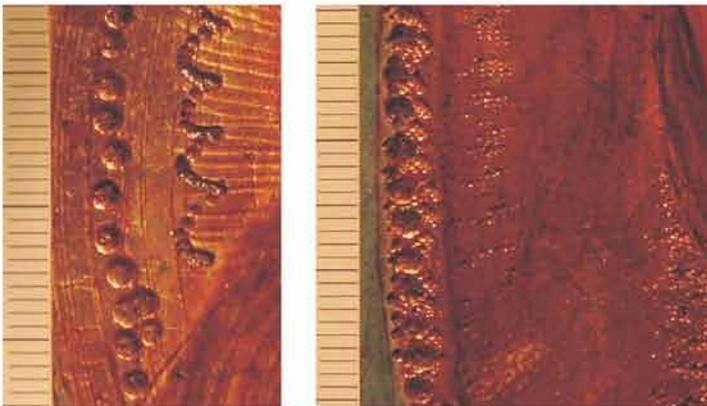
25/1. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Two Angels.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 19.



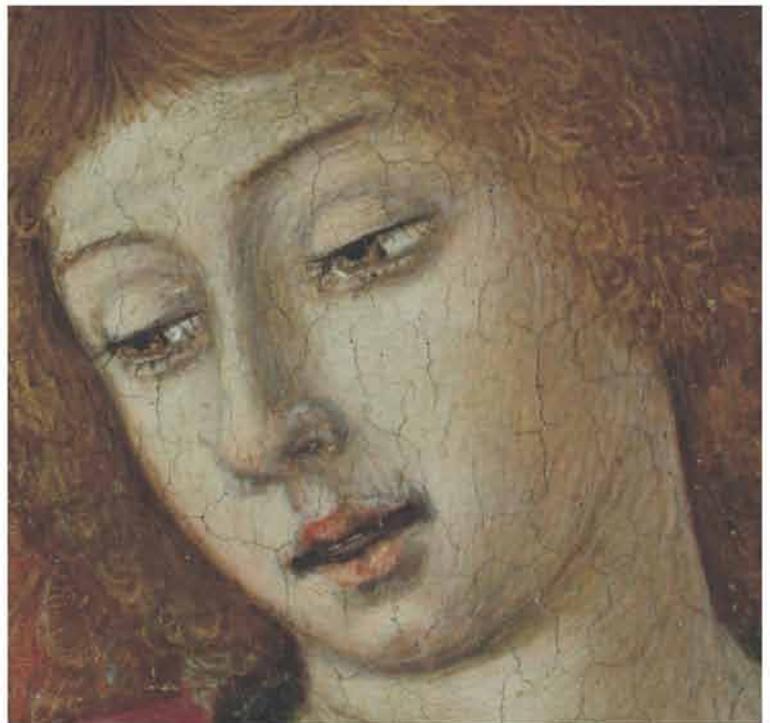
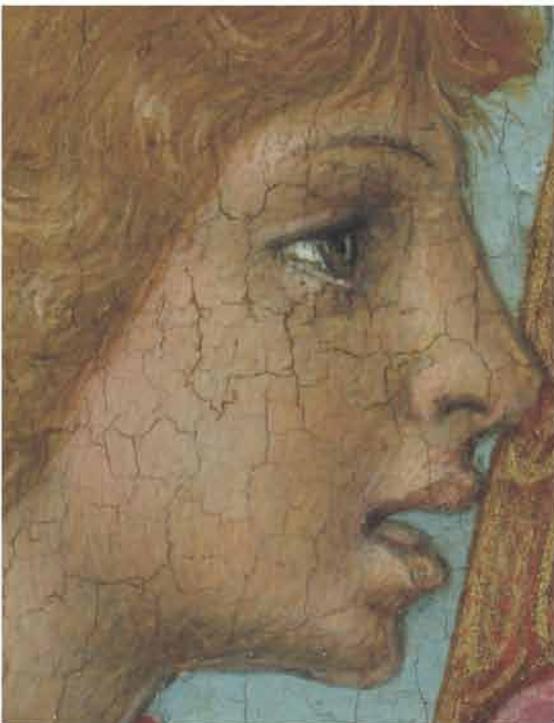
25/2. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Two Angels. Reverse.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 19.



25/3. Matteo di Giovanni: *Two Angels*.  
Detail of the upper edge of the panel at the joint of the old and the newly added parts.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 19.



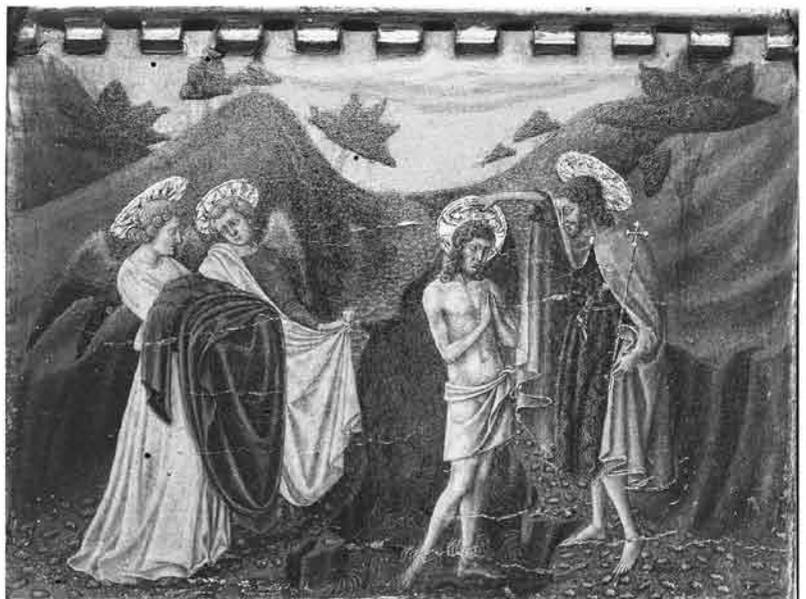
25/4 a, b. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Two Angels*. Scaled punchmarks.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 19.



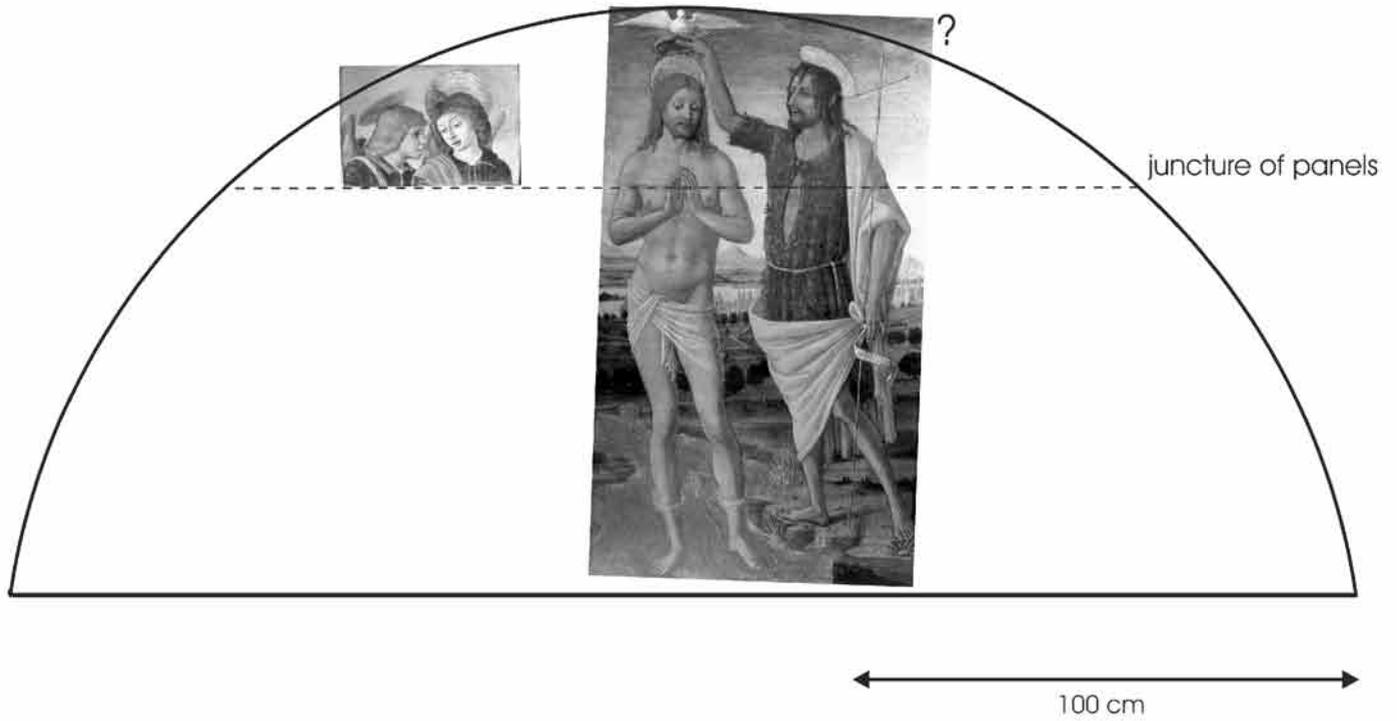
25/5 a, b. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Two Angels*. Details.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 19.



25/6. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Baptism of Christ.*  
Pushkin Museum, Moscow, inv. 140.



25/7. Domenico di Bartolo:  
*Baptism of Christ.*  
Detail of altarpiece.  
Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria,  
Perugia, inv. 19.



25/8. Hypothetical reconstruction of Matteo di Giovanni's *Baptism of Christ* lunette.



25/9. Matteo di Giovanni:  
*Baptism of Christ*.  
Detail of the Cinughi altarpiece,  
completed 1477.  
Sta. Maria delle Nevi, Siena.



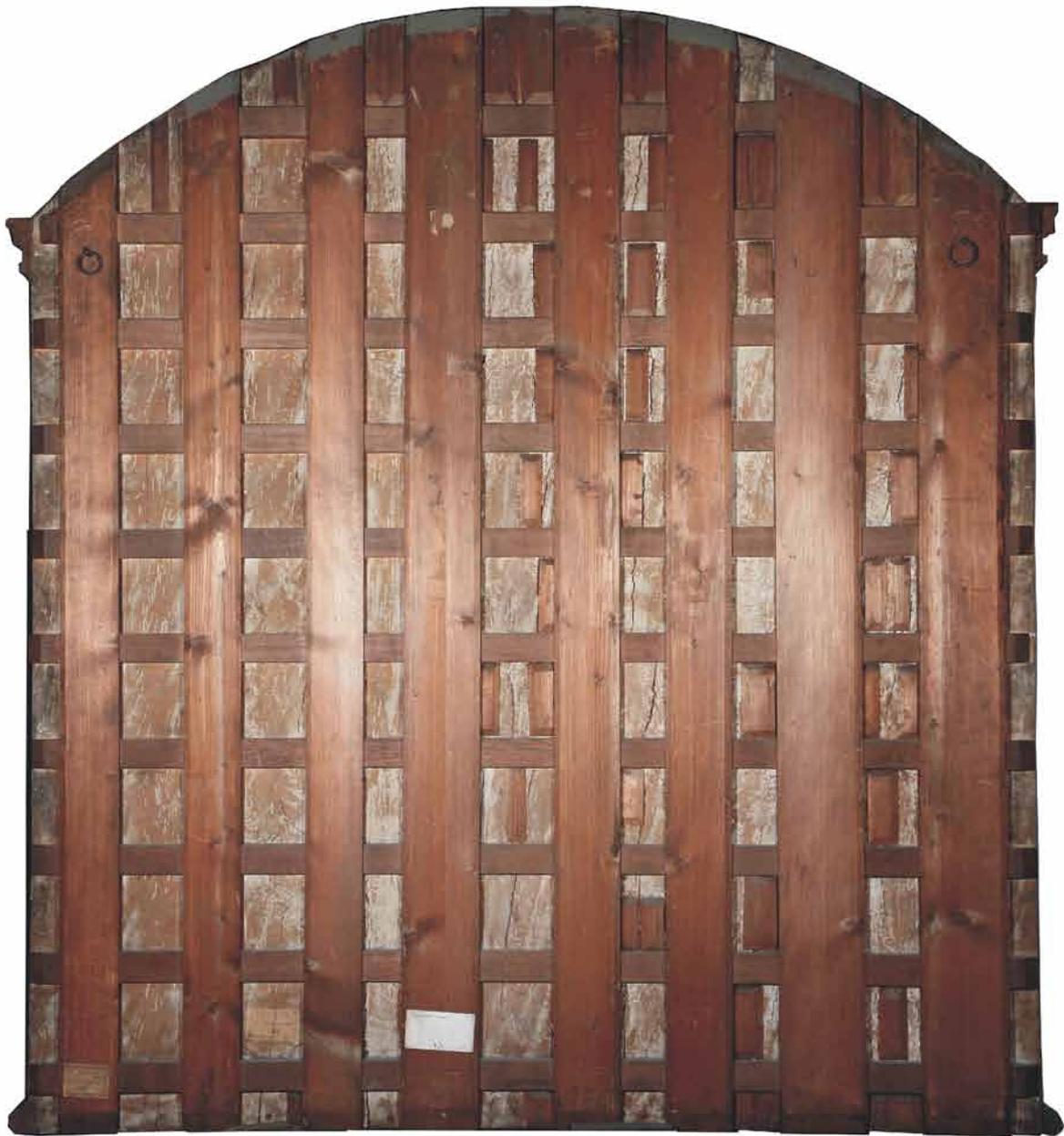
25/10. Guidoccio Cozzarelli:  
*Baptism of Christ*.  
Ca. 1482-83.  
San Bernardino, Sinalunga.



26/1. Guidoccio Cozzarelli:  
*Enthroned Virgin and Child with Sts. Margaret of Antioch, Catherine of Alexandria and Two Angels.*  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 43.



26/2. Guidoccio Cozzarelli: *Enthroned Virgin and Child with saints.*  
 Details of inscription at the bottom of the painting. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 43.



26/3. Guidoccio Cozzarelli:  
*Enthroned Virgin and Child with Sts. Margaret of Antioch, Catherine of Alexandria and Two Angels.*  
Reverse.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 43.

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26/4. Guidoccio Cozzarelli: *Enthroned Virgin and Child with saints.*  
Details of inscription on modern frame at the bottom.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 43.



26/5. Guidoccio Cozzarelli:  
*Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints*. Scaled punchmarks.  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 43.



26/6. Guidoccio Cozzarelli:  
*Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints*.  
 Details of the pilaster decoration.  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 43.



26/7, a, b. Guidoccio Cozzarelli:  
*Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints*.  
 Cracks in the support.  
 View of the right pilaster  
 capital from behind.  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 43.





26/8, a



26/8, b



26/8, c



26/8, d

26/8, a-e. Guidoccio Cozzarelli:  
*Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints.*  
Details.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 43.



26/8, e



26/9. Guidoccio Cozzarelli: *Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints*. 1486.  
San Bernardino, Sinalunga.



26/10. Guidoccio Cozzarelli:  
*Virgin and Child with Saints*.  
Formerly Castello di Belcaro, near Siena.



26/11. Guidoccio Cozzarelli:  
*Enthroned Virgin and Child with Saints*. 1491.  
Formerly San Bartolomeo, Ancaiano.



27/1. Bernardino Fungai:  
*Virgin and Child.*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 4209.



27/2. Bernardino Fungai:  
*Virgin and Child.*  
Reverse.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 4209.



27/3. Bernardino Fungai:  
*Virgin and Child.* Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 4209.



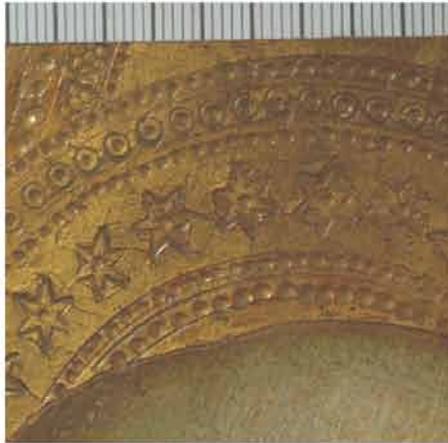
27/4. Bernardino Fungai:  
*Virgin and Child.* Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 4209.



27/5 a



27/5 b



27/5 c



27/5 d

27/5 a-d. Bernardino Fungai:  
*Virgin and Child*.  
Documentation the reverse (a-b)  
and scaled punchmarks (c-d).  
Museum of Fine Arts,  
Budapest, inv. 4209.



27/6. Bernardino Fungai:  
*Virgin and Child with Two Angels*.  
Accademia Carrara, Bergamo.



27/7. Bernardino Fungai:  
*Virgin and Child with Two Male Saints*.  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. 2764.



28/1. Bernardino Fungai:  
*Enthroned Virgin and Child with Four Angels, a Franciscan saint and St. Francis of Assisi.*  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 76.2.



28/2. Bernardino Fungai: *Enthroned Virgin and Child with Angels and Saints.* Reverse.  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 76.2.



28/3. Bernardino Fungai: *Enthroned Virgin and Child with Angels and Saints.* Punched decoration.  
 Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 76.2.



28/4. Bernardino Fungai:  
*Enthroned Virgin and Child  
with Angels and Saints.* Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 76.2.



28/5. Bernardino Fungai:  
*Virgin and Child.*  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 385.



28/6. Bernardino Fungai:  
*Enthroned Virgin and Child  
with Angels and Saints.*  
Detail of St. Francis of Assisi.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 76.2.



28/7. Bernardino Fungai:  
*Enthroned Virgin and Child  
with Angels and Saints.*  
Detail of the angels.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 76.2.



29/1. Sienese painter close to Bernardino Fungai (?),  
from Pinturicchio:  
*The Christ Child with the Young St. John the Baptist.*  
Cleaned and filled state during restoration.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 40.



29/2. Sienese painter close to Bernardino Fungai (?),  
from Pinturicchio:  
*The Christ Child with the Young St. John the Baptist.*  
Reverse.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 40.



29/3. Sienese painter close to Bernardino Fungai (?),  
from Pinturicchio:  
*The Christ Child with the Young St. John the Baptist.*  
Detail of St. John's face; infrared-reflectography.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 40.



29/4. Bernardino Pinturicchio (assisted?):  
*The Holy Family with the  
Young St. John the Baptist.*  
Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 495.



30/1. Master of the Story of Griselda:  
*Tiberius Gracchus*.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 64.



30/2. Master of the Story of Griselda:  
*Tiberius Gracchus*. Reverse.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 64.



30/3. Master of the Story of Griselda:  
*Tiberius Gracchus*.  
The word "quarto" written on the reverse.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 64.



30/4. Master of the Story of Griselda:  
*Tiberius Gracchus*.  
Label on the reverse.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 64.



30/5. Master of the Story of Griselda:  
*Tiberius Gracchus*. Detail of left background.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 64.



30/6. Master of the Story of Griselda:  
*Tiberius Gracchus*. Detail of right background.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 64.



30/7. Master of the Story of Griselda:  
*Tiberius Gracchus*.  
Inscription before and after cleaning.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 64.

30/8. Master of the Story of Griselda:  
*Tiberius Gracchus*.  
State after cleaning.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 64.





30/9. Master of the Story of Griselda:  
*Tiberius Gracchus*. Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 64.



30/10 a, b. Master of the Story of Griselda:  
*Tiberius Gracchus*. Details of the pedestal after cleaning.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 64.



30/11 a. Master of the Story of Griselda: *Alexander the Great*.  
The Barber Institute of Art, Birmingham, inv. 51.4.

30/11 b. Master of the Story of Griselda: *Joseph of Egypt* or *Eunostos of Tanagra*.  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Kress Coll., 1952.5.2.

30/11 c. Francesco di Giorgio, his workshop, and the Griselda Master: *Scipio Africanus*.  
Museo del Bargello, Florence, inv. 2023.

30/11 d. Master of the Story of Griselda: *Tiberius Gracchus*.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 64.



30/12 a. Matteo di Giovanni: *Judith* or *Tomyris of Scythia*.  
Indiana University Museum, Bloomington, inv. L62.163.

30/12 b. Master of the Story of Griselda: *Artemisia*.  
Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan, inv. 1126/473.

30/12 c. Pietro Orioli: *Sulpitia*.  
Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, inv. 37.161.

30/12 d. Neroccio de' Landi and the Master of the Story of Griselda: *Claudia Quinta*.  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, inv. 1937.1.12.



31/1. Girolamo di Benvenuto:  
*Virgin and Child with the  
Young St. John the Baptist.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.210.



31/2. Girolamo di Benvenuto:  
*Virgin and Child with the  
Young St. John the Baptist. Reverse.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.210.



31/3. Overpainted condition of CM 55.210,  
recorded in an early 20th c. postcard.



31/4. Girolamo di Benvenuto (and workshop?):  
*Virgin and Child with the Young St. John  
the Baptist, St. Jerome and a female saint.*  
Formerly Canto Coll., Milan.



31/5. Girolamo di Benvenuto:  
*Virgin and Child with the  
Young St. John the Baptist. Detail.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.210.



31/6. Benvenuto di Giovanni or  
Girolamo di Benvenuto:  
*Virgin and Child with Saints.*  
National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, inv. 839.



31/7. Girolamo di Benvenuto:  
*Virgin and Child with the  
Young St. John the Baptist. Detail.*  
Christian Museum, Esztergom, inv. 55.210.



31/8. Girolamo di Benvenuto and workshop:  
*Virgin and Child with the  
Young St. John the Baptist.*  
Whereabouts unknown.



31/9. Benvenuto di Giovanni:  
*Virgin and Child, Saints Sebastian  
and Fabian, detail.*

Signed and dated, 1509.

Collegiata della Santissima Trinita, Sinalunga.

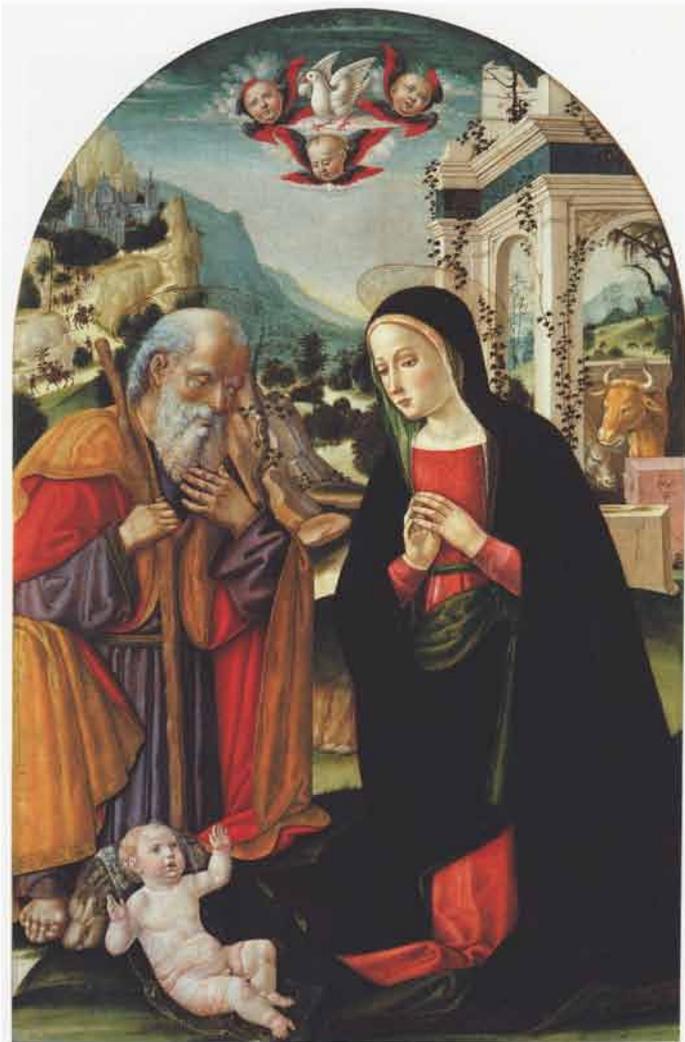


31/10. Girolamo di Benvenuto:  
*Madonna delle Nevi.*

Detail.

Signed and dated, 1508.

Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, inv. 414a.



31/11-12. Girolamo di Benvenuto:  
*Nativity.*

Full view and detail.

Museo Civico e Diocesano  
d'Arte Sacra,  
Montalcino, inv. 27MC.



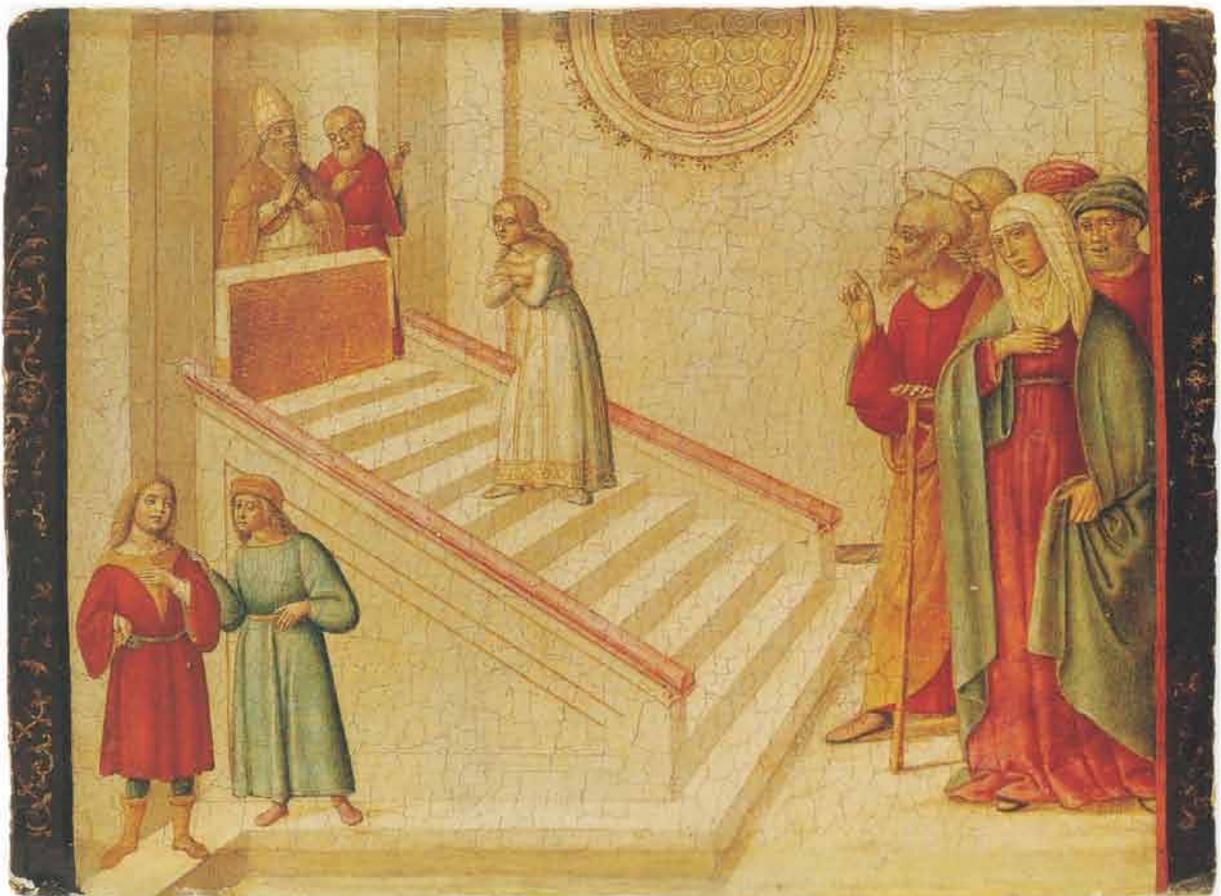
32/1. Girolamo di Benvenuto: *The Virgin Appears to St. Bernardino of Siena*.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 38.



32/2. Girolamo di Benvenuto: *The Virgin Appears to St. Bernardino of Siena*.  
Reverse. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 38.



32/3. Girolamo di Benvenuto: *The Virgin Appears to St. Bernardino of Siena*.  
UV photograph. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 38.



32/4. Girolamo di Benvenuto: *The Presentation of Virgin to the Temple*.  
Private collection.



32/5. Girolamo di Benvenuto: *St. Louis of Toulouse*.  
Private collection.



32/6. Girolamo di Benvenuto: *St. Elizabeth of Hungary*.  
Private collection.



32/7. Girolamo di Benvenuto:  
*Assumption of the Virgin.*  
Detail (St. Francis of Assisi).  
Museo Civico e Diocesano d'Arte Sacra,  
Montalcino, inv. 17MD.



32/8. Girolamo di Benvenuto:  
*The Virgin Appears to  
St. Bernardino of Siena.*  
Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 38.



32/9. Girolamo di Benvenuto:  
*The Virgin Appears to  
St. Bernardino of Siena.*  
Detail.  
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, inv. 38.



32/10. Girolamo di Benvenuto:  
*Assumption of the Virgin.*  
Detail.  
Museo Civico e Diocesano d'Arte Sacra,  
Montalcino, inv. 17MD.



Franciscan  
saint ?

Nativity of  
the Virgin ?



Ca. 275 cm

32/11. Hypothetical reconstruction of Girolamo di Benvenuto's *Assumption of the Virgin* altarpiece from the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin near Montalcino.