NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS
Italian Paintings of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

Nardo di Cione
Florentine, active from c. 1340; died 1365/1366

Saint Peter [left panel]

c. 1360

tempera on panel
painted surface: 45.1 × 12.5 cm (17 3/4 × 4 15/16 in.)
overall: 49 × 16.9 × 1.8 cm (19 5/16 × 6 5/8 × 11/16 in.)
Samuel H. Kress Collection 1939.1.261.a

ENTRY

This panel is part of a portable triptych in the form of a tabernacle with gabled central panel and closing shutters that was clearly intended for private devotion. The external decoration of the lateral panels is purely ornamental, conforming to Tuscan tradition [fig. 1].[1] When the shutters are opened, the composition is more unusual, since the central image of the Madonna bearing the child in her arms (*Madonna and Child, with the Man of Sorrows [middle panel]*)[2] is presented as a three-quarter-length standing figure, whereas the two saints by whom she is flanked (this panel and *Saint John the Evangelist [right panel]*) are full length. This combination, found in some cases in Sienese Trecento art,[3] is rare in Florentine painting. It is seen in some works of Bernardo Daddi (active by 1320, died probably 1348) dating to the years 1335–1340.[4] The presence of the Man of Sorrows in the trefoil at the top of the tabernacle is also very uncommon.[5]

On publishing the painting with an attribution to Nardo di Cione (which is unanimously accepted),[6] Richard Offner (1924) noted its affinities with the frescoes in the Strozzi Chapel in Santa Maria Novella in Florence. He considered it to have been executed by the mid-1350s, among other reasons because he detected in it vivid reminiscences of Bernardo Daddi, an artist who had died in 1348.[7] Later, in the volume of the *Corpus of Florentine Painting* dedicated to Nardo, Offner seems to have preferred an earlier dating, c. 1345–1350.[8] In the National Gallery of Art catalogs, without any convincing motivation, the tabernacle was invariably dated to c. 1360, a view accepted by Fern Rusk Shapley (1966), Andrew Ladis (1982), Serena Skerl Del Conte (1995), John O. Hand (2004), and Federica Baldini (2008).[9] A dating to the 1350s was proposed, in turn, by Gyorgy Gommosi (1927–1928), Hans Dietrich Gronau (1937), Barbara Klesse (1967), Olga

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Pujmanova (1984), and Stefano Petrocchi (1997).[10] Erling S. Skaug (1994), Gert Kreytenberg (1996, 2000), and Angelo Tartuferi (2001) have preferred a relatively late dating, placing the small triptych after 1360, in the last years of the artist's life.[11]

In his remarkable analysis of the triptych, then in the Goldman collection, Offner did not disguise his great admiration for this painting: he praised it for the "gemlike solidity" of its colors, the "introspection, greater warmth and simpler humanity" of its protagonists, and in particular the "passionate tenderness" of Mary's face [fig. 2].[12] Offner saw in this triptych an expression of the "lyrical rumination" that distinguished Nardo's work as a whole.[13] He also praised the finished workmanship of its technique, "in which sharpness and honesty of execution become a kind of preciosity."[14] Indeed, the present-day observer cannot but be enchanted by the extreme accomplishment of its execution, which its exceptionally fine state allows us to appreciate fully. We may observe, for example, such details as the exquisite painting of the child's transparent, almost invisible, close-fitting shirt, revealing the delicacy of the small body below it; or that of the silky beard of Saint John [fig. 3] that overlaps the dense folds of his mantle; or the naturalness with which Mary's hands support the child, their tapering fingers penetrating the folds of the gold-embroidered brocade that envelops the lower limbs of the infant Jesus.

Yet, in spite of its excellent condition and extremely high level of quality, the former Goldman triptych now in the National Gallery of Art does not seem to have particularly drawn the attention of scholars in the half century since Offner wrote his appreciative essay. The reason for this can perhaps be found in its extremely simple and clear composition and its stylistic character so manifestly Nardesque that it cannot leave any doubts about its authorship. If any doubts persist, they concern not the triptych's attribution but its date. Yet the chronology of the apparently rather brief artistic trajectory of Nardo di Cione is a very intricate question and, after Offner, few other scholars have attempted to tackle it. Our only secure points of reference for ordering Nardo's works are the triptychs dated 1365 and the probable date of 1356–1357 for the frescoes in the Strozzi Chapel. On this basis it can be maintained with some confidence that, as Offner astutely observed, the execution of the Gallery painting must be situated closer to the Strozzi frescoes, even though it is difficult to establish whether it should precede or postdate them. In the chronological reconstruction of Nardo's career proposed in Offner's monograph dedicated to the artist (1960), the triptych was placed in a

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group of paintings that also included the triptych formed by *The Coronation of the Virgin* in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the laterals in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich,[15] another triptych now in the National Gallery in London,[16] and the polyptych in Bojnice Castle (Slovakia).[17] Though none of these paintings are dated, they do seem to anticipate problems that the artist would successfully resolve in the mural cycle in the Strozzi Chapel.[18] Yet some clues perhaps suggest a slightly later date for the painting discussed here.

In the London Coronation, the artist does not appear to be interested in placing his figures in a three-dimensional space: Jesus and his mother sit on a virtually invisible throne, and, both by their position in profile and by the preference shown for wide expanses of color, testify to the artist's wish to reduce the plasticity of forms to the surface plane. In the two groups of five saints of the laterals now in Munich, the regilding of parts of the ground and the retouching of the draperies have altered the paintings' original appearance, but the soft modeling of the faces, the delicate tonal passages that define the strongly simplified forms, and the decoration of the halos [19] seem to confirm the common origin of the three panels and their relatively precocious date.

An aura of grandeur is conferred on the polyptych now in Bojnice by its relatively squat and ponderously solemn figures who yet seem more free in their movements, and who wear mantles constructed of deep and broad folds [fig. 4]. Here, too, the artist dispenses with an architectural throne (Mary's seat is created by a sumptuously embroidered gold cloth, on which the various planes are suggested by nothing more than the shifting intensity of light), but—in contrast to the panels in Munich—he accentuates the plasticity of the bodies in various ways. The saints are mainly presented frontally, but the chiaroscuro is denser and the expressive power of their gestures is heightened by their foreshortened arms, which seem to project outward from the surface plane of the painting towards the spectator. The precious brocaded stuffs of some of the female saints' garments here are no longer surface planes, as in the Saint Julian in the Alte Pinakothek, but instead follow the volumetric substance of the forms: they not only envelop but also model the bodies. In the halos of this polyptych, the incised foliated motifs are largely replaced by punch marks, although these are made to stand out against the granulated ground, as in the halos in the triptych now divided between London and Munich.[20] The same kind of gold tooling recurs in the triptych discussed here, although here the decoration impressed in the gold ground consists exclusively of punched motifs, in part reworked.[21]

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Aspects of the gold tooling and of the ornamental motifs of the gilded stuff that envelops the child underline the Washington triptych's affinity with the Bojnice polyptych and the Madonna and Child in the Brooklyn Museum in New York.[22] Yet several features of our painting reveal a change of direction in Nardo's style. We may note, for instance, the more slender proportions of the figures and the tendency to give an almost geometrical regularity to the drapery folds, which here assume angular forms and at times brusquely interrupt with sudden projections the placid fluidity of the contours. Moreover, the rather frowning seriousness of the faces of the two saints, modeled with more marked chiaroscuro and few but deep wrinkles, or their thick hair and wiry-looking beards [fig. 5],[23] seem more in keeping with the paintings of Nardo's full maturity than with those hitherto cited or with the murals in the Strozzi Chapel. In the Goldman Madonna, in short, Nardo, without abandoning the grace and delicacy of his previous works, begins to draw close to the severe essentiality of form pursued by his brother Andrea until the mid-1350s. Similar developments can be observed in his triptych now in the National Gallery in London, or the frescoes in the Cappella di Sant'Anna in the cloister (Chiostro dei Morti) at Santa Maria Novella [24]—that is, in works probably dating to the early 1360s, but at any rate earlier than the two altarpieces dated 1365.

Miklós Boskovits (1935–2011)

March 21, 2016

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COMPARATIVE FIGURES

fig. 1 Exterior view of portable triptych with wings closed, tempera on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

fig. 2 Detail of Mary, Nardo di Cione, *Madonna and Child, with Saints Peter and John the Evangelist, and Man of Sorrows*, c. 1360, tempera on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

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fig. 3 Detail of Saint John, Nardo di Cione, *Madonna and Child, with Saints Peter and John the Evangelist, and Man of Sorrows*, c. 1360, tempera on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

fig. 4 Nardo di Cione, *Madonna and Child*, tempera on panel, Bojnice Castle, Slovakia

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fig. 5 Detail of Saint Peter, Nardo di Cione, *Madonna and Child, with Saints Peter and John the Evangelist, and Man of Sorrows*, c. 1360, tempera on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

NOTES

[1] Victor M. Schmidt, *Painted Piety: Panel Paintings for Personal Devotion in Tuscany, 1250–1400* (Florence, 2005), figs. 40–41, 68 n. 76, cited several other triptychs similarly decorated.

[2] The iconographic type of the standing Madonna and Child can be traced back to the Byzantine *Hodegetria*. It began to spread in central Italy only in the late thirteenth century, probably through the influence of French Gothic sculpture, first in the sculpture of Giovanni Pisano and other Sienese and Pisan masters and then in painting. Cf. Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (Princeton, 1951), 42; Dorothy C. Shorr, *The Christ Child in Devotional Images in Italy during the XIV Century* (New York,

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1954), 119, 147.

[3] The best known example of the combination of the three-quarter Madonna with full-length saints in the laterals is Duccio's triptych in the National Gallery in London (no. 566), but it is also found in a polyptych by Luca di Tommè in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena (no. 586), in which the two saints that flank the Virgin are three-quarter length, whereas the other saints on the outer sides of the polyptych are full length.

[4] The paintings by Bernardo Daddi in question are the triptych in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Florence; the other dismantled triptych of identical composition now divided between the Pinacoteca Vaticana (no. 174) and the Kunstmuseum in Bern (no. 880); and a third similar triptych, which entered the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles in recent years (no. 93.PB.16). Cf. Richard Offner and Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 4, *Bernardo Daddi, His Shop and Following*, new ed. (Florence, 1991), 191–200; Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 8, *Workshop of Bernardo Daddi* (New York, 1958), 99–103; Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 5, *Bernardo Daddi and His Circle*, ed. Miklós Boskovits, Ada Labriola, and Martina Ingendaay Rodio, new ed. (Florence, 2001), 574–578.

[5] As Richard Offner noted, this iconographic motif normally appears in the central zone of the predella and not in the gable of altarpieces. Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 4, vol. 2, *Nardo di Cione* (New York, 1960), 24.

[6] The panel, it seems, had entered the Goldman collection as a work of Orcagna; see Richard Offner, "Nardo di Cione and His Triptych in the Goldman Collection," *Art in America* 12 (1924): 99. Subsequently, the attribution to Orcagna was reaffirmed in a number of manuscript expertises by leading art historians of the period, of which one was dated 1938 and signed by Adolfo Venturi, while Giuseppe Fiocco proposed an improbable attribution to Jacopo di Cione (Florentine, c. 1340 - c. 1400?) in another of these testimonials; see Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:342. Copies of the expertises are in NGA curatorial files.

[7] "The Goldman Virgin," Richard Offner wrote, "stands even closer [than the *Madonna with Child and Saints* now in the Brooklyn Museum] to the female figures in the Strozzi Chapel Paradise. The lurking movement in her easy posture, the slight yielding tilt of her head, its mould, the hair, the flat nose, the dainty budded lips and above them a sharp caret joined by two parallels to the nostrils, will be found again and again there." Richard Offner, "Nardo di Cione and His Triptych in the Goldman Collection," *Art in*

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America 12 (1924): 111. In another passage, the same scholar (on page 106) observed that, in spite of their affinities, "even Daddi's Madonnas, of all Florentine Madonnas most closely related to those of Nardo, seem to live in a far different world."

[8] Richard Offner proposed this time frame for such works as *Coronation of the Virgin* in the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, the polyptych in Bojnice, and the triptych in the National Gallery in London. Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 4, vol. 2, *Nardo di Cione* (New York, 1960), ix–x n. 6. See below notes 9–11.

[9] National Gallery of Art, *Book of Illustrations* (Washington, DC, 1941), 154, 241; National Gallery of Art, *Preliminary Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture* (Washington, DC, 1941), 138; National Gallery of Art, *Book of Illustrations* (Washington, DC, 1942), 157, 247; National Gallery of Art, *Paintings and Sculpture from the Samuel H. Kress Collection* (Washington, DC, 1959), 21; National Gallery of Art, *Summary Catalogue of European Paintings and Sculpture* (Washington, DC, 1965), 95; Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection: Italian Schools, XIII–XV Century* (London, 1966), 34, fig. 75; Andrew Ladis, *Taddeo Gaddi: Critical Reappraisal and Catalogue Raisonné* (Columbia, MO, 1982), 75; Serena Skerl Del Conte, *Antonio Veneziano e Taddeo Gaddi nella Toscana della seconda metà del Trecento* (Pasian di Prato, Udine, 1995), 108; John Hand, *National Gallery of Art: Master Paintings from the Collection* (New York, 2004), 13; Federica Baldini, in *L'eredità di Giotto: Arte a Firenze 1340–1375*, ed. Angelo Tartuferi (Florence, 2008), 16, 168, 169.

[10] Gyorgy Gommosi, "Nardo di Cione és a Szépmvészeti Múzeum somzée-féle Madaonnaja," *Az Országos Magyar Szépmvészeti Múzeum: Évkönyvei* 5 (1927–1928): 16; Hans Dietrich Gronau, *Andrea Orcagna und Nardo di Cione: Eine stilgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Berlin, 1937), 86 n. 152, 89; Brigitte Klesse, *Seidenstoffe in der italienischen Malerei des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Bern, 1967), 294, 371; Olga Pujmanová, in *Národní galerie v Praze*, ed. Jiího Kotalíka (Prague, 1984), 52; Stefano Petrocchi, "Nardo di Cione," in *Enciclopedia dell'arte medievale*, 12 vols. (Rome, 1997), 8:650.

[11] Erling S. Skaug, *Punch Marks from Giotto to Fra Angelico: Attribution, Chronology, and Workshop Relationships in Tuscan Panel Painting with Particular Consideration to Florence, c. 1330–1430*, 2 vols. (Oslo, 1994), 1:176–178; Gert Kreytenberg, "Cione," in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, 34 vols. (New York, 1996), 7:336; Angelo Tartuferi, *Dal Duecento agli Orcagna: Il restauro della Madonna col Bambino di ignoto fiorentino del Duecento e del trittico di Santa Maria degli Angeli di Nardo di Cione* (Livorno, 2001), 68, 75 n. 32.

[12] Richard Offner, "Nardo di Cione and His Triptych in the Goldman

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Collection,"*Art in America* 12 (1924): 105; Richard Offner, *Studies in Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century* (New York, 1927), 103, 104.

[13] Richard Offner, "Nardo di Cione and His Triptych in the Goldman Collection," *Art in America* 12 (1924): 106.

[14] Richard Offner, "Nardo di Cione and His Triptych in the Goldman Collection," *Art in America* 12 (1924): 105.

[15] Victoria & Albert Museum, London, Ionides Collection, no. C.A.I. 104; Alte Pinakothek, Munich, nos. W.A.F. 1027, 1028. See Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 4, vol. 2, *Nardo di Cione* (New York, 1960), 13–22.

[16] London, National Gallery, no. 581. Richard Offner considered this panel as "representative of an era…of progressive preparation for the Strozzi cycle," with a dating c. 1345–1350. See Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 4, vol. 2, *Nardo di Cione* (New York, 1960), v (for quote), x, 37–40. More recently, Dillian Gordon (1985), developing Offner's hypothesis that Bartolomeo di Lapo Benini was the donor of the altarpiece (which is known to have come from the Florentine church of San Giovanni Battista della Calza), suggested a very late date of execution, c. 1365. She based her proposal also on Erling S. Skaug's (1983) observations on the punch marks used to decorate the halos in the panel. On the basis of its stylistic characteristics, however, the painting would better fit into Nardo's chronology around 1360, in my opinion. Cf. Dillian Gordon, "Nardo di Cione's Altarpiece: Three Saints," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 9 (1985): 21–23; Erling S. Skaug, *Punch Marks from Giotto to Fra Angelico: Attribution, Chronology, and Workshop Relationships in Tuscan Panel Painting with Particular Consideration to Florence, c. 1330–1430*, 2 vols. (Oslo, 1994), 1:176–179.

[17] The polyptych, acquired in the late nineteenth century for the Pálffy Castle in Bojnice (now Slovakia), was transferred to the Prague National Gallery (nos. O 2376–2385) after the Second World War; Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 4, vol. 2, *Nardo di Cione* (New York, 1960), 33–35. Subsequently, it passed to the National Gallery in Bratislava and from there was restored to its original seat at Bojnice.

[18] "Nardo's frescoes," Richard Offner concluded, "were started soon after the tabernacle [Orcagna's monumental work executed for the church of Orsanmichele starting in 1352] was begun, and were very probably brought to an end before Orcagna's polyptych was set upon the altar of the [Strozzi] chapel in 1357"; Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 4, vol. 2, *Nardo di Cione* (New York, 1960), 47.

[19] In all three panels, the floriated motifs incised in the halos stand out against

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the granulated ground. Analyzing this decoration, Erling S. Skaug observed that in the London–Munich panel "the small four-point punch rosetta has been used not for granulation but as an independent motif. The same effect is to be found in the Washington tabernacle. It remains to be proved," he added cautiously, "that this rare feature in Nardo's tooling habits actually connects these works in time, but the possibility deserves attention." Erling S. Skaug, *Punch Marks from Giotto to Fra Angelico: Attribution, Chronology, and Workshop Relationships in Tuscan Panel Painting with Particular Consideration to Florence, c. 1330–1430*, 2 vols. (Oslo, 1994), 1:178.

[20] On the various techniques of gold tooling, see Erling S. Skaug, *Punch Marks from Giotto to Fra Angelico: Attribution, Chronology, and Workshop Relationships in Tuscan Panel Painting with Particular Consideration to Florence, c. 1330–1430*, 2 vols. (Oslo, 1994), 1:62–66.

[21] "Re-worked tooling," explained Erling S. Skaug, "is...in the Stockholm [Nationalmuseum, no. 2259], Prague and New Haven [Yale University Art Gallery, nos. 1971.13–14] panels mainly confined to the addition of a blunt point in the centers of medium-size six-petalled motifs. In halo and frame borders of the Washington and London–Munich panels, however, re-working even of medium-size circle motifs by blunt point inside frequently occurs." Erling S. Skaug, *Punch Marks from Giotto to Fra Angelico: Attribution, Chronology, and Workshop Relationships in Tuscan Panel Painting with Particular Consideration to Florence, c. 1330–1430*, 2 vols. (Oslo, 1994), 1:178 n. 18.

[22] Brigitte Klesse, *Seidenstoffe in der italienischen Malerei des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Bern, 1967), 294–295, registered the presence of fabrics decorated with motifs very similar to those of the gold-embroidered brocade of the child in the Washington triptych, in the polyptych now at Bojnice, and in the Madonna and Child with Saints in the Brooklyn Museum. For this latter panel—identifiable, according to Millard Meiss's plausible proposal, with the altarpiece formerly in the office of the Gabella de' Contratti in Florence and according to a seventeenth-century source signed and dated 1356—see Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 4, vol. 2, *Nardo di Cione* (New York, 1960), 67–69; and Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death* (Princeton, 1951), 15 n. 15. See also Hans Dietrich Gronau, "Nardo di Cione," in *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker, and Hans Vollmer 37 vols. (Leipzig, 1932), 26:39; and Hans Dietrich Gronau, *Andrea Orcagna und Nardo di Cione: Eine stilgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Berlin, 1937), 58.

[23] These characteristics are fully manifest in the two triptychs dated 1365 in the Galleria dell'Accademia and Museo di Santa Croce. See Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth*

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Century, sec. 4, vol. 2, *Nardo di Cione* (New York, 1960), 85–96 (as "Following of Nardo di Cione"); Angelo Tartuferi, in *Dipinti*, vol. 1, *Dal Duecento a Giovanni da Milano*, Cataloghi della Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze, ed. Miklós Boskovits and Angelo Tartuferi (Florence, 2003), 182–191; and Angelo Tartuferi, in *Angeli, santi e demoni: Otto capolavori restaurati; Santa Croce quaranta anni dopo (1966–2006)*, Problemi di conservazione e restauro, ed. Marco Ciatti, Cecilia Frosinini, and Chiara Rossi Scarzanella (Florence, 2006), 111–112.

[24] See Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 4, vol. 2, *Nardo di Cione* (New York, 1960), 75–78. Giovanni di Bartolo Steccuti, who had patronage of the chapel, is known to have died in 1360 and was buried there. Among the frescoes in question, the figure of Saint John the Evangelist (see Offner 1960, pl. XXIX) offers interesting affinities with the same saint in the Washington triptych.

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The triptych including this work, *Madonna and Child, with the Man of Sorrows [middle panel]*, and *Saint John the Evangelist [right panel]* is one of the few early Italian panels in the collection that has not been cradled. The wooden support of the central panel is vertically grained. A knotty section of the left side of the panel was replaced by the insertion from the front side of eleven rectangular blocks of wood, before the application of the cloth interleaf and the gesso layer. The frame and base of the triptych are original. The inscription is on a horizontally grained piece of wood that was set into the base. The wings are formed of single boards with vertical grain; it is unclear whether the spiral colonnettes by which they are joined to the main panel are original—repaired and regilded—or modern. The back of the wings are covered by paint imitating porphyry, with an ornamental decoration at the center that feigns the effect of inlaid work [fig. 1].

The figures and some of the drapery folds were delineated with incised lines. Infrared reflectography at 1.1 to 2.5 microns reveals underdrawing and hatchmarking, which is more prevalent in the Madonna and Child than in Saint John and Saint Peter.[1] The areas of flesh were prepared with a green underpaint, which was not modeled. Discrete paint strokes are visible in the clothing, but the paint is well blended in the flesh tones. Mordant gilding was used to form the gold decorative borders of the Virgin's and saints' robes. The lining of the Madonna's robe was originally brocade, probably with silver gilding and green

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paint.[2] Punched designs decorate the figures' halos, the border of each panel, the brocade swaddling cloth, the carpet, and the gable.

The central panel has a slight convex warp. Probably in an effort to flatten the wood, the back of the panel was scored from the top right corner approximately to the center, at an angle that follows the wood grain. The back of the panel is covered by a layer of modern reddish brown pigment. The base, including the area around the blue paint of the inscription, has been regilded; the upper frame members retain their original gilding, which has been locally repaired. The painted surface is generally very well preserved. There is inpainting in the bust of the Man of Sorrows, in the gable trefoil, and in Christ's swaddling cloth. The brocade lining of the Madonna's robe has been overpainted. The painting was treated by Stephen Pichetto in 1937 and again by Mario Modestini in 1955.

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TECHNICAL COMPARATIVE FIGURES

fig. 1 Exterior view of portable triptych with wings closed, tempera on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

TECHNICAL NOTES

[1] Infrared reflectography was performed with a Santa Barbara Focalplane InSb camera fitted with J and K astronomy filters.

[2] The NGA scientific research department performed x-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF). Silver and elements associated with green and blue pigments were found (see report dated December 22, 2010, in NGA conservation files).

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PROVENANCE

Gustav Adolf Wilhelm von Ingenheim [1789-1855], who acquired it in the first half of the nineteenth century, probably in Italy;[1] Ingenheim family, Schloss Reisewitz, Silesia; sold 1922 to (A.S. Drey, Munich); sold 1923 to Henry Goldman [1856-1937], New York;[2] sold January 1937 to (Duveen Brothers, Inc., London, New York, and Paris);[3] sold 1937 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York;[4] gift 1939 to NGA.

[1] According to Richard Offner (*A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting. The Fourteenth Century*, Section IV, Vol. II, Nardo di Cione, New York, 1960: 24), who obtained the information from Dr. Manfred Graf von Ingenheim, a descendant of the collector, Count von Ingenheim "had acquired some of his paintings during his stay in Italy (1820–1840), and had received others as gifts from the king of Prussia." Indeed, the center panel of the National Gallery's triptych has a label on the reverse that reads, "Kaiser Friedrich Palais / Zimmer No. 251 / Lfde No. 39," but the painting has not yet been located in an early catalogue of the Prussian royal collections. According to a contemporary report (Carl August Böttiger, "Gemäldesammlung des Grafen von Ingenheim." *Artistisches Notizenblatt* [appendix to *Abend Zeitung*] 7 [1927]: 26-28), by 1827 the count had no fewer than seventy-eight select Italian Old Masters ("auserwählte Stücke italienischer Meister") in his collection, which at that time was housed in Munich but was about to be transferred to Paris. Böttiger, who quotes the collector's words, claims these paintings were purchased in Italy in the years 1816-1817 and 1822-1824.

[2] Offner 1960, 24.

[3] Letter, Henry Goldman to Duveen Brothers, 5 January 1937; copy in NGA curatorial files. Goldman confirms the sale to the company of nine paintings and one sculpture; Duveen Brothers Records, accession number 960015, Research Library, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles: reel 312, box 457, folder 4.

[4] Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, National Gallery of Art, 2 vols., Washington, D.C., 1979, 1:342.

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EXHIBITION HISTORY

2008 L'eredità di Giotto. Arte a Firenze 1340-1375, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, 2008, no. 36, repro.

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