NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS
Italian Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Paintings

Master of Città di Castello
Italian, active c. 1290 - 1320

Maesta (Madonna and Child with Four Angels)

c. 1290

tempera on panel
painted surface: 230 × 141.5 cm (90 9/16 × 55 11/16 in.)
overall: 240 × 150 × 2.4 cm (94 1/2 × 59 1/16 × 15/16 in.)
framed: 252.4 x 159.4 x 13.3 cm (99 3/8 x 62 3/4 x 5 1/4 in.)
Samuel H. Kress Collection 1961.9.77

ENTRY

This panel, of large dimensions, bears the image of the Maestà represented according to the iconographic tradition of the *Hodegetria*.[1] This type of Madonna and Child was very popular among lay confraternities in central Italy; perhaps it was one of them that commissioned the painting.[2] The image is distinguished among the paintings of its time by the very peculiar construction of the marble throne, which seems to be formed of a semicircular external structure into which a circular seat is inserted. Similar thrones are sometimes found in Sienese paintings between the last decades of the thirteenth and the first two of the fourteenth century.[3] Much the same dating is suggested by the delicate chrysography of the mantles of the Madonna and Child.[4]

Recorded for the first time by the Soprintendenza in Siena c. 1930 as “tavola preduccesca,”[5] the work was examined by Richard Offner in 1937. In his expertise, he classified it as “school of Duccio” and compared it with some roughly contemporary panels of the same stylistic circle. Offner concludes that it belonged to “a slightly more primitive period than the *Maestà* of Duccio, namely the first decade of the fourteenth century.”[6] In the early 1950s, when the painting began to reemerge from its long oblivion, various scholars, perhaps at Bernard Berenson’s suggestion, pointed out its kinship with the Badia a Isola *Maestà*,[7] a classification that also convinced Gertrude Coor Achenbach (1960) and Enzo Carli (1965).[8] In the National Gallery of Art, however, the panel was cataloged simply as “Follower of Duccio,” and this classification was in general accepted in the art

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historical literature. Berenson (1968) noted that the anonymous artist was “close to the Master of Città di Castello,” while James Stubblebine (1979) considered him a “provincial follower” of the same Master. Stubblebine, who attempted to reconstruct the oeuvre of this artist, invented for him the name “San Quirico d’Orcia Master.”[9] The painting’s kinship with the so-called Master of 1310 was also proposed (Conti 1981) but almost immediately rejected (Bacchi 1987).[10] In the more recent literature, the painting generally has been cited under the conventional name of Master of San Quirico d’Orcia (Martini 1997, Bagnoli 2003, Schmidt 2005) or attributed to the Master of Città di Castello (Boskovits 1982, Freuler 2001, Freuler 2004).[11]

Before discussing the attribution, an effort should be made to define the chronological frame within which the Washington panel was painted. This can best be done by examining what is no doubt its most peculiar feature, the throne on which the Virgin is seated. Elaborate in construction, it is undoubtedly built of marble. This was a novel feature in late thirteenth-century Tuscan paintings. Marble thrones, hitherto used in Roman painting, appear for the first time in Siena in the great rose window designed by Duccio di Buoninsegna (Sienese, c. 1250/1255 - 1318/1319) for the cathedral (c. 1287–1288) and in the frescoes of the upper church of San Francesco in Assisi painted by Giotto (Florentine, c. 1265 - 1337) and his companions in the years around 1290.[12] The massive thrones that appear in various paintings of the period were then developed further: they became more elaborate, more lavish in ornament, more richly articulated, and also more rational and optically convincing. During the first decade of the fourteenth century, painted thrones assume ever more pronounced Gothic features. In this development, the *Maestà* painted by Duccio for Siena Cathedral (c. 1308–1311) may be considered a sure point of chronological reference. Though the marble throne on which that Madonna sits still lacks gothicizing features, its elaborate intarsia paneling, moldings, and foliated friezes suggest that it should date to a phase subsequent to that of the Washington painting.

None of the panels with which the Gallery painting has been compared [13] is securely datable, but the list of the analogies so far pointed out can be extended with the addition of one or two other works that can be dated approximately and usefully compared with the Washington Madonna. Historical considerations suggest, for example, that the fresco in the chapel of Saint Nicholas adjacent to the Collegiata at Casole d’Elsa, attributed by recent studies either to a so-called Casole Master (also known as Master of the Albertini) or to the Master of Città di Castello,

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postdates 1296 and probably predates 1312.[14] In that work [fig. 1], Mary's throne may be considered a further variant of the massive marble structures derived from Duccio's rose window in Siena Cathedral; despite its heavy structure, its richly articulated forms, illuminated by a light flowing into the painting from the left, and its backrest surmounted by a kind of gabled baldachin reveal that this is a work executed probably not later than the years around 1300 and hence close to the other version of the Madonna and Child now in the National Gallery in London, usually given to the same artist. To better define the chronology of the Washington panel it will be useful also to take into consideration some Sienese frescoes of the school of Duccio that can be dated c. 1305. The thrones that appear in these frescoes, though still classicizing in style, are more rational in design, more elaborate in structure, than that of the painting being discussed here.[15]

Returning to the problem of the hand that painted the panel in Washington, it should be premised that the attribution to the Badia a Isola Master, which the art historical literature has since abandoned, did have the merit of suggesting an early date for our painting. Recent studies recognize the Badia a Isola *Maestà* as the work of an exponent of the first generation of followers of Duccio. A late dating, to the second decade of the fourteenth century or after, does not seem justified for the painting discussed here, whose "halo style" recalls the Badia a Isola *Maestà* .[16] Various other clues suggest an earlier date: for example, the fact that the light here (as in the Badia a Isola *Maestà*) does not come from a single source, as it does in paintings realized by Duccio and his close followers in the years around 1310. The markedly elongated proportions of Mary in turn recall such examples as Duccio's Madonna in the Kunstmuseum in Bern or the protagonists of the *Maestà* of the Casole Master. The blessing gesture of the child, with his arm stretched out to the left, is characteristic of paintings dating to the final years of the thirteenth century, without the foreshortening that the frontal blessing of the Madonna of the National Gallery in London implies.[17]

On the other hand, the Washington Maestà should not be retained in the stylistically incoherent group collected under the name of San Quirico d'Orcia Master.[18] Indeed, with the possible exception of one painting, the Madonna of the Detroit Institute of Arts, the shared authorship of the works hitherto linked with the Washington Maestà seems very much open to doubt. So, may the Maestà in the Gallery be assigned outright to the Master of Città di Castello, who most scholars have recognized as the artist of the Detroit panel? The hypothesis is plausible, on two conditions: first, that the chronology of this painter be revised;[19] and second,

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that the works formerly assigned to the Casole (or Aringhieri or Albertini) Master be included in his catalog. If, as I suggest above, the Maestà in the National Gallery in London belongs to the figurative culture of the last decade of the thirteenth century, Maestà no. 18 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena [fig. 2] and the Casole d'Elsa fresco should date slightly later, around 1300, in view of their tendency towards a more pronounced classical style. The artist's career could then have continued, without any improbable changes of direction, with paintings generally given to the Master of Città di Castello, the earliest of which seems to be the Madonna and Child in a private collection recently published by Gaudenz Freuler (2001),[20] followed by the Maestà of Città di Castello itself. Such a sequence would seem to be corroborated by Mojmir Frinta's (1998) examination of the punch marks used in them: he has identified the use of this punch both in the panels attributed to the Casole Master and in the works of the Master of Città di Castello.[21]

If, as I am inclined to believe, the Washington panel was a product of the same workshop, it should be assigned the earliest possible date in the master's career: it is the result, presumably, of an initial phase in the artist's development in which not all the characteristic features of his fully fledged style have yet appeared. This, as well as the much compromised condition of the panel, may explain some stylistically anomalous features, such as the angels that flank the Virgin's throne: with their long necks, melancholy expressions, and thin yet incisive contours, they lack the corporeal, almost sculptural modeling and the typically soft chiaroscuro we associate with the Master of Città di Castello. On the other hand, better preserved passages, in particular the face of the angel in the upper left and the bust of the child, are comparable to corresponding details in panels in the Casole Master group, for example the *Maestà* in London and the Madonna no. 592 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena. The placid undulation of the contours of the figure of the enthroned Mary also recalls paintings usually included in the same oeuvre. Some compositional devices found in the oeuvre of the Casole Master that recur in the Washington panel also seem significant. I allude to the distinctive undulating curves of the exposed pale silk lining that enlivens the large, uniform expanse of the Madonna's dark blue mantle. The Virgin's conduct is also worth noting: she is draping a precious embroidered cloth around the body of her son, and pressing a hem of the fabric between her right forefinger and thumb in both the London and Washington versions of the Maestà [fig. 3].[22] Therefore we can propose, albeit with due caution, that the *Maestà* in the Gallery and those from Casole d'Elsa in London and Siena, as well as the namepiece in Città di Castello and the other

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works that art historians have gathered around it, constitute three successive phases in the career of the same distinctive and accomplished exponent of Sienese painting at the turn of the century.

Miklós Boskovits (1935–2011)

March 21, 2016

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COMPARATIVE FIGURES

fig. 1 Sienese, *Maestà*, c. 1300, fresco, Chapel of Saint Nicholas, Collegiata, Casole d'Elsa

fig. 2 Master of Città di Castello, *Maestà*, c. 1300, tempera on panel, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena. Image courtesy of the Ministerio per i Beni e le Attività Culturali

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fig. 3 Detail of Madonna, Master of Città di Castello, *Maestà (Madonna and Child with Four Angels)*, c. 1290, tempera on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

fig. 4 Sienese, *Maestà*, c. 1300, fresco, Church of San Lorenzo al Colle Ciupi at Monteriggioni. Image courtesy of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Superintendence of Fine Arts and Landscape for the provinces of Siena, Grosseto, and Arezzo

NOTES

[1] See Gregor Martin Lechner, "Maria," in *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, ed. Klaus Wessel (Stuttgart, 2005), 6:58–71. The Maestà is a type of image emphasizing the regal dignity of the Christ child, shown in the arms of his mother, who is enthroned and flanked by angels.

[2] This is also suggested by the historical vicissitudes of the painting, which seems not to have had any fixed ecclesiastical ownership but to have passed from churches in San Quirico d'Orcia to private owners and back again, without leaving any trace in the inventories relating to the churches in question. But almost all large-size panels of the Maestà painted in central

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Italy between the thirteenth and early years of the fourteenth century, in general taller than they are wide, were commissioned by lay confraternities. See Hans Belting, *Bild und Kult: Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich, 1990), 433–446; Miklós Boskovits, in *Duecento: Forme e colori del Medioevo a Bologna*, ed. Massimo Medica and Stefano Tumidei (Venice, 2000), 274–275.

[3] See below note 15.

[4] The term *chrysography* (from the Greek *chrysographia*, meaning writing with gold letters) comes from studies on the decoration of manuscript. Cf. Ronald Baxter, "Chrysography," in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, 34 vols. (New York, 1996), 7:245–247. In the art historical literature it is used as an alternative to gold grisaille to denote the gilded highlights of garments in paintings. Cf. Otto Demus, *Byzantine Art and the West* (New York, 1970), 103, 235; Kurt Weitzmann, *The Icon: Holy Images, Sixth to Fourteenth Century* (London, 1978), 92. This use of gold, especially the golden calligraphy used to highlight the folds of drapery, was borrowed from Byzantine art and spread in Tuscan painting around the mid-thirteenth century but gradually disappeared in the course of the second decade of the following century or shortly thereafter.

[5] Cf. Provenance note 2.

[6] Matteo Panzeri (1996) published the expertise dated August 30, 1937, in which Offner proposed that the panel belonged to "un'epoca un po' più primitiva della Maestà di Duccio, vale a dire il primo decennio del Trecento" (a slightly more primitive period than Duccio's *Maestà*, that is to say the first decade of the fourteenth century). Offner compared the panel, which he likely knew only from a photograph, with a series of paintings, thus circumscribing in a convincing way the artistic ambience in which it was painted. He noted its kinship with paintings by artists of the first generation of the followers of Duccio di Buoninsegna (Sienese, c. 1250/1255 - 1318/1319), such as the so-called Casole Master, of whom he cited works in the National Gallery in London (no. 565) and in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena (no. 592); a *Maestà* by the Master of Badia a Isola (now in the Museo di Colle Val d'Elsa); a similar panel of the same subject in the Museo Civico at Città di Castello; and another panel of the Madonna attributable to Segna di Bonaventura, formerly in the Platt collection in Englewood, New Jersey, and now in the Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven (no. 1959.15.17). See Matteo Panzeri, "La tradizione del restauro a Bergamo tra XIX e XX secolo: Mauro Pellicioli, un caso paradigmatico," in *Giovanni Secco Suardo: La cultura del restauro tra tutela e conservazione dell'opera d'arte; Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Bergamo, March 9–11, 1995*, supplemental volume 98 of *Bollettino d'Arte* (Rome, 1996), 111–112.

[7] In the posthumous edition of Bernard Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the*

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Renaissance: Central Italian and North Italian Schools, 3 vols. (London, 1968), 2:120, the painting was classified as the anonymous work of an artist close to the Master of Città di Castello. Nonetheless, prior to its acquisition by the Kress Foundation, Berenson apparently held a different view. In a letter of January 28, 1953, to his agent Gualtiero Volterra, Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi included photographs of the works of art he intended to sell to the Kress Foundation and informed him "delle impressioni di B.B" (of B. B.'s opinions) about them. The works in question include one attributed to the "Maestro di Badia a Isola quadro importantissimo che diventerebbe uno dei pezzi centrali di qualunque museo," see Elsa de' Giorgi, *L'eredità Contini Bonacossi: L'ambiguo rigore del vero* (Milan, 1988), 197. That this was the Gallery's painting is proven by its description in other letters as "Madonna col Bambino e quattro angeli." Subsequently (letter of Rush Kress to Contini-Bonacossi, May 14, 1953) the painting was also indicated as "Duccio, Pala d'altare della Madonna of Spoleto," but clearly this was a mistake on the writer's part. In fact, the *Madonna of Spoleto* is the panel generally attributed to the Badia a Isola Master that belonged to the collection of Claudio Argentieri in Spoleto in the 1930s, then circulated on the art market, and finally ended up in the collection of Vittorio Cini in Venice. See Federico Zeri, Mauro Natale, and Alessandra Mottola Molfino, *Dipinti toscani e oggetti d'arte dalla Collezione Vittorio Cini* (Vicenza, 1984), 10–11. As evinced by the documentation in NGA curatorial files, William Suida also had classified the panel as a work of the Badia a Isola Master at the time of its acquisition by the Kress Foundation, and Sandberg-Vavalà seems to have accepted this attribution as well.

[8] Gertrude Coor, "The Early Nineteenth-Century Aspect of a Dispersed Polyptych by the Badia a Isola Master," *The Art Bulletin* 42 (1960): 143 n. 6; Enzo Carli, "Ricuperi e restauri senesi: I, Nella cerchia di Duccio," *Bollettino d'arte* 50 (1965): 97, 99 n. 2.

[9] Bernard Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance: Central Italian and North Italian Schools*, 3 vols. (London, 1968), 2:120. James H. Stubblebine, *Duccio di Buoninsegna and His School*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1979), 1:89–91, gathered under the name "San Quirico d'Orcia Master" the Gallery *Maestà*; the *Madonna and Child* in the Detroit Institute of Arts (no. 24.96) usually given to the Master of Città di Castello; and a fragmentary panel of the same subject, formerly in the storerooms of the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena and now in the museum at Buonconvento. Cf. also note 18 below.

[10] Alessandro Conti, *La miniatura bolognese: Scuole e botteghe, 1270–1340* (Bologna, 1981), 53 n. 39. Pierpaolo Donati reconstructed the catalog of this anonymous Pistoian master around an altarpiece dated 1310 in the Museum in Avignon; cf. Pier Paolo Donati, "Per la pittura pistoiese del Trecento, 1," *Paragone* 25, no. 295 (1974): 4–26; Michel Laclotte and Esther Moench, *Peinture italienne: Musée du Petit Palais, Avignon* (Paris, 2005), 127–128.

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Andrea Bacchi (1986), on the other hand, thought the panel in Washington more likely to be the work of a Pisan master of the early fourteenth century. Andrea Bacchi, "Pittura del Duecento e del Trecento nel Pistoiese," in *La Pittura in Italia: Il Duecento e il Trecento*, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo, 2 vols. (Milan, 1986), 1:317–318.

[11] See Laura Martini, "Le vicende costruttive della chiesa di San Francesco," in *San Quirico d'Orcia: La Madonna di Vitaleta; Arte e devozione*, ed. Laura Martini (San Quirico d'Orcia, 1997), 13–14, 19 n. 5; Alessandro Bagnoli, "I pittori ducceschi," in *Duccio: Siena fra tradizione bizantina e mondo gotico*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli et al. (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2003), 297, 302 n. 23; Victor M. Schmidt, *Painted Piety: Panel Paintings for Personal Devotion in Tuscany, 1250–1400* (Florence, 2005), 181, 202 n. 44, 348; and Miklós Boskovits, "Review of *Duccio di Buoninsegna and His School* by J.H. Stubblebine; and *Duccio di Buoninsegna* by J. White," *The Art Bulletin* 64 (1982): 497. Though he did not specifically discuss the Washington panel, Gaudenz Freuler too included it implicitly in the catalog of the Master of Città di Castello. Cf. Gaudenz Freuler, "Duccio et ses contemporains: Le maître de Città di Castello," *Revue de l'art* 134 (2001): 28; Gaudenz Freuler, "Duccio alle origini della pittura senese," *Kunstchronik* 57 (2004): 589–590. He argued, in fact, that the works gathered by Stubblebine under the name of the San Quirico Master should be reassigned to the Città di Castello Master.

[12] Documents of 1287 and 1288 speak of the great rose window about to be realized for Siena Cathedral, the glass for which was then being bought. Cf. Luciano Bellosi and Alessandro Bagnoli, in *Duccio: Siena fra tradizione bizantina e mondo gotico*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli et al. (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2003), 162–179. The throne of the Coronation of the Virgin represented in the center of the window's upper tier recalls the type of throne in the *Madonna Rucellai* in the Uffizi, Florence, commissioned in 1285, but in contrast it is no longer of wood but of marble. The new type of throne, which would inspire Sienese painters of the following decades, is characterized by its high concave back placed between two robust quadrangular pillars, and by a seat flanked by projecting elements and adorned with panels of Cosmatesque ornament. It is heralded by the thrones of the four Evangelists in the rose window's spandrels. It seems to me improbable that this type of throne could have been borrowed from some work of the youthful Giotto (Florentine, c. 1265 - 1337), as conjectured in the above-cited catalog; the model should rather be sought in contemporary Roman painting. Cf. Miklós Boskovits, "Da Duccio a Simone Martini," in *Medioevo: La chiesa e il palazzo; Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Parma, September 20–24, 2005*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle (Milan, 2007), 573.

[13] Apart from the panels that Offner cited as comparanda (cf. note 6 above)

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and the small *Maestà* now in the Cini collection in Venice (cf. note 7), we should also cite those that Stubblebine attributed to a so-called San Quirico d'Orcia Master (cf. note 9), as did Alessandro Bagnoli, "I pittori ducceschi," in *Duccio: Siena fra tradizione bizantina e mondo gotico*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli et al. (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2003), 297, 302 n. 23. The latter accepted, it seems, the proposition that the master who painted the Washington panel was also responsible for the one now at Buonconvento. To these two paintings he added a fresco (fig. 4) in the church of San Lorenzo al Colle Ciupi at Monteriggioni, a painting of fine quality and great interest that undoubtedly belongs to the milieu of the master of the Washington panel, but I am unable to recognize in it a work by the same hand. I wonder whether it belongs to the earliest phase of the Goodhart Duccesque Master (alias Master of the Gondi Maestà).

[14] Cf. Giovanna Damiani, in *Mostra di opere d'arte restaurate nelle province di Siena e Grosseto* (Genoa, 1981), 2:20–24; Alessandro Bagnoli, "Museo della Collegiata," in *Museo archeologico e della Collegiata di Casole d'Elsa*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli and Giuseppina Carlotta Cianferoni (Florence, 1996), 61–62; Julian Gardner, "Duccio, 'Cimabue' and the Maestro di Casole: Early Sienese Paintings for Florentine Confraternities," in *Iconographica: Mélanges offerts à Piotr Skubiszewski*, ed. Robert Favreau and Marie-Hélène Debiès (Poitiers, 1999), 110–111; Alessandro Bagnoli, "La cappella funebre del Porrina e del vescovo Ranieri e le sue figurazioni murali," in *Marco Romano e il contesto artistico senese fra la fine del Duecento e gli inizi del Trecento*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2010), 92–111. Of the two kneeling donors depicted in the fresco, the one to the left is Bernardino called Porrina, a famous lawyer of the time, who had died by 1309; the one to the right, his brother Ranieri, who was bishop of Cremona and died in 1312. It cannot be excluded that, as Bagnoli believed, the fresco postdates 1312, with a commemorative intention; but far more probable seems the hypothesis of Damiani and Gardner that the chapel, site of the fresco, was erected, as was often the case, to enhance the importance of the donors while still alive, probably shortly after Ranieri's preferment to the see of Cremona in 1296.

[15] The peculiar motif of the pronouncedly forward-projecting sides of the throne, forming a semicircle around the seat on which the Madonna is enthroned and supporting a high concave backrest, must have characterized the Madonna no. 565 in the National Gallery in London before the lower part of the panel was sawn off. Julian Gardner (1999) argued for a relatively late date for this painting, c. 1315, because he believed that the figure of the blessing Christ child standing on his mother's knees derived from *Simone Martini's* famous *Maestà* in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena. But the child in the London panel (as shown in particular by his crossed legs) assumes a pose more similar to that of the Christ child in the Badia a Isola

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Maestà (cf. note 8 above), a work probably dating to c. 1290 and therefore appreciably earlier in date than Simone's fresco. See Julian Gardner, "Duccio, 'Cimabue' and the Maestro di Casole: Early Sienese Paintings for Florentine Confraternities," in *Iconographica: Mélanges offerts à Piotr Skubiszewski*, ed. Robert Favreau and Marie-Hélène Debiès (Poitiers, 1999), 111. The London Madonna is, I think, later than the Badia a Isola panel, but should not be placed beyond c. 1300. An archaic feature of the marble throne in the Badia a Isola *Maestà*, shown frontally and with an arched opening on its front side (like the thrones of the Evangelists in the rose window in Siena Cathedral), is that its foot-rest is seen laterally, as in the Coronation in the same window. So the type of throne may be compared with that we see in some of Duccio's earlier paintings, still falling within the thirteenth century (cf. the Madonna no. 873 in the Kunstmuseum of Bern). Around 1300, a new type of throne was being used: firmer in structure and classicizing in style. This is exemplified by the Madonna frescoed on the arch of the Due Porte at Stalloreggi (Siena), which James Stubblebine (1979) unconvincingly attributed to the Casole Fresco Master and Bellosi to "bottega di Giotto." In fact, the fresco is Sienese, close to Memmo di Filipuccio. Cf. James H. Stubblebine, *Duccio di Buoninsegna and His School*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1979), 1:114; Luciano Bellosi, "Il percorso di Duccio," in *Duccio: Siena fra tradizione bizantina e mondo gotico*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli et al. (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2003), 116.
The chronology of these paintings seems to be confirmed by some works with thrones of archaicizing type dating to the early years of the fourteenth century, such as that depicted in the *Martyrdom of Saint James* in the mural cycle of the former Palazzo Vescovile in Pistoia attributed to the Città di Castello Master. Cf. Ada Labriola, "Gli affreschi della cappella di San Niccolò nell'antico Palazzo dei Vescovi a Pistoia," *Arte cristiana* 76 (1988): 247–266 and fig. 4. Another example of similar ornament is that of the *Madonna and Child Enthroned* painted by Memmo di Filippuccio in the church of San Jacopo at San Gimignano, for which see Enzo Carli, "Ancora dei Memmi a San Gimignano," *Paragone* 14, no. 159 (1963): 31–32. Both thrones are morphologically close to the architectural details of the frescoes on the internal façade of the Collegiata in the same town, for which Memmo was paid in 1305. See Gianna Coppini, *San Gimignano: Sogno del Medioevo* (San Gimignano, 2000), 50.
The close kinship between the type of throne represented in the Washington panel and some paintings of the Goodhart Duccesque Master also should be underlined. Cf. James H. Stubblebine, *Duccio di Buoninsegna and His School*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1979), 2: figs. 257–259. Alessandro Bagnoli, in *Duccio: Siena fra tradizione bizantina e mondo gotico*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli et al. (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2003), 366–368, compared the throne in one of the works of this anonymous master, that now in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence, with the

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structure painted in the Washington Maestà and proposed for the former a date close to Duccio's *Maestà* in Siena. The proposal is plausible. However, the works of the Goodhart Duccesque Master renovate the form of the throne in the Washington Madonna, replacing the semicircular seat with a rectangular one and making the structure as a whole more rational. These changes, together with some new elements of gothicizing taste, imply for the panel in the Bargello a date decidedly later than the *Maestà* in the National Gallery of Art.

[16] Enzo Carli, "Ricuperi e restauri senesi. I. Nella cerchia di Duccio," *Bollettino d'arte* 50 (1965): 97, considered the Washington panel "a sequel" to the former Argentieri *Maestà* (now in the Cini collection in Venice) and seemed to imply for it—since he believed that the Cini Maestà had been executed "forse ancora entro il Duecento" (perhaps still within the thirteenth century)—a dating no later than the first decade of the fourteenth century. Fern Rusk Shapley (1966, 1979), too, followed by subsequent catalogs of the National Gallery of Art, proposed "early 14th century," while James Stubblebine (1979) detected in the panel some familiarity with the works of Pietro Lorenzetti (Sienese, active 1306 - 1345) and therefore proposed a date for it of c. 1320. Andrea Bacchi (1986) reverted to the years around the turn of the century ("a cavallo fra Duecento e Trecento"), while Julian Gardner (1999), without explicitly suggesting a date, compared the painting with the "old-fashioned composition" of the Madonna no. 565 in the London National Gallery, in his view datable to c. 1315. Recently, Alessandro Bagnoli (2003) also placed the Washington panel among the "casi tardivi e provinciali di coloro che furono sostanzialmente insensibili alle novità dei maestri più moderni e dipinsero ben avanti nel Trecento tenendo fede a modelli ormai superati" (retardataire and provincial cases of those who were substantially insensible to the innovations of more modern masters and who, painting well into the fourteenth century, remained faithful to outdated models). See Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection: Italian Schools, XIII–XV Century* (London, 1966), 14–15; Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:172–174; National Gallery of Art, *European Paintings and Sculpture: Illustrations* (Washington, DC, 1968), 37; National Gallery of Art, *European Paintings: An Illustrated Catalogue* (Washington, DC, 1985), 137; James H. Stubblebine, *Duccio di Buoninsegna and His School*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1979), 1:89–91; Andrea Bacchi, "Pittura del Duecento e del Trecento nel Pistoiese," in *La Pittura in Italia: Il Duecento e il Trecento*, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo, 2 vols. (Milan, 1986), 1:317–318; Julian Gardner, "Duccio, 'Cimabue' and the Maestro di Casole: Early Sienese Paintings for Florentine Confraternities," in *Iconographica: Mélanges offerts à Piotr Skubiszewski*, ed. Robert Favreau and Marie-Hélène Debiès (Poitiers, 1999), 112; Alessandro Bagnoli, "I pittori ducceschi," in *Duccio: Siena fra tradizione bizantina e mondo gotico*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli et al. (Cinisello Balsamo,

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Milan, 2003), 297.

[17] A similar position of the child is frequently found in Italian paintings of the thirteenth century. In Siena, we find it as early as 1262 (cf. the Madonna and Child no. 16 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Siena). The motif was abandoned in the phase of Duccio's full maturity and that of his followers at the turn of the century. It was replaced by a more modern motif of the Christ child who expresses affection for his mother or pulls toward himself a hem of her veil, or raises his hand in the gesture of blessing frontally, with his arm shown in foreshortening.

[18] James H. Stubblebine, *Duccio di Buoninsegna and His School*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1979), 1:89–91, noted the Washington Madonna's affinity with the half-length Madonna in the Detroit Institute of Arts (no. 233), which most art historians have attributed to the Città di Castello Master. He also gave a panel now in the Museum at Buonconvento to his San Quirico Master. Not easily classifiable in stylistic terms, the latter, decidedly Duccesque in composition (to which Victor Schmidt compared the small Madonna no. 873 in the Kunstmuseum of Bern), is distinguished by aristocratically elongated forms and by some peculiar harshness in the definition of the faces. Cf. Victor Schmidt, in *Duccio: Siena fra tradizione bizantina e mondo gotico*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli et al. (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2003), 180. These are characteristics it shares with a vaguely Duccesque Madonna now in the Salini collection in Siena—a work undeniably of far earlier date—published by Gaudenz Freuler (2001) as marking the exordium of the Città di Castello Master. See Gaudenz Freuler, "Duccio et ses contemporains: Le maître de Città di Castello," *Revue de l'art* 134 (2001): figs. 1, 30. As for the Maestà in Monteriggioni cited in note 13 above, Bagnoli rightly compared the richly articulated mantle and dress of the Madonna with Duccio's gravely damaged *Maestà* in Massa Marittima, a painting probably produced by the middle of the second decade. But despite its massive forms, the timidly gothicizing architecture of the throne in the Monteriggioni fresco suggests a significantly later date for the fresco than for the Washington panel. See Alessandro Bagnoli, "I pittori ducceschi," in *Duccio: Siena fra tradizione bizantina e mondo gotico*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli et al. (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2003), 297.

[19] Though they reconstructed the career and oeuvre of the artist in different ways, the recent studies by Freuler and Bagnoli concurred in assigning some key works of the Master of Città di Castello to the first decade of the fourteenth century. These include the namepiece itself, the *Maestà* in the Pinacoteca Comunale in Città di Castello; the dismantled polyptych presumably comprising the figures of saints nos. 29–32 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena; the *Madonna and Child* in the Museo dell'Opera, Siena; and polyptych no. 33, also in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena. These prestigious commissions indicate, of course, that the anonymous master

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was already at this precocious date a well-established artist. See Gaudenz Freuler, "Duccio et ses contemporains: Le maître de Città di Castello," *Revue de l'art* 134 (2001): 27–50; Gaudenz Freuler, "Duccio alle origini della pittura senese," *Kunstchronik* 57 (2004): 576–594; Alessandro Bagnoli, "La cappella funebre del Porrina e del vescovo Ranieri e le sue figurazioni murali," in *Marco Romano e il contesto artistico senese fra la fine del Duecento e gli inizi del Trecento*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2010), 92–111.

[20] Gaudenz Freuler, "Duccio et ses contemporains: Le maître de Città di Castello," *Revue de l'art* 134 (2001): 35–37 and fig. 10. Perhaps rightly, he dated the painting to c. 1300; Alessandro Bagnoli preferred an immediately preceding phase. See Alessandro Bagnoli, in *Duccio: Siena fra tradizione bizantina e mondo gotico*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli et al. (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2003), 315.

[21] Mojmir S. Frinta identified the same penta-lobe rosette punchmark in the Maestà no. 565 in the National Gallery in London and in the Maestà no. 18 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena, both paintings usually attributed to the Casole Master, and in the Maestà in the picture gallery at Città di Castello and numerous other paintings attributed to the Master of Città di Castello. Cf. Mojmir Svatopluk Frinta, *Punched Decoration on Late Medieval Panel and Miniature Painting* (Prague, 1998), 442. Alessandro Bagnoli (2003) admitted the presence of the same punch mark in the two stylistic groups but did not think that this necessarily implied they were the work of a single master: it would prove, he argued, "semmai, l'uso comune dello stesso strumento o l'appartenenza ai due pittori di un utensile identico" (if anything, the common use of the same instrument or the possession by the two painters of an identical tool). However, the circumstance that this punch appears only in these works and not in the paintings of other contemporary masters seems to support the identification between the Casole Master and the Città di Castello Master. See Alessandro Bagnoli, "I pittori ducceschi," in *Duccio: Siena fra tradizione bizantina e mondo gotico*, ed. Alessandro Bagnoli et al. (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2003), 294. Again according to Frinta (1998, 489), the hexa-rosette motif used in the Washington panel recurs in the Madonna no. 583 of the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena and in a Madonna *della Misericordia* from the parish church of Vertine in Chianti, now on loan to the same Pinacoteca. Recent studies have underlined the affinity of these two works and have related them to Simone Martini's formative period; indeed, many scholars now consider the former to be a work of the young Simone himself. The other is a more problematic painting: though some attribute it to Simone, it was probably produced in the shop of Memmo di Filippuccio. Cf. Bagnoli 2003, 422–424; Pierluigi Leone De Castris, *Simone Martini* (Milan, 2003), 344. It is not easy to evaluate with any precision the significance of this data, still less to explain the fact,

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ascertained by Frinta, that the same hexa-rosette punch also appears in the Pietro Cavallini-attributed *Epitaph of Bishop Umbert d'Ormont* now in the collection of the Arcivescovado of Naples.

[22] The Virgin's gesture of draping the body of the infant Jesus, who wears a transparent chemise, in a precious red cloth, is repeated in the fresco in Casole.

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The painting was executed on a panel composed of four boards with vertical grain, on which strips of woven fabric were laid. The panel, which has a gable of obtuse angle shape, is enclosed in an engaged frame whose left-hand vertical section seems to be original. The panel maintains what seems to be its original thickness (2.4 cm). The reverse of the panel is covered with remains of a gesso coating and a sparse layer of red paint. A wooden batten, which is part of the original structure, runs across the reverse of the panel approximately 60 cm from the top. The trace of a second horizontal batten (approximately 90 cm from the bottom) is also visible; the batten itself is lost, but the area formerly covered by it is uncovered by paint or gesso and retains the clipped iron nails with which it was formerly attached. The panel was prepared with a layer of gesso over the fabric.[1] Infrared reflectography at 950–680 nm [2] revealed underdrawing in the figures' hands and feet and a verdaccio under the flesh tones.[3] The paint layers of the obverse, applied over a gesso preparation, appear to be tempera; the gold ground is laid over a red bole preparation.

In the earliest known photograph of the painting [fig. 1], from c. 1930, the panel appeared worm eaten and irregularly broken at the edges, especially on the right side (looking from the obverse).[4] In a subsequent treatment, sawdust was used to plug holes in the wooden support and its various vertical checks. Numerous wooden "butterflies" also were inserted in the boards to bridge the joins and checks. The panel now appears in stable condition, but each of the four boards has a vertical convex warp, and the panel overall has a horizontal convex warp. The panel is badly damaged along the bottom 10 cm: the paint and gesso are almost completely lost from this area. The painted surface has suffered from neglect and ill treatment and has been subjected to restorations on various occasions. There is a large amount of inpaint and overpaint on the painting.[5] The areas that are not heavily overpainted are the Madonna's face, the Christ child's face and torso, and

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the upper left angel's face and hands. The Madonna's robe is reinforced, as are the trim on the angels' robes and the throne cushions. The Christ child's hair and swaddling cloth are heavily restored. The face of the lower right angel is almost entirely restoration, as is the bottom 30 cm of the panel. The angels' wings are completely overpainted. In addition, a thick, yellowed varnish covers the surface.

A very clumsy and apparently early restorer, possibly as early as the fourteenth century, reinforced the design of the faces and the child's drapery; added a flower to his left hand; overpainted the Virgin's coif, transforming it into a veil; and modified the structure of the throne, covering the convex shape of its central part behind the Madonna's legs with a plain checkered surface.[6] The execution of a second series of halos, smaller than the original ones, probably can be traced back to this same intervention. The smaller halos cover only a part of the older ones and have no incised decoration. At some point, perhaps in the early nineteenth century,[7] an arched top was given to the panel with the addition of modern wood; this may have been to fit it in a nichelike recess in the wall of a church. This enlargement is still visible in the abovementioned photograph of about 1930. By 1937 the panel had been treated again, probably by Mauro Pellicioli.[8] It was probably during Pellicioli's treatment that the earlier restorations were removed, revealing the original composition of the halos, throne, faces, and drapery, as well as the original angled shape of the panel. The restorer Vannoni in Florence treated it again, in c. 1952; his work probably addressed the wooden support and possibly the framing.[9] Since then no further conservation work has been done.

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TECHNICAL COMPARATIVE FIGURES

fig. 1 Archival photograph, c. 1928–1930, Master of Città di Castello, *Maestà (Madonna and Child with Four Angels)*, c. 1290, tempera on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

fig. 2 Johann Anton Ramboux, sketch of *Maestà (Madonna and Child with Four Angels)*, here attributed to the Master of Città di Castello, c. 1830–1840, Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt

TECHNICAL NOTES

[1] The NGA scientific research department analyzed the painting using x-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF) and scanning electron microscopy/energy dispersive spectrometry (SEM/EDS) of cross-sections. This analysis determined that the preparation layers are calcium sulfate (see report dated January 19, 2010, in NGA conservation files).

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[2] Infrared reflectography was performed with an infrared hyperspectral camera operating at 960–1680 nm and a Mitsubishi M600 focal plane array camera operating at 1 to 5 microns.

[3] The use of black, yellow, and white pigments in the verdaccio was confirmed by the abovementioned analysis (see report dated January 19, 2010, in NGA conservation files).

[4] The reference is to a photograph made when the panel still belonged to a private collector in San Quirico d'Orcia c. 1930 (see Provenance). A print of the negative, from the Archive of the Soprintendenza of Florence (no. 11273), is in the NGA curatorial files.

[5] The NGA scientific research department analysis showed zinc, indicating areas of restoration, in many spectra and samples (see report dated January 19, 2010, in NGA conservation files).

[6] Some of the retouches illustrated by the photograph referred to above are so rough (especially the drapery of the Christ child and the flower in his hand) as to make one wonder if it is not the work of an amateur realized in a relatively recent period; however, a detail like the checkered front side of the throne would seem to be hardly later than the fourteenth century. In any case the painting is documented in this state by the 1930 photograph and in a sketch (fig. 2) made by Johann Anton Ramboux (1798–1866), whose *Sammlung von Umrissen dienend zur Geschichte der bildenden Künste des Mittelalters in Italien in den Jahren 1818–1822 und 1833–1843 aufgenommen*, consisting of ten volumes of copies and sketches and now in the library of the Städelsches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt am Main, contains a drawing of the Washington painting (vol. 3, fol. 20, no. 507). During his first Italian visit (1818–1822), Ramboux was able to visit Siena and neighboring territories only briefly; therefore, the sketch of the Washington Madonna probably dates to his later visit in the years 1833–1843. Cf. Hans Joachim Ziemke, "Ramboux und die sienesische Kunst," *Städel Jahrbuch* 2 (1969): 255–300.

[7] The arched top of the panel, already in a fragmentary state, is visible in the Soprintendenza photograph (mentioned in note 4 above), as well as in Ramboux's sketch. The unusual doubling of the halos is probably a consequence of the need to regild them and yet to be sparing with the gold.

[8] The painting, in a state still similar to that shown by the photo of c. 1930, appears without the arched top and with a few cleaning tests in the faces of the Virgin and the child, in the hand of the lower right side angel, and in the left side of the throne in a set of photographs probably made by the mid-1930s (copies in NGA curatorial files). In his expertise dated August 30, 1937 (see Entry note 6 and Panzeri 1996), Richard Offner stated that the photo of the picture he had in hand "scopre solamente in parte la superficie originale la quale è . . . ancora molta ridipinta" (only partly reveals the original surface,

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which is still heavily repainted). The same photograph had been sent to Bernard Berenson by Wildenstein's, New York (to whom the panel may have been offered for sale), on November 3, 1937 (copy in the Berenson Library at Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Florence). The restoration is credited to Pellicioli by Panzeri. Photos of the painting during cleaning are in the Giannino Marchig collection of the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles (ND 614, box 933, photos 114497–114500).

[9] See Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:173. The person in question was in all probability Ferruccio Vannoni, a frame maker who worked for Stephen Pichetto. See Gianni Mazzoni, *Quadri antichi del Novecento* (Vicenza, 2001), 21, 40 note 20 and passim.

PROVENANCE

Possibly the church of San Francesco in San Quirico d'Orcia (Siena).[1] Pompeo Lemmi (or Lammi?), San Quirico d'Orcia; Giacobbe Preziotti, San Quirico d'Orcia, by c. 1930;[2] (Italian art market);[3] Baron Alberto Fassini, Tivoli; Corinna Uberti Trossi, Livorno, by 1949; (Ettore Sestieri, Rome), by 1951;[4] (Count Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi, Florence), by 1953;[5] sold 1954 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York;[6] gift 1961 to NGA. [1] The panel's original provenance is uncertain. It was recorded by Johann Anton Ramboux (1798-1866) in the first half of the nineteenth century, whose *Sammlung von Umrissen dienend zur Geschichte der bildenden Künste des Mittelalters in Italien in den Jahren 1818-1822 und 1833-1843 aufgenommen*, consisting of ten volumes of copies and sketches and now in the library of the Städelsches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt am Main, contains the drawing (vol. 3, fol. 20, no. 507) of the Washington painting. During his first Italian visit (1818–1822) Ramboux was able to visit Siena and neighboring territories only briefly; therefore, the sketch of the NGA painting probably dates to his later visit in the years 1833–1843 (see Hans Joachim Ziemke, "Rambiux und die sienesische Kunst," *Städel Jahrbuch* N.S. 2 [1969]: 255-300). Ramboux notes the painting as present in a cloister of the principal church of San Quirico ("Tafel . . . welche sich in einem Kreuzgang der Hauptkirche zu S. Quirico befindet"), probably referring to the Collegiata. This church, however, never had a cloister (see A. Canestrelli, "La Pieve di S. Quirico in Osenna," *Siena monumentale* 1 [1906]: 5-21). On the other hand, in the early decades of the twentieth century the panel was considered to have come from San Francesco in San Quirico d'Orcia, a church situated in the center of town and originally provided with such a structure. The Franciscans are

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known to have established a community at an early date in San Quirico; their presence there is recorded ever since the thirteenth century (Luigi Pellegrini, *Insediamenti francescani nell'Italia del Duecento*, Rome, 1984: 179). Their convent was suppressed in 1783 (Laura Martini, "Le vicende costruttive della chiesa di San Francesco," in *San Quirico d'Orcia. La Madonna di Vitaleta: arte e devozione*, San Quirico d'Orcia [Siena], 1997: 19). The panel may then have been transferred to the Collegiata, or to some other site, but in fact, we have no further information about it until c. 1930. Describing the works of art contained in the church of San Francesco in 1865, Francesco Brogi (*Inventario generale degli oggetti d'arte della provincia di Siena*, Siena, 1897) fails to cite the Gallery's painting, nor is it included in the list relating to the church of the Collegiata of San Quirico that he himself drew up. Evidently by that time the panel had been removed from the church and was either in private hands or in some small oratory; because it was the property not of the church but of a lay confraternity, its owners could have moved it from its former location. The arrival of the painting in (or its restitution to) San Francesco is conceivable after 1865, when the bishop of Montalcino entrusted the church to the Pia Commissione di Santa Maria di Vitaleta to undertake the necessary work of restoration and refurbishment of the building, later renamed Santa Maria di Vitaleta. This same commission later brought a suit against the possessors of the painting in 1930, claiming its restitution. The panel, therefore, which does not figure among the sacred furnishings entrusted by the Curia of Montalcino to the Pia Commissione at the time of the transfer of the church (in 1865), could have been reinstated to it only some time later and could have remained there for a number of years, sufficiently long enough for the inhabitants of the town to remember it (see Martini 1997). [2] The "tavola preduccesca" cited in the documentation in the archive of the Soprintendenza of Siena is described as "presso il Sig. Lemmi"; Fern Rusk Shapley (*Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols., Washington, D.C., 1979: 1:173) speaks of Pompeo Lammi. In the suit brought to claim property rights over the painting, however, the owner of the painting is named as Giacobbe Preziotti (Martini 1997, 19 n. 6). [3] In November 1936, again according to the information gleaned by Laura Martini, the Ministry for National Education notified the Soprintendenza that property rights had been confirmed to belong to the private citizens who then owned the painting, and its export authorized. Probably following this decision, the restoration of the panel began and the painting was offered for sale on the Italian art market. [4] Shapley 1979, 1:173 places the panel in the Fassini collection and with the dealer Ettore Sestieri. A catalogue of the collection, then only recently formed, of barone Alberto Fassini exists, published without a date in

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the early 1930s, but it does not include this painting among those distributed among his various houses. Gertrude Coor Achenbach ("The early nineteenth-century aspect of a dispersed polyptych by the Badia a Isola Master," *The Art Bulletin* 42 [1960]: 143), who places the painting "shortly after World War II in a private collection near Tivoli," refers, probably, to that of Alberto Fassini. Elisa de Giorgi *(L'eredità Contini Bonaccossi*, Milan, 1988: 197) reports the presence of the painting in the Uberti Trossi collection. [5] The date of the painting's purchase by Contini-Bonacossi is unknown, but it must have been in his possession by 1953, when he proposed, with some insistence, to sell it to the Kress Collection (see De Giorgi 1988). [6] On 7 June 1954, the Kress Foundation made an offer to Contini-Bonacossi for sixteen paintings, including NGA 1961.9.77, which was listed as *Madonna and Child and Four Angels* by Master of Badia a Isola. In a draft of one of the documents prepared for the count's signature in connection with the offer, this painting is described as one "which came from my personal collection in Florence." Contini-Bonacossi accepted the offer on 30 June 1954; the final payment for the purchase was ultimately made in early 1957, after his death in 1955. (See copies of correspondence in NGA curatorial files.) The painting was not given to the NGA until 1961, and in a letter to Evelyn Sandberg Vavalà of 1 August 1960 (copy in NGA curatorial files), Fern Rusk Shapley continues to express doubts about it, wondering whether the *Maestà* was "good enough to warrant our making an effort . . . to get it for the National Gallery."

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To cite: Miklós Boskovits (1935–2011), "Master of Città di Castello/*Maesta (Madonna and Child with Four Angels)*/c. 1290," *Italian Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Paintings*, NGA Online Editions, http://purl.org/nga/collection/artobject/46176 (accessed April 02, 2016).

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