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

Puccio di Simone
Florentine, active c. 1330 - 1360
Allegretto Nuzi
Umbrian, active from c. 1340; died 1373

Madonna and Child Enthroned with Four Saints and Eighteen Angels [middle panel]

1354

tempera on panel
painted surface: 108 x 57.8 cm (42 1/2 x 22 3/4 in.)
overall (with cradle): 108.5 × 59.5 × 3.2 cm (42 11/16 × 23 7/16 × 1 1/4 in.)
framed: 150.5 x 66.7 x 8.3 cm (59 1/4 x 26 1/4 x 3 1/4 in.)
Inscription: on the Madonna's halo: .S[AN]C[T]A.MARIA.MATER.DEI.; on the Child's halo: IIS . XRO . M;[1] along the base: [MCCC]LIIII.QUESTA TA[VOLA HA F]ATTA F[A]RE. FRATE GIOVANNI DA [...] (1354, this picture was commissioned by Fra Giovanni)
Andrew W. Mellon Collection 1937.1.6.b

ENTRY

The triptych comprised of this panel, *Saint Anthony Abbot [left panel]*, and *Saint Venantius [right panel]* is in some respects unusual, even unique, in fourteenth-century painting in central Italy. First, it is unusual for an altarpiece of this kind to be characterized by such a disparity both in the distribution and in the proportions of the figures: numerous and small in the center, large in the laterals—even larger in scale than the Madonna enthroned in the main panel. Second, another very rare feature is that one of the saints, Anthony Abbot, appears twice, once in the central panel and again in the left lateral.[1] Third, and uniquely, a practically identical

version (only slightly larger in size) exists in the Duomo of Macerata, though with a provenance from the church of Sant'Antonio Abate in that town.[2] It is dated 1369, and the fact that, at an interval of fifteen years, both triptychs were commissioned and their iconographic program established by a member of the Antonine order named Giovanni (Johannes) makes it likely that both were executed for the same patron.[3]

The composition at the center, with tiered angels and saints flanking the enthroned Madonna, was probably based on a model developed in a portable triptych from the shop of Bernardo Daddi (active by 1320, died probably 1348) or perhaps by the hand of Puccio di Simone (Florentine, active c. 1330 - 1360) himself.[4] Mary holds in her arms the naked child, who is draped from the hips downward in a precious gold-embroidered cloth [fig. 1]. With an apparently playful gesture, she points her index finger at him.[5] The Christ child is wearing a necklace with a small branch of coral as a pendant.[6] With his left hand he grasps a small bird,[7] while with the other hand he holds onto the hem of his mother's mantle. The Madonna and child are flanked on either side by nine angels, probably alluding to the nine choirs of angels.[8] The raised throne is approached by two steps, flanked in the foreground by four saints. To the left we see Saint Catherine of Alexandria (unusually wearing the imperial crown and with a palm branch in her right hand, while her other hand is supported on the toothed wheel, instrument of her martyrdom) [9] and Saint Benedict.[10] On the other side, closest to the throne, is Saint Anthony Abbot, patron saint of the Order of Hospitallers of Saint Anthony, better known as the Antonines, dressed in the dark brown tunic and beige mantle of his order. The saint supports himself on the T-shaped handle of his staff, while at his feet a small black pig, his usual attribute, can be glimpsed.[11] The female saint standing next to him can be recognized as Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, another exemplary figure of Christian charity, who gathers up her dress in front to support a posy of brightly colored flowers.[12] Above the Madonna, Christ Crucified appears in the quatrefoil medallion of the gable.[13] In the left lateral, Saint Anthony Abbot appears once again. He is accompanied by his usual attributes. Directing his gaze at the Virgin and Child, he raises his left hand in a gesture of homage and service,[14] while with his other hand he holds the T-shaped staff. The half-figure Angel of the Annunciation appears in the trefoil medallion in the gable above his head. In the right lateral the martyr Saint Venantius is represented as a young knight dressed in a precious gold-embroidered brocaded tunic.[15] He supports a standard in his right hand. The half-figure of the Virgin Annunciate appears in the trefoil medallion above his head.

It is not known at whose suggestion this triptych, on its appearance in a London sale catalog of July 25, 1916, was cited as “A Triptych…attributed to Allegretto Nuzi da Fabriano.” Presumably, Bernard Berenson had occasion to see it before the sale and to connect it with the catalog of works he had begun to assemble under the name of this Marchigian master some years earlier.[16] It cannot be excluded, however, that the painting entered the Russell collection already with this attribution in the course of the nineteenth century, given its provenance from a church (and then from a collection) in Allegretto’s hometown. In fact, even if the original provenance of the altarpiece from the church of Sant’Antonio Abate in Fabriano is undocumented, it can be regarded as virtually certain. It is suggested first and foremost by the double presence of the patron saint of the Antonine order, and also by the circumstance that another work by Allegretto, dating to the year before the triptych discussed here, is also known to have a provenance from the church of Sant’Antonio fuori Porta Pisana.[17] In any case, the attribution of the triptych to Allegretto was supported with complete conviction by Berenson (1922, 1930), followed by Osvald Sirén (1924), Luigi Serra (1925, 1927–1928, 1929), Bruno Molajoli (1928), Roger Fry (1931), Lionello Venturi (1931, 1933), Umberto Gnoli (1935), Luigi Coletti (1946), Ugo Galetti and Ettore Camesasca (1951), and Pietro Toesca (1951). Robert Lehman (1928), on the other hand, accepted the attribution with some reservations.[18]

The doubts can be traced back to Raimond van Marle, who in 1924 detected in the triptych the presence of elements of Daddesque culture that he found incompatible with the attribution to Allegretto.[19] Richard Offner (1927), Helen Comstock (1928), and Mario Salmi (1930) endorsed van Marle’s doubts.[20] Some years later, Offner recognized that the work is the result of two hands: that of Allegretto, who painted only the left lateral, and that of an anonymous Florentine follower of Daddi whom Offner dubbed the “Master of the Fabriano Altarpiece” and who, he argued, was responsible for the rest of the altarpiece. These conclusions, reported for the first time in the catalog of the National Gallery of Art (NGA 1941) and then explained in detail by Offner himself (1947), were gradually accepted in all the more recent literature on the painting.[21] After more than a decade, Roberto Longhi (1959) succeeded in identifying the anonymous Florentine painter with Puccio di Simone.[22] Offner did not accept the proposal,[23] and the name of the Master of the Fabriano Altarpiece continued to survive for several years in the art historical literature. Since the mid-1970s, however, the triptych in the National Gallery of Art has been generally, and correctly, recognized as the joint work of

Puccio (central and right panels) and Allegretto (left panel).

The execution of an altarpiece by two different artists can hardly have been a rarity in the practice of fourteenth-century painters: one of the most famous examples of such a collaboration is that of Simone Martini (Sienese, active from 1315; died 1344) and Lippo Memmi (Sienese, active 1317/1347) in the triptych dated 1333 now in the Uffizi, Florence, signed by both artists.[24] What is more rare is the execution of a painting by two unrelated painters of different origin and formation, such as Puccio from Florence and Allegretto from Fabriano. They could have gotten to know each other during Allegretto's documented residence in Florence in 1346, but the style of the earlier works by this painter suggests that while in Florence he probably frequented the shops of Maso di Banco and the young Orcagna (Andrea di Cione) and not that of Bernardo Daddi, who was the mentor of Puccio in those years.[25] It is probable that the Marchigian artist remained in contact with the Florentine scene also around 1350, when perhaps he returned to work there after the devastating outbreak of the Black Death in 1348. Nor can it be excluded that it might have been at the request of the Antonine canons of Fabriano, and not by personal choice, that he sought the collaboration of a Florentine painter for the works that the order had commissioned from him in his hometown.[26]

Though its style and other data suggest that Puccio should be given credit for the overall planning of the triptych, the parts executed by the two masters can be clearly distinguished. The ornamentation of the two lateral panels—a decorative frieze delimiting the gold ground; a series of miniature lunettes around the arches, within each of which an elegant foliated motif is inserted;[27] and the decoration of the carpet that covers the floor—is identical and repeats types of decoration found in other, presumably earlier works by Puccio di Simone.[28] The central panel proposes a composition of tiered angels and saints flanking the Madonna that is unusual in paintings on a monumental scale but recurs in Puccio's smaller panels clearly destined for private devotion. The severe and solemn figure of Saint Anthony Abbot in the left lateral [fig. 2], seen in half-profile while he raises his left hand with a nonchalant gesture of *locutio*, forms part of the figurative repertoire of Puccio di Simone.[29] Yet the hermit saint seems more noble in feature and more youthful in appearance than similar figures painted by Puccio, while his unwrinkled face and the fixed gaze of his almond eyes immediately betray the identity of the master who painted him: Allegretto. Allegretto, in fact, would repeat the image of the saint in a very similar way in later works, such as the lateral of a triptych in the Pinacoteca Civica in Fabriano.[30]

A very different humanity is evident in the image of Saint Venantius [fig. 3], a somewhat effeminate youth with a soft complexion, snub nose, and sharp little eyes, whose long blond locks fall over the shoulders of his sumptuous court dress.[31] With a slight smile playing on his thin lips, he complacently surveys the saints gathered around the Virgin's throne; they too have personalities, each with individual features: etiolated and reserved female saints, their gestures expressing timidity; self-assured monks with thick, silky beards and minutely described and shadowed faces; and angels who move and dart glances with the alert grace of college girls, completely filling the available space on both sides of the throne. The naturalistic tendency that distinguishes Puccio's style in this phase has sometimes been related to the presence in Florence of another great non-Florentine painter, Giovanni da Milano,[32] but more likely it depends rather on other artistic developments that began to appear in Florence even earlier than the midcentury. I refer in particular to the activity, undoubtedly important (even if still difficult to quantify), of Stefano di Ricco [33] and of the Master of San Lucchese,[34] pioneers of that minute vision to which Puccio would accede after the death of Bernardo Daddi and that would characterize his output during the last decade of his life.[35] The panel now in the Pinacoteca of Fabriano and the triptych discussed here testify that in the years c. 1353–1354 Puccio had resolutely embarked on the path of pictorial realism. He is to be considered not a follower of Giovanni da Milano or of Giottino but their fellow traveler, or even perhaps their predecessor.

Miklós Boskovits (1935–2011)

March 21, 2016

COMPARATIVE FIGURES

fig. 1 Detail of Madonna and Child (central panel), Puccio di Simone and Allegretto Nuzi, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints and Angels*, 1354, tempera on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Collection

fig. 2 Detail of Saint Anthony (left panel), Puccio di Simone and Allegretto Nuzi, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints and Angels*, 1354, tempera on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Collection

fig. 3 Detail of Saint Venantius (right panel), Puccio di Simone and Allegretto Nuzi, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints and Angels*, 1354, tempera on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Collection

NOTES

[1] It seems possible, however, as Shapley pointed out, that the triptych originally had a rather different iconographic program. “The cut running

round the saint through the gold background," wrote Shapley with regard to the left lateral with Saint Anthony, "may indicate that Nuzi replaced a damaged or unfinished figure." Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:384. Another theory is that the "cut" is the incised line for a different figure, but the plan for that figure was abandoned before it was painted and the figure of Saint Anthony was painted instead. Technical examination with x-radiographs and infrared reflectography cannot conclusively determine whether what Shapley referred to as a "cut" is deliberate or might actually be just a somewhat anomalous crack around the figure of Saint Anthony, which could have occurred during the thinning or possible transfer of the panel. If that is the case, then this figure is not a replacement.

[2] Alberto Rossi, in *Pittura del Marceratese dal Duecento al tardo gotico* (Macerata, 1971), 62–64, gives the measurements of the panel as 152 × 177 cm. The triptych in Macerata bears the inscription ISTAM/TABULAM FECIT FIERI FRA/TER IOHANNES CLERICUS PRECEPTOR/TOLENTINI: ALEGRITTUS DE FABRIANO ME PINXIT [. . .] MCCCLXVIIII. See Luigi Serra, *L'arte nelle Marche*, vol. 1, *Dalle origini cristiane alla fine del gotico* (Pesaro, 1929), 287, 296. That painting, which Ricci recorded as having come to the cathedral from the church of Sant'Antonio Abate in Macerata, therefore had been commissioned by another community of the Antonine order and then transferred to its present site following the suppression of the religious orders in the Napoleonic period. Amico Ricci, *Memorie storiche delle arti e degli artisti della Marca di Ancona*, 2 vols. (Macerata, 1834), 1:89–90.

[3] Luigi Serra, *L'arte nelle Marche*, vol. 1, *Dalle origini cristiane alla fine del gotico* (Pesaro, 1929), 287, conjectured that the same person had commissioned both this altarpiece and its prototype, now in Washington. The various houses of the order were called preceptories, so it may be surmised that, at least in 1369, Johannes clericus—the donor cited in the inscription—was the superior of the house of the Antonine order in Tolentino and, perhaps, the promoter of its daughterhouse in Macerata. For the term preceptor, cf. Charles du Fresne Du Cange, *Glossarium mediæ et infimæ latinitatis*, 10 vols. (Niort, 1883–1887), 6:451.

[4] 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), 394 n. 1, already observed that "the grouping of the attendant figures in tiers on either side of the Virgin has been handed down by Bernardo Daddi" in works such as *Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels*. He also drew attention to the anomaly of the portrayal of the Madonna in a smaller scale than the saints in the laterals. This was probably a solution imposed by the need to follow a model specified by the donor, perhaps a

painting similar to Daddi's aforementioned work or a similar composition by Puccio himself. On the works of this type produced in the shops of Bernardo Daddi (active by 1320, died probably 1348) and Puccio di Simone, cf. Offner 2001, 404 n. 2; on the relevant iconography, see Barbara Bruderer Eichberg, *Les neufs choeurs angéliques: Origine et évolution du thème dans l'art du Moyen âge* (Poitiers, 1998), 62–67.

[5] Dorothy C. Shorr (1954) stated, "This action conceals some peculiar significance and may possibly refer to the sacrificial aspect of the Lamb of God" (cf. Jn 1:29; Rev 5:6). On the other hand, as Offner (2001) notes, in Puccio's earlier paintings "the Virgin is almost always engaged in play with the Child.... The painter studiously endows the Child with artlessness and the Mother with appropriate happiness untouched by the shadow of prophecy." See Dorothy C. Shorr, *The Christ Child in Devotional Images in Italy during the XIV Century* (New York, 1954), 168; 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), 340.

[6] This iconographic detail reflects a widespread practice in the Middle Ages, when small necklaces with miniature branches of coral as pendants frequently were given to children to wear to protect them from harm, thanks to the apotropaic power attributed to coral. See Wolfgang Brückner, "Koralle," in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum and Günter Bandmann, 8 vols. (Rome, 1970), 2:556.

[7] Small birds, mainly fastened to a cord, were widely used as children's toys in the Middle Ages. But symbolic significances were also attributed to them, with reference to the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Christ. Cf. Herbert Friedmann, *The Symbolic Goldfinch: Its History and Significance in European Devotional Art* (Washington, DC, 1946).

[8] See Barbara Bruderer Eichberg, *Les neufs choeurs angéliques: Origine et évolution du thème dans l'art du Moyen âge* (Poitiers, 1998), 62–67.

[9] For the iconography, see George Kaftal, *Saints in Italian Art*, vol. 1, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence, 1952), 225–234. The peculiar form of her crown, conical with pointed termination, corresponds to that introduced by Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII and appears with some frequency in the central decades of the fourteenth century not only in representations of emperors but also in scenes of the Coronation of the Virgin—for example, in Puccio di Simone's version of the theme in a panel in the Musée de Valence in Valence; see 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), 404–408. On the historical circumstances surrounding the realization of this

form of crown, cf. Percy Ernst Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte vom dritten bis zum sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1954–1956), 3:1015–1019.

[10] For the iconography of Saint Benedict, cf. George Kaftal, *Saints in Italian Art*, vol. 1, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence, 1952), 145–174. The presence of the saint, founder of Western monasticism, in the place of honor, at the right-hand side of Mary and her son, is probably motivated by the fact that the motherhouse of the Antonine order, St. Antoine-en-Viennois, was originally a Benedictine abbey.

[11] See Laurence Meiffret, *Saint Antoine ermite en Italie (1340–1540): Programmes picturaux et dévotion* (Rome, 2004). The cult of the fourth-century hermit saint was especially spread in Italy through the hospitals run by the Antonines after the lay confraternity established at La-Motteaux-Bois was transformed into a religious order. La-Motteaux-Bois was the site of the Benedictine abbey, later called St. Antoine-en-Viennois, where the relics of Saint Anthony had been transferred in the eleventh century. The inscription above the saint's halo also alludes to the French origin of the order.

[12] Saint Elizabeth, the founder of a hospital, was especially venerated in the Middle Ages for her charitable activities; cf. *Sankt Elisabeth: Fürstin, Dienerin, Heilige* (Sigmaringen, 1981), 101–116 and passim. For her iconography, see George Kaftal, *Saints in Italian Art*, vol. 1, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence, 1952), 337–343.

[13] On the unusual motif of the isolated figure of the crucified Christ in the gable medallion of an altarpiece, which recurs in some works of Allegretto Nuzi and also in Florentine paintings of the second half of the fourteenth century, see 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), 394 n. 3.

[14] See François Garnier, *Le langage de l'image au Moyen Age*, vol. 1, *Signification et symbolique* (Paris, 1982), 174.

[15] On Saint Venantius, martyred under the persecutions of Decius, see C. Boccanera, "Venanzio da Camerino," in *Bibliotheca sanctorum*, 12 vols. (Rome, 1969), 12:969–978. The saint, patron of the city of Camerino in the Marche, was also the titular saint of the Collegiata (cathedral since 1728) of Fabriano.

[16] See Bernard Berenson, *The Central Italian Painters of the Renaissance*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1909), 131–132.

[17] I refer to the panel of Saint Anthony Abbot with a group of devotees mentioned in Provenance note 1 above. The painting, dated 1353, was first attributed to Allegretto Nuzi by Ricci in 1834. Although Offner in 1927

excluded it from the catalog of the Marchigian painter, it continued to be attributed to him for many years to come, as was the triptych in the National Gallery of Art. Ricci's description does not perfectly coincide with the work now displayed in the Pinacoteca of Fabriano, probably because he wrote from memory without checking the characteristics of the image against the painting. In any case, the date 1353 that Ricci read in the painting makes it virtually certain that it is the same painting. The triptych in the Gallery and the panel in Fabriano are the only paintings certainly produced by Puccio outside Tuscany. A period of activity in Perugia has also been surmised, however; Puccio could have stopped there during his journey to or from Fabriano. Cf. 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), 378 and n. 2, and a non-Florentine (Umbrian or Marchigian) destination cannot be excluded also for Puccio's triptych now in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Offner 2001, 18 and n. 43).

[18] Bernard Berenson, "Prime opere di Allegretto Nuzi," *Bollettino d'arte* (1922): 296–309; Bernard Berenson, *Studies in Medieval Painting*(New Haven, 1930), 63–73; Osvald Sirén, "Three Early Florentine Trecento Pictures," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 45 (1924): 285; Luigi Serra, *Le gallerie comunali delle Marche* (Rome, 1925), 132; Luigi Serra, "L'arte nelle Marche: La pittura gotica; La scuola fabrianese," *Rassegna marchigiana* 6 (1927–1928): 128, 130, 136, 138, 146; Luigi Serra, *L'arte nelle Marche*, vol. 1, *Dalle origini cristiane alla fine del gotico* (Pesaro, 1929), 280–281, 286–288, 293; Bruno Molajoli, "La scuola pittorica fabrianese," *Gentile da Fabriano: Bollettino mensile per la quinta commemorazione centenaria a cura della Società Fabrianese per la Tutela del Patrimonio Artistico ed Archeologico* 1 (1928): 16; Roger Fry, "Mr Berenson on Medieval Painting," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 58, no. 338 (1931): 245; Lionello Venturi, *Pitture italiane in America* (Milan, 1931), no. 87; Lionello Venturi, *Italian Paintings in America*, trans. Countess Vanden Heuvel and Charles Marriott, 3 vols. (New York and Milan, 1933), 1: no. 107; Umberto Gnoli, "Nuzi, Allegretto," in *Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti*, ed. Istituto Giovanni Treccani, 36 vols. (Milan, 1935), 25:86; Luigi Coletti, *I Primitivi*, vol. 2, *I senesi e i giotteschi* (Novara, 1946), xlix; Ugo Galetti and Ettore Camesasca, *Enciclopedia della pittura italiana*, 3 vols. (Milan, 1951), 3:1779; Pietro Toesca, *Il Trecento. Storia dell'arte classica e italiana* 3; *Storia dell'arte italiana* 2 (Turin, 1951), 677; Robert Lehman, *The Philip Lehman Collection, New York* (Paris, 1928), no. 67.

[19] Raimond van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*, vol. 3, *The Florentine School of the 14th Century* (The Hague, 1924), 395.

[20] Richard Offner, *Studies in Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century* (New York, 1927), 143; Helen Comstock, "The Bernardo Daddis in the United

States," *International Studio* 38 (1928): 94; Mario Salmi, "Review of L'arte nelle Marche dalle origini cristiane alla fine del Gotico by Luigi Serra," *Rivista d'arte* 12 (1930): 303, 308.

[21] National Gallery of Art, *Preliminary Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture* (Washington, DC, 1941), 128, 142; Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 5, *Bernardo Daddi and His Circle* (New York, 1947), 182–184.

[22] Roberto Longhi, "Qualità e industria in Taddeo Gaddi ed altri," *Paragone* 10, no. 111 (1959): 9–10.

[23] In the foreword to the volume in which he discussed Puccio's oeuvre, Richard Offner reprimanded the error of some art historians who proposed to link polyptych no. 8569 in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence (signed by Puccius Simonis) "with a group of paintings like those of the Fabriano Master, " adding, "Affinities between the Fabriano Master and Puccio must be admitted to exist as between two painters from a common stock, but it becomes the less likely that they are the same person as their paintings... would...have to show greater analogies of style than actually appear." Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 8, *Workshop of Bernardo Daddi* (New York, 1958), i–ii. Offner's doubts probably can be explained by the circumstance that the central panel of the altarpiece in question was illegible until a few years ago as a result of a maladroit repainting, from which only the recent restoration has freed it. See Angelo Tartuferi with Roberto Buda and Rosella Lari, in *Da Puccio di Simone a Giottino: Restauri e conferme*, ed. Angelo Tartuferi and Daniella Parenti (Florence, 2005), 42–45.

[24] Though signed by both artists, the work has been very differently assessed in the art historical literature; cf. in this regard the papers in the volume *Simone Martini e l'Annunciazione degli Uffizi*, ed. A. Cecchi (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2001), which tend to circumscribe Lippo's role in the execution of the triptych; and the more recent article by Andrea De Marchi, "La parte di Simone e la parte di Lippo," *Nuovi studi* 11 (2006): 5–24, which considers the execution divided substantially into two equal parts.

[25] In attempting for the first time to reconstruct the career of his Master of the Fabriano Altarpiece, Richard Offner conjectured "that he was born around 1320...[and] he learned his craft under the spell of Daddi, which served...to mold his artistic personality, in the mid-thirties of the century;...he persisted in this state for about ten years...[and] for some years thereafter his native talents seem...to blossom into full flower...about the time of Daddi's reputed death in 1348." 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), 347–348. Recent reflection on the question,

summarized in my essay in the above-cited volume of Offner (2001, 17–21), suggests to me the probability that during the 1330s, Puccio could have spent some time in Giotto's shop, entering Daddi's only after the death of the great master.

[26] The church of Sant'Antonio Abate in Florence was built and successively enlarged in the course of the fourteenth century and frescoed, according to Vasari, by a painter he called Lippo (perhaps Lippo di Benivieni?) and by Buonamico Buffalmacco. Cf. Giuseppe Richa, *Notizie istoriche delle chiese fiorentine divise ne' suoi quartieri*, 10 vols. (Florence, 1754–1762), 4:1–10; and Giorgio Vasari, "I Ragionamenti," in *Le vite dei più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, 9 vols. (Florence, 1882), 8:105–106. By the sixteenth century it already had been demolished. It must have been a complex of imposing dimensions and striking decoration, and it cannot be excluded that other later Antonine communities, such as that of Fabriano, considered it a model to be imitated. The association of Allegretto with Puccio surely was not formed merely to paint the triptych now in Washington. As we have seen (Provenance note 2), Luigi Lanzi recorded frescoes signed by Allegretto still surviving in the cloister adjoining the church in Fabriano, and it does not seem to go too far to assume that Allegretto, before frescoing the cloister, might also have frescoed the interior of the church.

[27] A small but significant difference between the two laterals should be pointed out, suggesting a change or reconsideration in iconographic program. Although, as Erling S. Skaug (1994) rightly pointed out, "the left wing of the Washington triptych…displays none of Nuzi's punch marks, the execution of the lettered halo to the left…is clearly different from Puccio's manner: the outline of each letter is stippled (with a single point punch), whereas Puccio's letters consistently retain their incised outlines, and the granulation…is confined to the ground. The halo may have been executed by Nuzi." 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), 1:141. The presence of a different system of punch decoration in Saint Anthony's halo, along with the technical anomalies noted in the figure of the saint (see note 1 above), suggest that this aspect of the left panel may have been modified in course of the altarpiece's realization.

[28] In various panels by Puccio di Simone, the molding of the upper arch is embellished on the inside with a corbel frieze, the lunette-shaped interspaces decorated with a foliate motif incised in the gold ground, just as in the Washington triptych. We may cite *Coronation of the Virgin* no. 16 in the Lindenau-Museum in Altenburg; the triptych formed by the *Coronation of the Virgin* in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Ghent (no. 1903–A) and the two panels of saints in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin (no. III.20); or the other

version of the Coronation of the Virgin, in the Musée du Petit Palais in Avignon (no. M.I. 414), all datable to the 1340s. The ornamental motif of the carpet on which the saints are standing in the lateral panels recurs, as noted by Brigitte Klesse, *Seidenstoffe in der italienischen Malerei des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Bern, 1967), 219, 220, in such works by Puccio di Simone as the former Lehman Madonna now in the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena and the former Dijon triptych now in the Musée du Petit Palais in Avignon (no. 20155).

[29] The saint is portrayed by Puccio in an identical pose in the Petrognano polyptych now in the Museo di Arte Sacra at Certaldo and, in reverse, in the small triptych formerly in the collection of Carlo De Carlo in Florence; see 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), 476–482, 595–596.

[30] Allegretto painted the figure of Saint Anthony Abbot with the same pose and facial features as in the Washington triptych not only in the Macerata triptych but also in a panel in the Pinacoteca of Fabriano. The latter presents Saint Anthony Abbot and Saint John the Evangelist and, together with another lateral of the same triptych, depicting the Baptist and Saint Venantius, comes from the abbey of Santa Maria d'Appennino. Cf. Fabio Marcelli, *Pinacoteca Civica "Bruno Molajoli"* (Fano, 1997), 60.

[31] The saint's brocaded tunic, embroidered with motifs of flowers, birds, and tortoises, is one of the most lavishly decorated and complex fabrics to be found in paintings executed in the mid-fourteenth century. It is displayed almost ostentatiously by the young Saint Venantius, who throws one side of his mantle behind his right shoulder seemingly with no other purpose than to display his sumptuous dress. The same lavishly brocaded tunic, similarly exhibited, is seen not only in the copy of the Washington triptych now in Macerata but also in the image of Saint Venantius in the triptych cited in the previous note, now in the Pinacoteca Civica of Fabriano, and in various other works. The material, of which the public in Fabriano was clearly fond, also appears in the painted mantle of a statue of the Madonna and Child with a provenance from a church in the environs of Fabriano and now in a private collection in Perugia. Cf. Enrica Neri Lusanna, in *L'eredità di Giotto: Arte a Firenze 1340–1375*, ed. Angelo Tartuferi (Florence, 2008), 132. The fabric in question should be understood as Florentine in origin. Brigitte Klesse, *Seidenstoffe in der italienischen Malerei des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Bern, 1967), 140–142, pointed out that it appears, with variants, in various paintings produced in the shop of Andrea Orcagna.

[32] It is Roberto Longhi who proposed that the naturalistic approach exemplified by the figures in the Gallery triptych reflects models disseminated by Giovanni da Milano during his activity in Florence. Roberto

Longhi, "Qualità e industria in Taddeo Gaddi ed altri,"*Paragone* 10, no. 111 (1959): 9–10; Roberto Longhi, "Una 'riconsiderazione' dei primitivi italiani a Londra," *Paragone* 16 (1965): 13. The proposal has been repeated in various more recent contributions: Carlo Volpe, "Il lungo percorso del 'dipingere dolcissimo e tanto unito,'" in *Storia dell'arte italiana*, vol. 2, *Dal Medioevo al Novecento*, pt. 1, *Dal Medioevo al Quattrocento*, ed. Federico Zeri, Giulio Bollati, and Paolo Fossati (Turin, 1983), 281 n. 30, 299; Silvia Giorgi, in *Galleria Nazionale di Parma*, vol. 1, *Catalogo delle opere dall'antico al Cinquecento*, ed. Lucia Fornari Schianchi (Milan, 1997), 47.

[33] The Florentine painter Stefano, whose name is cited without patronymic but with great admiration by Trecento sources, is probably to be identified with Stefano di Ricco di Lapo, son-in-law of Giotto and father of the painter Giottino. Cf. Brendan Cassidy, "Stefano Fiorentino," in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, 34 vols. (New York, 1996), 29:598–599; Giovanna Ragionieri, "Stefano Fiorentino," in *La pittura in Europa: Il dizionario dei pittori*, ed. Carlo Pirovano, 3 vols. (Milan, 2002), 3:867–868. Reconstructions, in part divergent, of Stefano's oeuvre have been proposed by Luciano Bellosi, "Giottino e la pittura di filiazione giottesca intorno alla metà del Trecento," *Prospettiva* 101 (2001): 19–40; and the present writer, Miklós Boskovits, "Ancora su Stefano fiorentino (e su qualche fatto pittorico di Firenze verso la metà del Trecento)," *Arte cristiana* 91 (2003): 173–180. How closely linked Puccio's painting is with the reformed, gothicizing "Giottism" of the mid-fourteenth century is shown by the fact that Bellosi (2001, 31–33) attributed to Stefano, though with extreme caution, the great painted cross in the church of San Marco in Florence, which others consider executed by Puccio. Cf. 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), 1:137–138; Mojmir Svatopluk Frinta, *Punched Decoration on Late Medieval Panel and Miniature Painting* (Prague, 1998), 427; and Miklós Boskovits, in 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), 17–21.

[34] On the still inadequately defined personality of the Master of San Lucchese, cf. Miklós Boskovits, in *Giotto: Bilancio critico di sessant'anni di studi e ricerche*, ed. Angelo Tartuferi (Florence, 2000), 208–211; Miklós Boskovits, "Ancora su Stefano fiorentino (e su qualche fatto pittorico di Firenze verso la metà del Trecento)," *Arte cristiana* 91 (2003): 175–177; Luciano Bellosi, "Giottino e la pittura di filiazione giottesca intorno alla metà del Trecento," *Prospettiva* 101 (2001): 34–37.

[35] For the chronology of Puccio's oeuvre since the mid-fourteenth century, I refer the reader to my own proposals: Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and*

Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century, sec. 3, vol. 9, *The Miniaturist Tendency* (Florence, 1984), 74–79; 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), 17–21, though with the caveat that I erroneously included the polyptych now in the Museo Diocesano in Certaldo and the signed polyptych in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence among the painter's late works.

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The altarpiece is constructed of three panels, the central one of which is fabricated of at least two pieces of wood with vertical grain. The original thickness of the panels was reduced to 1.3–1.7 cm, and it has been cradled. These alterations may have been accomplished during an undocumented treatment that possibly occurred in the 1920s.[1] Part of the frame is original, but the ornamental painting of the gables is a later addition.[2] The painted surface is realized on a white gesso preparation applied over a layer of fabric, whereas the gilding is applied over an additional layer of red bole. Despite some worm tunneling and the slight concavity over the join of the planks in the central panel and some resulting paint losses, which have required integrations, the panels are generally in fine condition. There is extensive inpainting in the robe of Saint Anthony and scattered inpainting in the hands of Saint Venantius, in the Virgin's cloak, and in some of the heads of the angels; however, the thick surface coating masks the true degree of inpainting. The gold and the punched decoration at the top of the left panel above the halo of Saint Anthony, as well as in part of the halo itself, are modern.

TECHNICAL NOTES

[1] No information is available about this treatment, which "was made several years ago," according to a 1939 letter from David E. Finley to Richard Offner (copy in NGA curatorial files), possibly in the period when the altarpiece was returned from Carl Hamilton to Duveen Brothers (see Provenance note 5). Comparison of the photograph that Bernard Berenson published in 1922 with a photograph dated 1937 in the NGA photo archives indicates that the painting was treated between the dates when these photos were taken. However, it is unclear if the thinning and cradling took place during that treatment or if it had already occurred. A letter dated December 12, 1917

from Muscat Rougeron Picture Restoration to Duveen Brothers discusses treatment of a "quimptich" by Allegretto di Muzzi, which may refer to the NGA panel. Duveen Brothers Records, accession number 960015, Research Library, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles: reel 114, box 259, folder 12.

[2] The NGA scientific research department analyzed the frame using x-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF), cross-sections, and polarized light microscopy (see report dated April 1, 2002, in NGA conservation files). The analysis showed that the frame was silver leaf, which was toned and decorated with red and green transparent glazes.

PROVENANCE

Probably commissioned for the high altar of the demolished church of Sant'Antonio Abate fuori Porta Pisana, Fabriano;[1] apparently by the early years of the nineteenth century it was no longer in this church, presumably having passed into a local private collection.[2] Joseph Russell Bailey [1840-1906], 1st Baron Glanusk, Glanusk Park, Breconshire, Wales; by inheritance to his son, Joseph Henry Russell Bailey [1864-1928], 2nd Baron Glanusk, Glanusk Park; sold in 1915.[3] (sale, Sotheby's, London, 25 July 1916, no. 137, as Attributed to Allegretto Nuzi); purchased by Walter Dowdeswell[4] for (Duveen Brothers, Inc., London, New York, and Paris); Carl W. Hamilton [1886-1967], New York, in the early 1920s; (Duveen Brothers, Inc., London, New York, and Paris), by 1929;[5] sold 15 December 1936 to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh;[6] gift 1937 to NGA.

[1] The church, recorded for the first time in 1313, was officiated by the regular canons of Saint Augustine of Saint-Antoine de Vienne, a Hospitaler company founded by Gaston de Dauphiné in 1095 and transformed by Pope Boniface VIII into a religious order in 1297. It enjoyed a very rapid diffusion throughout Europe (see Italo Ruffino, "Canonici regolari di S. Agostino di S. Antonio di Vienne," in *Dizionario degli istituti di Perfezione* 2 [1973]: 134-141; Adalbert Mischlewski, *Grundzüge der Geschichte des Antoniterordens bis zur Ausgang des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Bonn, 1976). Romualdo Sassi (*Le chiese di Fabriano. Brevi cenni storico – artistici*, Fabriano, 1961: 11-12) recalls that the church of Sant'Antonio Abate in Fabriano had three altars, of which presumably the high altar was dedicated to the Madonna and one other to the titular saint. In the late eighteenth century, following the decline of the order, the church was transferred to the hospital, which

had used it as a mortuary when the city was struck by an epidemic in 1818. By this time the building must already have been stripped of its movable works of art, even though Amico Ricci (*Memorie storiche delle arti e degli artisti della Marca di Ancona*, Macerata, 1834: 88) records the continuing presence in the sacristy of the panel of *Saint Anthony Abbot with a Group of Devotees* now in the Pinacoteca of Fabriano and unanimously attributed to Puccio di Simone (see Fabio Marcelli, *Pinacoteca Civica "Bruno Molajoli"*, Fano, 1997: 26). The church, as Sassi reports, was demolished in 1834. Richard Offner (*A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting. Sec. III, vol. V, The Fourteenth Century. Bernardo Daddi and his circle*, Brattleboro, 1947; 2nd edition by Miklós Boskovits, assisted by Ada Labriola and Martina Ingedaay Rodio, Florence, 2001: 394-399, n. 5) presents the reasons that suggest the provenance of the Washington triptych from the church in Fabriano.

[2] This is suggested by the fact that during the Napoleonic occupation of the Marche (1797-1811) many churches, especially those of religious orders, were expropriated and stripped of their works of art, and by the fact that Luigi Lanzi (*Storia pittorica della Italia dal Risorgimento delle Belle Arti fin presso al fine del XVIII secolo (1808)*, ed. Martino Capucci, Florence, 1968: 266), who records the presence in the church of frescoes signed by Allegretto and dated 136[?] , does not mention the presence of the triptych. The same argument *ex silentio* can be adduced from Ricci (1834, 88), who claims that even the frescoes formerly situated in the cloister annexed to the church had been lost and similarly fails to mention the triptych: had it been present, it surely would not have escaped his attention.

[3] This information was gleaned by Duveen Brothers, and included in the prospectus they supplied to Andrew Mellon (in NGA curatorial files).

[4] Walter Dowdeswell was the agent for Duveen Brothers at this time (see Edward Fowles, *Memories of Duveen Brothers*, London, 1976: 64, and passim). The Duveen Brothers "X-Book" entry for the triptych (the painting was X 170) begins with "Purchased from Sotheby's 25/7/1916" (Duveen Brothers Records, accession number 960015, Research Library, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles: reel 422; see also reel 45, box 133, folder 5; copies in NGA curatorial files). A copy of the sale catalogue in the Frick Art Reference Library, New York (copy in NGA curatorial files), is annotated with Dowdeswell's name as the buyer.

[5] The “American oil millionaire” Carl W. Hamilton decided in c. 1920 to furnish his New York apartment with works of art furnished by the Duveen Brothers; a few years later, however, he returned most of his collection to Duveen (see Fowles 1976, 98-99, 127-130; Maryle Secrest, *Duveen. A Life in Art*, New York, 2004: 181-184, 368). Joseph Duveen, head of the firm, had the triptych again by at least 19 January 1929, when he responded to a letter originally sent to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and then on to Hamilton, stating, “The correspondence has been sent to me because Mr. Hamilton no longer possesses the Triptych, which is now in my private collection . . .” (Duveen Brothers Records, reel 125, box 270, folder 3).

[6] The original bill of sale is in Records of The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, subject files, box 2, NGA archives; copy in NGA curatorial files.

EXHIBITION HISTORY

1926 Sesquicentennial Exhibition, Philadelphia, 1926.

INSCRIPTION FOOTNOTES

[1] Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols., Washington, DC, 1979: 1:383, read HS.XRO. [LUX] M[VNDI]. Presumably the first letters were intended to be IHS, the frequently used traditional abbreviation of the name of Jesus, formed, at least partially, of the letters of the Greek version of the name: . The second group of letters is again an incorrect transcription of the letters of the word Christus in Greek: ; see Hans Feldbusch, “Christusmonogramm,” in *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, edited by Otto Schmitt and Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte München, 10 vols., Stuttgart, 1937-2003: 3(1954):707-720. The meaning of the final letter M, which might be an abbreviation of various words, is difficult to interpret.

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To cite: Miklós Boskovits (1935–2011), "Puccio di Simone, Allegretto Nuzi/*Madonna and Child Enthroned with Four Saints and Eighteen Angels [middle panel]*/1354," *Italian Paintings of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, NGA Online Editions, http://purl.org/nga/collection/artobject/7 (accessed December 21, 2016).