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

Allegretto Nuzi

Also known as
Allegretto di Nuzio
Allegretto di Nuzi
Umbrian, active from c. 1340; died 1373

BIOGRAPHY

The artist probably was born in Fabriano, in the Marches; indeed, he signed his name on various occasions as Allegritus de Fabriano. The artist is documented for the first time in Florence in 1346, when he enrolled in the Compagnia di San Luca, the lay confraternity of painters. His name, written as “Allegrettus Nuccii de Senis,” also appears in the register of foreign members of the Arte dei Medici e Speziali in Florence, a guild that also comprised painters.[1] The claimed Sienese origin can probably be explained by the supposition that Allegretto had arrived in Florence after a period in Siena. Local sources in Fabriano record the presence of his works, dated respectively 1345 and 1349, in the church of Santa Lucia at Fabriano,[2] but the reliability of this information cannot now be corroborated, since the paintings in question have been lost. Amico Ricci (1834) identified the former with a panel of the Madonna and Child Enthroned with eight angels formerly in the collection of the Viscountess D’Abernon in London, a proposal accepted by the editors of the last edition of Bernard Berenson’s *Italian Pictures* (1968),[3] but this claim cannot be verified since the panel’s inscription is now illegible.

The painter’s first securely dated work remains the left lateral of the Washington triptych, executed (according to the inscription below the central panel) in 1354. But perhaps a street tabernacle with a fresco of the Madonna and Child with two saints and two angels, formerly on the Via di San Filippo in Fabriano and now in the Pinacoteca Civica in that town, also dates to the same year: its inscription is now lost, and the date reported by local sources has been incorrectly transcribed. These works were followed in chronological order by the much-ruined Madonna formerly in the Sabatucci collection in Fabriano (1358); the triptych in the Pinacoteca Vaticana (1365); the polyptych in the Palazzo Municipale in Apiro (Macerata) and the *Madonna of Humility* in the Pinacoteca at San Severino Marche, both dated 1366; the triptych in the cathedral of Macerata (1369); and the *Madonna and Child Enthroned* in the Galleria Nazionale in Urbino (1372).

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The initial phase of the painter's career can be reconstructed on the basis of some works in which the Florentine stylistic component, essentially derived from Maso di Banco, is fused with elements that reveal the artist's familiarity with the art of the Sienese Lorenzetti brothers, such as the polyptych of the J. G. Johnson collection in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the D'Abernon Madonna, the portable triptych in the Kunstmuseum in Bern, and the Crucifixion in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. Documented back in Fabriano again in 1348 and 1350,[4] Allegretto probably resumed his contacts with Florence in the 1350s, more particularly with the thriving shop of Andrea Orcagna. But at this time he also seems to have formed a professional association with Puccio di Simone (Florentine, active c. 1330 - 1360), with whom he would later work in Fabriano. In the 1350s, Allegretto probably painted the five-part *Madonna and Saints* in the Pinacoteca of Fabriano; the diptych in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin and that of the Madonna and Child and *Vir dolorum*, now divided between private collections;[5] as well as a large part of the frescoes in the cathedral and church of Santa Lucia in Fabriano. A gradual stiffening of his compositional schemes, metallic hardness of modeling, and ever more frequent use of sumptuous fabrics with striking decorative motifs in his paintings characterize the final phase of the artist, who died at Fabriano between September and November 1373.

[1] See Ugo Procacci, "Il primo ricordo di Giovanni da Milano a Firenze," *Arte antica e moderna* 13–16 (1961): 65. The name of the painter also appears, but without a date, in a register begun in 1343 of members of a confraternity in Fabriano. See Stefano Felicetti, "Regesti documentari, 1299–1499," in *Il maestro di Campodonico: Rapporti artistici fra Umbria e Marche nel Trecento*, ed. Fabio Marcelli (Fabriano, 1998), 215.

[2] Amico Ricci, *Memorie storiche delle arti e degli artisti della Marca di Ancona*, 2 vols. (Macerata, 1834), 1:88, 109 n. 49.

[3] Bernard Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance: Central Italian and North Italian Schools*, 3 vols. (London, 1968), 2: fig. 206. I suspect that the dated paintings formerly to be seen in the choir of the church of Santa Lucia, which Ricci said were lost following the transformation of the church, were probably frescoes.

[4] See Stefano Felicetti, "Regesti documentari, 1299–1499," in *Il maestro di Campodonico: Rapporti artistici fra Umbria e Marche nel Trecento*, ed. Fabio Marcelli (Fabriano, 1998), 215.

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[5] See Angelo Tartuferi, in *Da Allegretto Nuzi a Pietro Perugino*, ed. Fabrizio Moretti and Gabriele Caioni (Florence, 2005), 26–37.

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