



Bernardo Daddi

active by 1320, died probably 1348

Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels

c. 1345

tempera on panel

painted surface: 50.2 × 24.2 cm (19 3/4 × 9 1/2 in.)

overall (including engaged frame): 57.1 × 30.5 × 2.6 cm (22 1/2 × 12 × 1 in.)

Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952.5.61

ENTRY

The painting, which formed the central panel of a portable triptych for domestic devotion, [1] represents the Madonna and Child, in larger proportions than the other figures in the composition, seated on a raised throne. The throne is in the form of a tabernacle or ciborium; [2] its crocketed triangular gable is framed by the inner trefoil arch of the panel, and its inner canopy is decorated with an azure star-studded “sky.” Mary supports her child with both hands. The Christ child is holding a fruit, perhaps a pomegranate, [3] in his left hand and is stretching out his right to take the small bird perched on a finger of the angel closest to him. [4] The throne is flanked on both sides by a red seraph and an azure cherub [5] and, below these, by two pairs of angels, of which the one to the far left plays a shawm—the medieval precursor of the oboe—and that on the opposite side a psaltery; the concert of angels is completed by the portative organ and the viol played by two angels kneeling in the foreground. [6] Of the four saints to the sides of the throne we can identify, to the left, Apollonia, with a tooth in her hand, [7] and, more doubtfully, Catherine of Alexandria to the far right, [8] while the six saints in the foreground are

Lucy, John the Baptist, Andrew, Paul, Peter, and Agnes. [9]

The painting has always been recognized as an autograph work by Bernardo Daddi, to whom Richard Offner (as cited in Sinibaldi and Brunetti 1943) was the first to attribute it. [10] Subsequently, however, the same scholar (1958) conjectured the hand of assistants in its execution, but this proposal has found little or no support in the more recent literature. [11] Indeed, the only interventions alien to Daddi in the execution are those of modern restorers. Stylistic affinities have been observed between the panel in the National Gallery of Art and the triptych dated 1338 [fig. 1] now in the Seilern collection of the Courtauld Institute Gallery in London, [12] and there are also various shared features of ornamentation. Thus, some of the motifs punched in the gold ground of the Washington painting are present both in the Seilern triptych and in other dated works by Daddi of the following year. [13] Similar, too, are the decoration of the cloth of honor [14] and some aspects of the garments. [15]

The details in question suggest for our panel a date either close to or probably slightly after 1340. In this phase the artist tended to add more spaciousness to his compositions, while his figures gain in grandeur thanks both to their expanded forms and the amplitude of the mantles that envelop them. At the same time, however, they become more relaxed in posture, more spontaneous in gesture [fig. 2]. Not only spectators but participants in the action, they confer a certain air of naturalness on the scene. Typical examples of this interpretive approach are the female saint in our panel, who with a friendly, caressing gesture rests one hand on Mary's throne; [16] the Christ child, who twists impulsively away from his mother to grasp the small bird that the angel, smiling, is offering to him; [17] and the two female saints portrayed below this angel and the two angels on the other side of the throne, who exchange glances, commenting in silent complicity on the child's joyful reaction. Other characteristic aspects of this phase in Daddi's art are a tendency toward simplification of the drawing: for example, the mantle of Saint Agnes that falls in an unbroken perpendicular line from head to ground; the preference for faces drawn in profile; and the clarity of the compositional structure. The modeling, too, is softer than in Daddi's previous works, dated before c. 1335, anticipating developments that would be expressed more powerfully in the last years of the artist's life.

Miklós Boskovits (1935–2011)

March 21, 2016

COMPARATIVE FIGURES

NOTES

- [1] The edges of the wooden support and of the engaged frame have been scraped and smoothed down. Following this operation practically no trace of the hinges that fastened the shutters to the central panel remain, although as Laurence Kanter kindly pointed out to me, the concave channels on the sides of the frame housed rotating columns that secured the wings of the triptych, as in the Seilern triptych by Bernardo Daddi in the Courtauld collection in London; see Richard Offner, *Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 8, *Bernardo Daddi, His Shop and Following* (Florence, 1958), 19–21. Not only the proportions but also the composition and the ornamental decoration suggest that the panel was the centerpiece of a portable triptych very similar in form and composition to that in the Courtauld Gallery, which has images of the Nativity and the Crucifixion in its side panels. Presumably, both panels being discussed here and the central panel of the triptych in London were topped by a triangular gable bearing the image of the Blessing Christ. Another panel by Bernardo Daddi, very similar to this one in the National Gallery of Art, must also have originally been the centerpiece of a triptych: namely, the Madonna and Child now in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, no. 61.61; see Richard Offner and Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 4, *Bernardo Daddi, His Shop and Following*, new ed. (Florence, 1991), 297–300. According to Eliot W. Rowlands, the latter should be reconstructed along the lines of the exemplar in London. Eliot W. Rowlands, *The Collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art: Italian Paintings, 1300–1800* (Kansas City, MO, 1996), 51–52. Evidently, Daddi's shop produced several related versions. *Madonna and Child with Angels and Saints* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena (no. 73) seems, both in iconography and in the arrangement of the figures, almost a facsimile of the example in Washington. See Richard Offner and Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 4, *Bernardo Daddi, His Shop and Following*, new ed. (Florence, 1991), 443–446. Further evidence of the success of this composition is Pietro Nelli's replication of it in a panel whose whereabouts

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS

Italian Paintings of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

are now unknown; it too was formerly the centerpiece of a portable triptych, for which see Miklós Boskovits, *Pittura fiorentina alla vigilia del Rinascimento, 1370–1400* (Florence, 1975), 417.

- [2] In the works by Daddi that can be securely dated to 1338 (National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, no. 904) and 1339 (Minneapolis Institute of Art, no. 34.20), the Madonna is sitting on a throne with a tall, gabled but flat backrest. Yet in the same year as the Edinburgh Madonna (1338), the throne of the Seilern triptych in the Courtauld Art Gallery, London, is transformed into a gabled and vaulted ciborium, forming a kind of tabernacle around the Son of God and his mother. The images of the Madonna sitting on a simpler tabernacle-shaped throne in a private collection in Germany and in the National Gallery in Prague could be slightly earlier in date; see Richard Offner and Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 4, *Bernardo Daddi, His Shop and Following*, new ed. (Florence, 1991), 214–215, 377–380. The tabernacle throne, however, can be assumed to be an innovative feature of the second half of the 1330s.
- [3] The pomegranate is a well-known symbol of the Church, and also of the sacrifice and Resurrection of Christ: see Mirella Levi D'Ancona, *The Garden of the Renaissance: Botanical Symbolism in Italian Painting* (Florence, 1977), 312–318.
- [4] According to Herbert Friedmann, in paintings of the Gothic and Renaissance periods, small birds in the hand of the Christ child may symbolize the soul, the Resurrection, the Passion of Christ, or death. Herbert Friedmann, *The Symbolic Goldfinch: Its History and Significance in European Devotional Art* (Washington, DC, 1946), 7–35.
- [5] On these representatives of the highest rank of the hierarchies of angels, see Barbara Bruderer Eichberg, *Les neufs chœurs angéliques: Origine et évolution du thème dans l'art du Moyen âge* (Poitiers, 1998), 62–67.
- [6] Howard Mayer Brown and Joan L. Lascelle, *Musical Iconography: A Manual for Cataloguing Musical Subjects in Western Art before 1800* (Cambridge, MA, 1972).
- [7] The customary iconography of Saint Apollonia is to show her with her symbol of martyrdom: pincers holding an extracted tooth; see George Kaftal, *Saints in Italian Art*, vol. 1, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence, 1952), 97–98.
- [8] Offner identified the two crowned female saints to the right as Margaret and Catherine, but the attributes of the crown and the processional cross in the hand of the former could equally well be adapted to other royal saints, such as Agatha. Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 8, *Workshop of Bernardo*

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS

Italian Paintings of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

Daddi (New York, 1958), 16. The identification of the other female saint as Catherine, the learned saint par excellence, is suggested by the book she bears in her hand; cf. George Kaftal, *Saints in Italian Art*, vol. 1, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence, 1952), 225–234.

- [9] For the iconography of these saints, cf. respectively George Kaftal, *Saints in Italian Art*, vol. 1, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence, 1952), 644–650, 549–560, 35–46, 799–816, 7–12.
- [10] Giulia Sinibaldi and Giulia Brunetti, eds., *Pittura italiana del Duecento e Trecento: Catalogo della mostra giottesca di Firenze del 1937* (Florence, 1943), 499, no. 157.
- [11] Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 8, *Workshop of Bernardo Daddi* (New York, 1958), 15–17.
- [12] Fern Rusk Shapley observed these affinities, and Eliot W. Rowlands confirmed them. Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection: Italian Schools, XIII–XV Century* (London, 1966), 26; Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:154; Eliot W. Rowlands, *The Collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art: Italian Paintings, 1300–1800* (Kansas City, MO, 1996), 53. For the Seilern triptych, see Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 8, *Workshop of Bernardo Daddi* (New York, 1958), 19–21, pls. IV, IVa; Courtauld Institute of Art, *The Princes Gate Collection* (London, 1981), 10–12; Courtauld Institute of Art, *The Courtauld Gallery at Somerset House* (London, 1998), 26–27.
- [13] Mojmir S. Frinta (1998) identified punches in the panel in the National Gallery of Art that recur in various paintings by Daddi, including the two triptychs dated 1338 and 1339, respectively (cf. note 10) and the Crucifixion in the Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, dated 1343. Mojmir Svatopluk Frinta, *Punched Decoration on Late Medieval Panel and Miniature Painting* (Prague, 1998), 382, 411, 444–445. According to Erling S. Skaug, the painting in the Gallery would be datable “in the mid-forties” on the basis of its punches. 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), 1:114 n. 186.
- [14] Brigitte Klesse found the decorative motifs of fabrics in the panel being discussed here in paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Frick Museum in Pittsburgh, and the Galleria Sabauda in Turin; see Brigitte Klesse, *Seidenstoffe in der italienischen Malerei des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Bern, 1967), 454; and Richard Offner and Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth*

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS

Italian Paintings of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

Century, sec. 3, vol. 4, *Bernardo Daddi, His Shop and Following*, new ed. (Florence, 1991), 84–86, 233–238, 293–296. These are all undated works, but on stylistic grounds should be placed in the period 1330–1335 and beyond.

- [15] Useful clues for the dating are the garments of the young female saints with their striking *décollété* and wide *manicottoli*—the tight-fitting sleeves of their dresses, which widen considerably at the elbows and hang down to their thighs. On the basis of these fashionable elements of court dress of the period, Luciano Bellosi suggested a dating of the panel being discussed here to the late 1330s or slightly beyond. Luciano Bellosi, “Moda e cronologia: A) gli affreschi della Basilica Inferiore di Assisi,” *Prospettiva* 10 (1977): 21–31; Luciano Bellosi, “Moda e cronologia: B) per la pittura di primo Trecento,” *Prospettiva* 11 (1977): 12–27.
- [16] By the thirteenth century, and hence also in works by Giotto and other masters of the early Trecento, the angels often lay one hand with a gesture of familiarity on Mary’s throne, or grasp it, giving the impression that they have just brought it before the onlooker or are about to take it away. Bernardo Daddi, on the other hand, emphasized the emotional contact between the sacred group and the saints and angels who surround it. One of the group rests his hand on the throne (as in the small panels in the Museo Horne in Florence, the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, the Museum in Kansas City, etc.), while some of the angels enter in a playful rapport with the child. See Richard Offner and Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 4, *Bernardo Daddi, His Shop and Following*, new ed. (Florence, 1991), pls. I, III, XXXIX.
- [17] Though expressed with great discretion, the motion of the slightly parted lips and the slight contraction of the muscles around the eyes seem deliberately to confer a joyful, smiling expression on the personages, abandoning the formula of serene but regal composure that hitherto had almost always seemed to be considered appropriate to images of the Madonna and saints in Florence. On the theme of the smile in religious painting of the period, a little investigated aspect, cf. Jan Svanberg, “The Gothic Smile,” in *Künstlerischer Austausch: Akten des xxviii. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte, Berlin, July 15–20, 1992*, ed. Thomas W. Gaehtgens (Berlin, 1993), 2:357–370.

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The painting was executed on a single plank of wood, 2.6 cm thick with vertical grain. The outer edges of the wooden support and of the engaged frame, which

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS

Italian Paintings of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

were originally covered with gesso, have been scraped and smoothed down. Long, red, concave channels were cut into the outer edges on both sides of the frame, from the base to the spring of the arch. A continuous layer of gesso was applied to the front of the panel, including the colonettes and molding, and to the back of the panel, which was then covered with dark red paint. Areas to be gilded were prepared with red bole. The gold ground was embellished with punch marks in the halos and around the edges of the arched termination of the painted surface. The figures were placed on the panel by incising their outlines into the wet gesso. The paint was applied with discrete brushstrokes, with green underpainting in the flesh areas. The trim on the robes was mordant gilded.

The panel has not been thinned and retains its original reverse coating. In spite of the coating, the panel has a convex warp. A blackened hollow area at the bottom of the frame on the left side may be the result of a candle burn. By the mid-1930s, the panel appeared much darkened by dust and opacified varnishes, and the face of the Virgin had been heavily inpainted, while some areas of the painted surface appeared worn. [1] Mario Modestini treated the panel in Italy in 1948. [2] The paint layer is somewhat abraded, especially in the Madonna's face and the Christ child. There is some inpainting in the shadowed portions of some of the figures' blue robes, in the profile of Saint Paul, and in the face of the female saint (Margaret?) standing close to the throne on the right side. [3]

TECHNICAL NOTES

- [1] The painting is reproduced in this state in the Brogi photograph no. 26084, as well as in the reproduction in Sinibaldi and Brunetti 1943, according to whom "il viso della Madonna è completamente ridipinto e vi sono qua e là svelature" (the face of the Madonna is completely repainted, and there are abrasions here and there). Giulia Sinibaldi and Giulia Brunetti, eds., *Pittura italiana del Duecento e Trecento: Catalogo della mostra giottesca di Firenze del 1937* (Florence, 1943), 498–499. See also Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 8, *Workshop of Bernardo Daddi* (New York, 1958), 15–17, pl. III.
- [2] According to Roberto Longhi's handwritten expertise of March 20, 1950 (copy in NGA curatorial files), "questa anconetta...era gravemente offuscata da un cattivo restauro...ora...una intelligente pulitura ha recuperato la pittura originale" (this little tabernacle...was gravely compromised by a bad restoration...now...an intelligent cleaning has recovered the original

painting). The provider of the “intelligent cleaning” was, as Fern Rusk Shapley (1979) pointed out, Mario Modestini, in Italy; see Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:154. NGA conservation department files have a Kress Restoration Record that noted that Modestini cleaned and restored the painting in Italy in 1948 before acquisition. Longhi’s opinion may be somewhat too optimistic. In fact, Richard Offner (1958), who noted that the “painting was cleaned in 1951,” criticized the reconstruction of the Virgin’s face for its “unseemly expression of spurious suggestiveness.” In Offner’s opinion other areas of the painting were also, “with small exception,” retouched. See Richard Offner, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, sec. 3, vol. 8, *Workshop of Bernardo Daddi* (New York, 1958), 16.

- [3] Describing the state of the painting when Mario Modestini treated it in 1948, Dianne Dwyer Modestini wrote (2003): “The right side of the Madonna’s face as it turns into the shadow is completely missing. The original gesso was present but there was no verdaccio, or underdrawing.... The eye is totally missing. All the drapery passages were severely worn.” Dianne Dwyer Modestini, “Imitative Restoration,” in *Early Italian Paintings: Approaches to Conservation; Proceedings of a Symposium at the Yale University Art Gallery, April 2002*, ed. Patricia Sherwin Garland (New Haven, 2003), 215.

PROVENANCE

According to a tradition reported by a previous owner, Virgoe Buckland, the panel comes from the Vallombrosa abbey near Florence and in 1872 it was given by the abbot to the painter and restorer J. Stark;^[1] purchased from Stark by Sir Henry Doulton [1820-1897];^[2] his heirs;^[3] by inheritance to Commander Virgoe Buckland [d. 1949], Hove, Sussex;^[4] (sale, Sotheby’s, London, 2 November 1949, no. 76, as by Bernardo Daddi); (Mannenti), probably the agent for (Count Alessandro Contini Bonaccossi, Florence); sold July 1950 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York;^[5] gift 1952 to NGA.

[1] Richard Offner (*A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting. Sec. III, vol. VIII*. New York, 1958: 16) provides the early provenance, which had been communicated to him by Buckland. After a first suppression in 1808, the expelled monks were able to return to Vallombrosa, which was already deprived of its archive, library, and works of art. In 1866, however, the abbey was suppressed for

good and some years later its church transformed into the parish church. See Nicola R. Vasaturo, Guido Morozzi, Guiseppe Marchini, and Umberto Baldini, *Vallombrosa nel IX centenario della morte del fondatore Giovanni Gualberto. 12 luglio 1703*, Florence, 1973: 141-143. The abbot in those years, from 1867 to 1877, was Germano Gai, who, indeed, may have owned the painting, and taken it with him when he was obliged to leave the abbey. On Gai see Francesco Tarani, *L'ordine vallombrosano. Note storico – cronologiche*, Florence, 1920: 28, 151-152.

The identity of "J. Stark" is uncertain. Possibly he may have been Arthur James Stark (1831–1902), a landscape painter; see *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart.*, ed. Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker, and Hans Vollmer, 37 vols., Leipzig, 1907-1950 (reprinted 1970-1971): 31(1937):478.

[2] Sir Henry Doulton was instrumental in developing the firm of Royal Doulton Pottery and served as vice president of the Society of Art in London; see *The Dictionary of National Biography*, London, 1906: 358.

[3] Offner 1958, 16 (and repeated by later authors), says Doulton bequeathed the painting to "his daughter, Mrs. Buckland." However, Doulton's daughters were Sarah Lilian, who married John Kinnersley Hooper, and Katherine Duneau, who was unmarried. "Mrs. Buckland" would have been one of Doulton's two younger sisters, either Jane (1824-1892), who married Thomas Buckland, or Marianne (1829- by 1895), who married Virgoe Buckland (1825-1883). Virgoe Buckland and Henry Doulton were the executors of the will of Henry's father, John Doulton (1793-1873), and in that document Virgoe Buckland is described as an "auctioneer and surveyor" (will made 22 February 1873; John Doulton died 21 May 1873; will proved 29 October 1873; copy in NGA curatorial files).

In his will Henry Doulton bequeaths "all my furniture books pictures prints musical instruments works of art...unto my Trustees Upon trust to divide the same in equal shares as nearly as they can having regard to the money value thereof between such of them my said son and two daughters as shall survive me." (See the copy of the will [proved 7 January 1898] and information about the Doulton and Buckland families, in NGA curatorial files.)

[4] The relationship of Commander Virgoe Buckland to Henry Doulton's daughters and sisters has not yet been determined. Commander Buckland died 8 May 1949, and his estate consigned the painting to the sale in November of that year. His will (proved 12 August 1949; copy in NGA curatorial files) leaves money to various "cousins," including several with the surname Buckland and Doulton. Other than his wearing apparel, no specific possessions are itemized.

[5] "Mannenti" is the name recorded as the buyer at the 1949 sale. The Kress Foundation made an offer to Contini Bonacossi on 17 June 1950, for a group of 125 paintings and one sculpture, including NGA 1952.5.61. The offer was accepted on July 1, and the works of art were released to the foundation on July 6 after the first payment was received. See copies of correspondence in NGA curatorial files as well as The Kress Collection Digital Archive, <https://kress.nga.gov/Detail/objects/1374>.

EXHIBITION HISTORY

1937 Mostra Giottesca, Palazzo degli Uffizi, Florence, 1937, no. 165A (no. 157 in the 1943 catalogue of the exhibition, edited by Sinibaldi and Brunetti).

1949 Possibly loan to display with permanent collection, Hove Museum and Art Gallery, England (according to 1949 sale catalogue).[1]

2012 Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance: Painting and Illumination, 1300-1350, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 2012-2013, not in catalogue (shown only in Toronto).

EXHIBITION HISTORY NOTES

[1] See the Provenance of the painting for details about the 1949 sale. The Hove Museum is now unable to locate a record of the painting being lent to them (e-mail, 6 June 2011, Karen Wraith to Anne Halpern, in NGA curatorial files).

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS

Italian Paintings of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

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