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

Master of the Washington Coronation
Italian, active first third 14th century

The Coronation of the Virgin

1324

tempera on poplar panel
painted surface (score lines to score lines): 99.3 × 77.4 cm (39 1/8 × 30 1/2 in.)
overall: 108.3 × 79 × 1.5 cm (42 5/8 × 31 1/8 × 9/16 in.)
framed: 115.3 x 86 x 8.9 cm (45 3/8 x 33 7/8 x 3 1/2 in.)
Inscription: on the base of the throne: MCCCXXIIII [1]
Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952.5.87

ENTRY

The Coronation of the Virgin marks the final episode of the legend of the mother of Jesus, that of her ultimate glorification after her bodily assumption into heaven. The episode first appears in medieval sources, but it was not until the thirteenth century that the scene in which Christ places the crown on his mother's head is explicitly illustrated in monumental painting and sculpture. Mary usually is represented seated on the same throne as her son and to his right as he crowns her with his right hand. [1] This scheme, which subsequently underwent some changes, especially in Tuscany, [2] was faithfully followed by Venetian painters throughout the fourteenth century and beyond. The panel in the National Gallery of Art is one of the earliest representations of the subject that has come down to us from the Veneto region. [3] An iconographic innovation introduced here, one that Paolo Veneziano (Venetian, active 1333 - 1358) subsequently revived, is the representation of the celestial spheres that can be seen behind the cloth of honor in the background. [4]

The Coronation of the Virgin in Washington originally must have formed part of a larger complex. No evidence has yet been found of other panels with which it might have belonged. But there are good grounds for assuming that it would have been flanked by a series of stories of Christ or stories of the Virgin, arranged in two superimposed tiers, rather than by standing figures of saints, as found, for instance, in polyptychs of the full maturity of Paolo Veneziano. [5] It may also be assumed that the Coronation would have been surmounted by a gable panel representing

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the Crucifixion [6] and that standing figures of saints or prophets would have been placed at the two sides of the upper register [fig. 1] (see also Reconstruction). I think it probable, on grounds of style and measurements, that the panel of the prophets Jeremiah and Daniel and the busts of two Evangelists [fig. 2], formerly in the Cini collection in Venice and now in another private collection, belonged to this latter zone of the polyptych; [7] the panel seems well suited to integrate the upper right-hand part of the polyptych, now lost, of which the Washington Coronation formed the center.

Who was the Master of the Washington Coronation? As regards his possible identification with Martino da Venezia, we can only speak of a working hypothesis suggested by the stylistic affinities between the painting here discussed and those of Paolo, son of Martino, and also bearing in mind the undisputed ascendancy that Paolo's bottega rapidly succeeded in winning in early fourteenth-century Venetian painting. The fact remains that the artistic profile of the Master of the Washington Coronation remains very uncertain. Art historians now generally agree on the need to exclude his works from the catalog of Paolo Veneziano, to whom they were almost unanimously attributed for some thirty years, beginning with Giuseppe Fiocco (1930–1931), and to whom the Gallery (1985), Francesca Zava Boccazzi (1993), and John Oliver Hand (2004) continued to attribute the Coronation in Washington. [8] But the alternative proposal by Michelangelo Muraro (1965, 1969), who placed the Washington panel at the center of his reconstruction of the oeuvre of an artist he considered the stylistic precursor and perhaps even the elder brother of Paolo, has met with increasing consent since the latter decades of the twentieth century. [9] Opinions differ, however, on the extent of the catalog of the Master of the Washington Coronation. Only three paintings, all chronologically close to the panel dated 1324, are unanimously, or almost unanimously, recognized as his work. They are the Madonna and Child no. 1604 in the Musei Civici in Padua; [10] the painted crucifix in the Istituto Ellenico in San Giorgio dei Greci in Venice; [11] and the fragment of a Crucifixion that surfaced at an auction sale in Rome in 1974, but which has since gone untraced. [12] To this small group a number of other works can, in my view, be added. These include one other dated painting: namely, the altar frontal of the Blessed Leone Bembo now at the treasury of the Church of Saint Blase in Vodnjan (Dignano d'Istria) in Croatia, painted for the Venetian church of San Sebastiano in 1321. Usually ascribed to Paolo Veneziano, [13] the panel provides further evidence of the essential stylistic continuity between the manner of Paolo and that of the older master.

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The two painters, however, should not be confused. From his earliest works (those datable between the second and early third decade of the century, such as the scenes from the life of the Virgin in the Musei Civici at Pesaro [14] and the frescoes on the triumphal arch and nave of the church of San Fermo at Verona), [15] Paolo Veneziano displays a more spontaneous elegance in the movement of his figures, more fluent linear rhythms in his design, and more delicate passages of chiaroscuro in his modeling. In other words, he reveals a style akin to but more modern—more attuned to the Gothic manner—than that of the Master of the Washington Coronation. In the years in which Paolo made his appearance on the scene, the activity of our anonymous master is attested to by works in which the forms tend to be more incisive and in which any cultivation of elegance in gesture, or gothicizing animation in calligraphic rhythm, is muted. Instead, the author of the Washington Coronation dedicates particular attention to the corporeal substance of his figures, which in general seem more restricted in movement and more reserved in comportment than those that populate the paintings of Paolo Veneziano.

The results of the master's activity in the 1310s, or slightly before, are probably the Crucifixion in the Serbian Orthodox church of Split (Spalato); [16] the two fragments of an altarpiece—one with three, the other with four figures of saints—now in the Pinacoteca Civica in Forlì; [17] and the so-called *Madonna delle stelle* in the church of Santi Maria e Donato in Murano. [18] These paintings are still strongly indebted to the classicizing aspirations of the Palaeologan Renaissance. But instead of cultivating the formal complexities and agitated rhythms of Byzantine painting of his day, the artist seems to draw inspiration from the powerful firmness of the bodies and the incisive figurative style of the painted images of previous decades. What remains of the important cycle of frescoes in the church of San Zan Degolà in Venice probably belongs to a slightly earlier phase in the master's career, to the years around the turn of the century. These frescoes are variously attributed and dated, [19] but it seems to me difficult to doubt their very close stylistic affinity with the group of paintings just cited. They are truly superb examples of the painter's sophisticated figurative culture, influenced not by Giotto (Florentine, c. 1265 - 1337) (as has sometimes been suggested) but by the neo-Hellenistic figurative art developed in Constantinople and also in other centers of the "Byzantine Commonwealth" since the 1260s. [20] These works are preceded in date by the vigorous language of some other paintings in which the artist strives to create strong effects of plastic relief and to present his figures in illusionistically convincing architectural settings. I refer to such works as the *Madonna and Child*

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with Donors [fig. 3] in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow [21] and the busts of apostles from the iconostasis of Caorle Cathedral. [22] In particular, the articulation of forms in the latter, with zones of color almost geometrical in regularity, and their modeling with energetic brushstrokes and sudden flashes of white highlights suggest that they were executed within the last decade of the thirteenth century.

The fact that works of such importance had been commissioned from the artist some two to three decades before he executed the painting now in Washington shows that the Master of the Washington Coronation must have become a well-established painter by the time of its creation, even if he still proposed very different figurative ideas than those of his full maturity. If the artist followed a decidedly "philo-Byzantine" orientation in his initial phase, in his paintings of the 1320s he draws closer to the classicism pursued by Giotto and other artists of central Italy. In works such as the panel now in Washington (dated 1324) he aspires to a figural style characterized by gothicizing elegance of movement and fluency in linear rhythms [fig. 4]. These paintings reveal an undeniable kinship with the first works attributed to Paolo Veneziano. It is therefore probable that the elderly master shared a workshop around this time with the rising star of fourteenth-century Venetian painting. [23]

Miklós Boskovits (1935–2011)

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COMPARATIVE FIGURES

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fig. 1 Reconstruction of a dispersed polyptych by the Master of the Washington Coronation: a. *The Coronation of the Virgin*; b. *Two Apostles and the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel (?)* (fig. 2)

fig. 2 Master of the Washington Coronation, *Two Apostles and the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel (?)*, 1324, tempera on panel, formerly Vittorio Cini collection, Venice

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fig. 3 Master of the Washington Coronation, *Madonna and Child with Angels and Donors*, early fourteenth century, tempera on panel, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow. Image: bpk, Berlin/Pushkin Museum, Moscow/Roman Beniaminson/Art Resource, NY

fig. 4 Detail, Master of the Washington Coronation, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1324, tempera on poplar, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

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RECONSTRUCTION

Click on any panel in the altarpiece reconstruction below to see an enlarged version of the image. Color reproductions in the reconstruction indicate panels in the National Gallery of Art collection.

Reconstruction of a dispersed polyptych by the Master of the Washington Coronation:

a. *The Coronation of the Virgin*
b. *Two Apostles and the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel (?)* (Entry fig. 2)

NOTES

[1] See Philippe Verdier, *Le couronnement de la Vierge: Les origines et les premiers développements d'un thème iconographique* (Montréal and Paris, 1980); Marie-Louise Thérel, *Le triomphe de la vierge-église: A l'origine du décor du portail occidental de Notre-Dame de Senlis* (Paris, 1984).

[2] On paintings by Tuscan artists in which Christ crowns Mary generally with

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both hands, 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), 531–539. In the earliest version of this iconography in Tuscan painting, the panel by Guido da Siena (c. 1270–1275) now in the Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery in London, Jesus places the crown on his mother's head with his right hand only. See Gertrude Coor, "The Earliest Italian Representation of the Coronation of the Virgin," *The Burlington Magazine* 99 (1957): 328–330.

[3] A fresco in the church of Santi Fermo e Rustico in Verona representing the Coronation of the Virgin must date several years before 1324. Now much damaged, it was rightly restored to the young Paolo Veneziano (Venetian, active 1333 - 1358) by Andrea De Marchi (2004) with a dating to the early third decade. The painting, executed c. 1320 according to the present writer (see Boskovits 2009), is similar in iconography to the Coronation in Washington, but the composition, adjusted to the oblong shape of the frescoed space, is densely thronged with angels to the sides of the throne. Very similar to the composition of the present panel is the embroidered antependium from the cathedral of Krk (Veglia) in Croatia, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (cf. Gamulin 1964). The work is difficult to date but presumably originated in years not far removed from the execution of the painting discussed here. Andrea De Marchi (2004) kindly brought to my attention another early representation of the subject, a now fragmentary fresco of the Coronation of the Virgin in Gemona Cathedral in Friuli, datable to the 1320s. See Andrea De Marchi, "La prima decorazione della chiesa francescana," in *I santi Fermo e Rustico: Un culto e una chiesa, per il XVII centenario del loro martirio (304–2004)*, ed. Paolo Golinelli and Caterina Gemma Brenzoni (Verona, 2004), 205–206; Miklós Boskovits, "Paolo Veneziano: Riflessioni sul percorso, 1," *Arte cristiana* 97 (2009): 83; Grgo Gamulin, "Alcune proposte per Maestro Paolo," *Emporium* 139 (1964): 151–153.

[4] As found in polyptych no. 21 of the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice and in the fragmentary panel of the Museo di Palazzo Venezia in Rome. The motif of the star-studded celestial sphere is also present in the antependium of Krk and the fresco of Gemona cited in the previous note. Cf. Rodolfo Pallucchini, ed., *La pittura veneziana del Trecento* (Venice, 1964), figs. 144 and 183.

[5] Cf. the altarpieces of San Pantalon at Venice, that of the stories of Saint Lucy at Krk (Croatia), and polyptych no. 21 of the Accademia in Venice. The five small panels with stories of the Virgin in the Museo Civico in Pesaro probably come from a similar polyptych. Cf. Rodolfo Pallucchini, ed., *La pittura veneziana del Trecento* (Venice, 1964), figs. 19–23.

[6] Although most Venetian polyptychs of the fourteenth century have come

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down to us either disassembled or incomplete, two altarpieces painted by Paolo Veneziano—in the Bishop's Palace of Krk and the (now dismembered) polyptych from the Collegiata of Pirano (on loan to the Museo di Palazzo Venezia in Rome)—still retain a gable panel with the Crucifixion. Another panel that retains its upper Crucifixion is the small altarpiece in the Galleria Nazionale in Parma, on which see Rodolfo Pallucchini, ed., *La pittura veneziana del Trecento* (Venice, 1964), figs. 48, 162, 74.

[7] Rodolfo Pallucchini (1964) published the panel, citing its provenance as the collection of the art historian Detlev von Hadeln (1878–1935) in Florence and its size as 26 × 90 cm. According to Pallucchini, the panel in question is a work by Paolo Veneziano dating to c. 1330 and must have originally formed part of the predella of a now disassembled polyptych. Michelangelo Muraro (1969) accepted that proposal, although he did not exclude the alternative suggestion that the four figures originally belonged to "una piccola iconostasi" (a small iconostasis). More recently, Mauro Lucco (1992) included the painting in the catalog of the Master of Caorle, the conventional name for an artist whose outlines perfectly coincide, in my view, with those of the Master of the Washington Coronation. See Rodolfo Pallucchini, ed., *La pittura veneziana del Trecento* (Venice, 1964), 29, 250, fig. 65; Michelangelo Muraro, *Paolo da Venezia* (Milan, 1969), 151–152; Mauro Lucco, "Maestro di Caorle," in *La Pittura nel Veneto: Il Trecento*, ed. Mauro Lucco, 2 vols. (Milan, 1992), 2:537. The alternation of full-length prophets and half-figure apostles would seem to exclude the alleged provenance of the former Cini collection panel either from a predella or from an iconostasis. Yet just such an alternation of painted figures of different scale is found in the upper register of various polyptychs from Venice or from the Veneto, e.g., that of Santa Chiara, a work by Paolo Veneziano now in the Accademia in Venice; that of Guariento now in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles; or that of Giusto de' Menabuoi in the baptistery of Padua; see Pallucchini (1964), figs. 137, 315, 399. The proportions of the individual panels of the former Cini painting, less squat than those of the predellas of Venetian altarpieces of the period, also suggest that they are more likely to belong to the upper register of an altarpiece. As regards it possibly belonging to the Washington Coronation, I can only make a tentative hypothesis, given that I am only familiar with the work from photographs; however, the stylistic features of the two paintings show that they belong to the same chronological phase of the painter, and even their proportional relations make their common origin plausible. In fact the lost laterals of the Coronation, to judge from the still intact polyptychs of Paolo Veneziano's earliest phase (such as the altarpiece in Krk and the polyptych of Santa Chiara now in the Accademia in Venice), must have been only slightly broader than the centerpiece.

[8] Following its late nineteenth-century attribution—by whom remains

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unclear—to Caterino Veneziano (in the caption of the nineteenth-century photograph cited in Technical Summary note 3), Raimond van Marle (1924) cited the Coronation as an anonymous work of "gothico-byzantine style." Evelyn Sandberg-Vavalà in 1930 expressed the view that "it is highly feasible to attribute it to Maestro Paolo himself," and in the following year Giuseppe Fiocco (1930–1931) unhesitatingly confirmed this attribution. Subsequently, only Viktor Lazarev, at least in a first publication dating to 1931, preferred to leave the painting in anonymity, while other art historians, until 1965, remained convinced of Paolo's authorship. See Raimond van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*, vol. 4, *The Local Schools of North Italy of the 14th Century* (The Hague, 1924), 5–6; Evelyn Sandberg-Vavalà, "Maestro Paolo Veneziano," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 57 (1930): 165 n. 5; Viktor Nikiti Lazarev, "Über eine neue Gruppe byzantinisch-venezianischer Trecento-Bilder," *Art Studies* 8 (1931): 13 n. 3. Giuseppe Fiocco, "Le primizie di maestro Paolo Veneziano," *Dedalo* 11 (1930–1931): 887–888; National Gallery of Art, *European Paintings: An Illustrated Catalogue* (Washington, DC, 1985), 300; Francesca Zava Boccazzi, "Paolo Veneziano," in *Dizionario della pittura e dei pittori*, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo and Bruno Toscano, 6 vols. (Turin, 1993), 4:139; John Hand, *National Gallery of Art: Master Paintings from the Collection* (New York, 2004), 10.

[9] Michelangelo Muraro, "Maestro Paolo da Venezia: Fortuna critica," *Ateneo veneto* 3 (1965): 92, 96; Michelangelo Muraro, *Paolo da Venezia* (Milan, 1969), 21, 26, 28–30, 157–159 et passim, pls. 1–2. Lazarev (1965) was the first to reunite the Washington Coronation with the Madonna no. 1604 in the Musei Civici in Padua and with the Madonna (no. I. str. 141) in the National Museum in Belgrade, classifying them as works of a predecessor, perhaps even the master, of Paolo Veneziano. The same scholar (1966) further explained that it was Muraro who had convinced him in the course of a conversation that the painting in the National Gallery of Art should be excluded from Paolo's catalog. See Viktor Nikiti Lazarev, "Saggi sulla pittura veneziana dei secoli XIII–XIV: La maniera greca e il problema della scuola cretese," *Arte veneta* 19 (1965): 24–26, 31 n. 62; Viktor Nikiti Lazarev, "Review of La pittura veneziana del Trecento by R. Pallucchini," *The Art Bulletin* 48 (1966): 120–121. Muraro himself then tried to reconstruct the production of the Master of the Washington Coronation, assigning him not only the panels in Padua and Belgrade but also the Madonna no. 7212 in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, the above-mentioned fragment with figures of saints and prophets formerly in the Cini collection in Venice, and the painted crucifix now in the church of San Giorgio dei Greci in Venice. Some other works that Muraro ascribed to the anonymous master, whom he hypothetically identified with Marco, brother of Paolo, should rather be ascribed to other hands, according to the present writer: the Madonna in Belgrade; the painted crucifix in the monastery of the Benedictine nuns at

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Trogir (Traù); and that in the Borla collection at Trino Vercellese all probably should be considered youthful works by Paolo himself. For these works, see Rosa D'Amico and Tatjana Bošnjak, in *Il Trecento adriatico: Paolo Veneziano e la pittura tra Oriente e Occidente*, ed. Francesca Flores d'Arcais and Giovanni Gentili (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2002), 144; Grgo Gamulin, *The Painted Crucifixes in Croatia* (Zagreb, 1983), 120 and pl. IV; Rodolfo Pallucchini, ed., *La pittura veneziana del Trecento* (Venice, 1964), 48 and fig 156. The antependium in the monastery of the Benedictine sisters at Zadar (Zara) and the mosaics of the baptistery of San Marco in Venice are presumably the work of other, as yet unidentified Venetian artists of the period. As for the cartoon for the stained-glass window with the figure of the Baptist in the lower church of San Francesco at Assisi, I think it is attributable to Jacopo Torriti. Cf. Alessandro Tomei, *Iacobus Torriti pictor: Una vicenda figurativa del tardo Duecento romano* (Rome, 1990), 68. Following Muraro's intervention, many art historians continued to maintain with varying degrees of conviction the attribution of the Washington Coronation to Paolo Veneziano, while others preferred to leave it in anonymity. Cf. Giuseppe Marchini, *Corpus vitrearum Medii Aevi*, vol. 1, *Le vetrate dell'Umbria* (Rome, 1973), 136; Luciano Gargan, *Cultura e arte nel Veneto al tempo del Petrarca* (Padua, 1978), 58; Hans Belting, "Introduzione," in *Il medio oriente e l'occidente nell'arte del XIII secolo, Atti del XXIV congresso internazionale di storia dell'arte, September 10–18, 1979*, ed. Hans Belting (Bologna, 1982), 10 n. 20; Marvin Eisenberg, *Lorenzo Monaco* (Princeton, 1989), 61 n. 83; Filippo Pedrocco, *Paolo Veneziano* (Milan and Venice, 2003), 213. Since the 1970s, an ever growing number of scholars have accepted Muraro's proposal, and even in some cases his conjectural attribution to Marco Veneziano: Michelangelo Muraro, "Maestro Marco e Maestro Paolo da Venezia," in *Scritti di storia dell'arte in onore di Antonio Morassi* (Venice, 1971), 23, 30–31; Giuseppe Marchini, *Corpus vitrearum Medii Aevi*, vol. 1, *Le vetrate dell'Umbria* (Rome, 1973), 136; Lucio Grossato, ed., *Da Giotto al Mantegna* (Milan, 1974), no. 9; "Paolo Veneziano," in *Dizionario enciclopedico Bolaffi dei pittori e degli incisori italiani: Dall' XI al XX secolo*, ed. Alberto Bolaffi and Umberto Allemandi, 11 vols. (Turin, 1975), 8:323; Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:326–328; Pietro Scarpellini (intro. and comm.), in *Fra Ludovico da Pietralunga and Pietro Scarpellini, Descrizione della Basilica di S. Francesco e di altri Santuari di Assisi* (Treviso, 1982), 344; Robert Gibbs, *L'occhio di Tomaso: Sulla formazione di Tomaso da Modena* (Treviso, 1981), 37; Robert Gibbs, "A Fresco by Marco or Paolo Veneziano in Treviso," *Studi trevisani* 1 (1984): 27–29, 30 n. 7; Robert Gibbs, *Tomaso da Modena: Painting in Emilia and the March of Treviso, 1340–1380* (Cambridge, 1989), 29; Robert Gibbs, "Master of the Washington Coronation," in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, 34 vols. (New York, 1996), 20:784; Robert Gibbs, "Paolo Veneziano," in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed.

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Jane Turner, 34 vols. (New York, 1996), 24:30; Mauro Lucco, "Pittura del Trecento a Venezia," in *La Pittura in Italia: Il Duecento e il Trecento*, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo, 2 vols. (Milan, 1986), 1:181; Mauro Lucco, "Marco di Martino da Venezia," in *La Pittura in Italia: Il Duecento e il Trecento*, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo, 2 vols. (Milan, 1986), 2:634; Mauro Lucco, "Paolo Veneziano," in *La Pittura in Italia: Il Duecento e il Trecento*, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo, 2 vols. (Milan, 1986), 2:648; Mauro Lucco, "Maestro dell'Incoronazione della Vergine di Washington," in *La Pittura nel Veneto: Il Trecento*, ed. Mauro Lucco, 2 vols. (Milan, 1992), 2:534; Mauro Lucco, "Marco di Martino da Venezia (Marco Veneziano)," in *La Pittura nel Veneto: Il Trecento*, ed. Mauro Lucco, 2 vols. (Milan, 1992), 2:541–542; Mauro Lucco, "Paolo Veneziano," in *La Pittura nel Veneto: Il Trecento*, ed. Mauro Lucco, 2 vols. (Milan, 1992), 2:544; Mojmir Svatopluk Frinta, *Punched Decoration on Late Medieval Panel and Miniature Painting* (Prague, 1998), 127, 128; Fulvio Zuliani, in *Da Giotto al tardogotico: Dipinti dei Musei Civici di Padova del Trecento e della prima metà del Quattrocento*, ed. Davide Banzato and Franca Pellegrini (Rome, 1989), 77–79; Francesca Flores d'Arcais, "Venezia," in *La Pittura nel Veneto: Il Trecento*, ed. Mauro Lucco, 2 vols. (Milan, 1992), 1:22; Francesca Flores d'Arcais, "Paolo Veneziano," in *Enciclopedia dell'arte medievale*, 12 vols. (Rome, 1998), 9:157; Francesca Flores d'Arcais, in *Il Trecento adriatico: Paolo Veneziano e la pittura tra Oriente e Occidente*, eds. Francesca Flores d'Arcais and Giovanni Gentili (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2002), 142; Carla Travi, "Il Maestro del trittico di Santa Chiara: Appunti per la pittura veneta di primo Trecento," *Arte cristiana* 80 (1992): 96 n. 57; Carla Travi, "Su una recente storia della pittura del Veneto nel Trecento," *Arte cristiana* 82 (1994): 71; Clara Santini, "Un'antologia pittorica del primo Trecento nella chiesa di San Francesco a Udine," *Arte cristiana* 82 (1994): 188; Clara Santini, "Un episodio della pittura veneziana di primo Trecento: Il 'Maestro dell'Incoronazione della Vergine di Washington,'" *Il Santo* 37 (1997): 123–145; Italo Furlan, in *Il Trecento adriatico: Paolo Veneziano e la pittura tra Oriente e Occidente*, ed. Francesca Flores d'Arcais and Giovanni Gentili (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2002), 118; Viktorija Markova, *Italija: Sobranie živopisi*, vol. 1, *VIII–XVI vekov* (Moscow, 2002), 43; Andrea De Marchi, "Peintre vénitien vers 1320," in S*plendeurs de la peinture italienne, 1250–1510* (Paris, 2005), 26–28; Andrea De Marchi, "Polyptyques vénitiens: Anamnèse d'une identité méconnue," in *Autour de Lorenzo Veneziano: Fragments de polyptyques vénitiens du XIVe siècle*, ed. Andrea De Marchi (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2005), 14–15; Andrea De Marchi, "La postérité du devant d'autel à Venise: Retables orfévrés et retables peints," in *The Altar and its Environment, 1150–1400*, ed. J.E.A. Kroesen and Victor Michael Schmidt (Turnhout, 2009), 63.

[10] Cf. Lucio Grossato, ed., *Da Giotto al Mantegna* (Milan, 1974), no. 9; Fulvio Zuliani, in *Da Giotto al tardogotico: Dipinti dei Musei Civici di Padova del Trecento e della prima metà del Quattrocento*, ed. Davide Banzato and

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Franca Pellegrini (Rome, 1989), 77–79. Francesca Flores d'Arcais claimed to detect—erroneously, in my view—differences between this panel and the Coronation in Washington, "soprattutto nella maggiore corposità della Madonna padovana…a differenza della morbidissima ed elegante struttura delle figure Kress [i.e., the figures of the Washington panel] avvolte in vesti che molto più si legano alla tradizione bizantina…" (above all in the greater solidity of the Paduan Madonna…as distinguished from the soft and elegant structure of the Kress figures, wrapped in draperies much more closely tied to the Byzantine tradition). Francesca Flores d'Arcais, in *Il Trecento adriatico: Paolo Veneziano e la pittura tra Oriente e Occidente*, ed. Francesca Flores d'Arcais and Giovanni Gentili (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2002), 142.

[11] Cf. Maria Cristina Bandera Viani, *Museo delle icone bizantine e post bizantine e Chiesa di San Giorgio dei Greci* (Bologna, 1988), 1–2; Clara Santini, "Un episodio della pittura veneziana di primo Trecento: Il 'Maestro dell'Incoronazione della Vergine di Washington,'" *Il Santo* 37 (1997): 125 and pl. 5.

[12] Cf. Christie's, Rome, May 20, 1974, lot. 73. Measuring 53 × 73 cm, it is a fragment of the lower part of a panel depicting the Crucifixion. The sale catalog linked this work with the circle of the painter of the Washington Coronation, and Carla Travi later inserted it in the catalog of the Master of Caorle (alternative name of the Master of the Washington Coronation). Carla Travi, "Il Maestro del trittico di Santa Chiara: Appunti per la pittura veneta di primo Trecento," *Arte cristiana* 80 (1992): 96 n. 57.

[13] On the panel now at Vodnjan, *Blessed Leone Bembo with a Donor, Angels, and Four Stories of His Life*, cf. Rodolfo Pallucchini, ed., *La pittura veneziana del Trecento* (Venice, 1964), 22–24, figs. 27–34. Various scholars (including Flores d'Arcais 1992) have attributed it to Paolo Veneziano, but Filippo Pedrocco (2003) cited it as the work of a "maestro precedente" (i.e., a master earlier than Paolo). In my view, the Vodnjan panel belongs to the catalog of the Master of the Washington Coronation. See Francesca Flores d'Arcais, "Venezia," in *La Pittura nel Veneto: Il Trecento*, ed. Mauro Lucco, 2 vols. (Milan, 1992), 1:29, 32, 34; Filippo Pedrocco, *Paolo Veneziano* (Milan and Venice, 2003), 213; Miklós Boskovits, "Paolo Veneziano: Riflessioni sul percorso, 1," *Arte cristiana* 97 (2009): 88 n. 21.

[14] Cf. Rodolfo Pallucchini, ed., *La pittura veneziana del Trecento* (Venice, 1964), 20–21, and figs. 19–23, and in more recent years Alessandro Marchi, in *Il Trecento adriatico: Paolo Veneziano e la pittura tra Oriente e Occidente*, ed. Francesca Flores d'Arcais and Giovanni Gentili (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2002), 146. In my view, Marchi's dating to the third decade of the fourteenth century should be pushed back to the second decade.

[15] See Andrea De Marchi, "La prima decorazione della chiesa francescana," in

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I santi Fermo e Rustico: Un culto e una chiesa, per il XVII centenario del loro martirio (304–2004), ed. Paolo Golinelli and Caterina Gemma Brenzoni (Verona, 2004), 199–219. De Marchi (206) dated the frescoed decoration of the church in Verona to the early 1320s, in a period "in cui il giovanissimo Paolo sembra muoversi ancora sotto tutela del Maestro dell'Incoronazione del 1324, forse suo padre Martino" (in which the very young Paolo seems still to be moving under the tutelage of the Master of the 1324 Coronation, perhaps his father Martino). But a slightly earlier dating, to the end of the second decade, should not be excluded. Paolo died between 1358 and 1362, so he probably would not have been all that young around 1315.

[16] Published by Kruno Prijatelk, "Nota su una Crocifissione vicina a Paolo Veneziano a Split (Spalato)," *Arte veneta* 40 (1986): 148–150, the painting was restored to the Master of Caorle by Mauro Lucco, "Maestro di Caorle," in *La Pittura nel Veneto: Il Trecento*, ed. Mauro Lucco, 2 vols. (Milan, 1992), 2:537; and by Carla Travi, "Il Maestro del trittico di Santa Chiara: Appunti per la pittura veneta di primo Trecento," *Arte cristiana* 80 (1992): 96 n. 57.

[17] The two fragments in Forlì, left in anonymity by earlier art historians such as Edward B. Garrison (1949) and Giordano Viroli (1980), were attributed to the Master of Caorle by Giovanni Valagussa (1995). Cf. Edward B. Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index* (Florence, 1949), 237; Giordano Viroli, ed., *La Pinacoteca Civica di Forlì* (Forlì, 1980), 6–7; Giovanni Valagussa, "Prima di Giotto," in *Il Trecento riminese: Maestri e botteghe tra Romagna e Marche*, ed. Daniele Benati (Milan, 1995), 77–78.

[18] Published as a work of the "Veneto-Byzantine school of the 14th century" by Ettore Merkel, "Isole del nord della Laguna," *Quaderni della Soprintendenza ai beni artistici e storici di Venezia* 14 (1986): 159–160, the panel was reassigned to the Master of Caorle by the present writer. Cf. Carla Travi, "Su una recente storia della pittura del Veneto nel Trecento," *Arte cristiana* 82 (1994): 71.

[19] Discussed by Rodolfo Pallucchini, ed., *La pittura veneziana del Trecento* (Venice, 1964), 10, figs. 2–4, as examples of a "bizantinismo…[che] sembra decantarsi in un classicismo ellenistico, mediante una costruzione intensamente plastica della forma…alla fine del Duecento" (Byzantinism which seems to decant itself into a Hellenistic classicism by means of an intensely plastic construction of forms…at the end of the thirteenth century), the San Zan Degolà frescoes were interpreted as an "announcement of the art of Paolo Veneziano" by Michelangelo Muraro, "Antichi affreschi veneziani," in *Le meraviglie del passato* (Verona, 1954), 688. Sergio Bettini (1954) noted their kinship with the mosaic dated 1277 on the ciborium of the Basilica Eufrasiana in Parenzo (Istria), and Italo Furlan (2002) dated them even earlier, to c. 1260. According to Luciano Bellosi, on the other hand (1985), the architectural settings of these frescoes were "troppo solide e concrete per non postulare un precedente assisiate" (too concrete and solid

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not to postulate a precedent [for them] in Assisi), and this implied a dating to the early years of the fourteenth century. A late thirteenth-century date had already been postulated by Lazarev (1965), the first to compare the San Zan Degolà cycle with the Madonna in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow and the Washington Coronation, followed by Boskovits (1989), who included in the master's oeuvre, in addition to the aforesaid works, the panels in Caorle (for which see also note 22 below). Travi (1994) then categorically affirmed the common authorship of the frescoes and the group of paintings formerly combined with the Washington Coronation under the conventional name of the Master of Caorle. See Sergio Bettini, "I mosaici dell'atrio di San Marco e il loro seguito," *Arte veneta* 8 (1954): 7–24; Italo Furlan, in *Il Trecento adriatico: Paolo Veneziano e la pittura tra Oriente e Occidente*, ed. Francesca Flores d'Arcais and Giovanni Gentili (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2002), 118; Luciano Bellosi, *La pecora di Giotto* (Turin, 1985), 147 n. 93, 214; Viktor Nikiti Lazarev, "Saggi sulla pittura veneziana dei secoli XIII–XIV: La maniera greca e il problema della scuola cretese," *Arte veneta* 19 (1965): 24–26, 31 n. 62; Miklós Boskovits, "Pittura e miniatura a Milano: Duecento a primo Trecento " in *La nuova città dal Comune alla Signoria*, ed. Carlo Bertelli, Il millennio ambrosiano (Milan, 1989), 67 n. 68; Carla Travi, "Su una recente storia della pittura del Veneto nel Trecento," *Arte cristiana* 82 (1994): 71.

[20] The neo-Hellenistic tendency, attested in the field of monumental painting by the frescoes of Sopoani, is also exemplified by various icons in the collection of the monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai, or by the miniatures in the *Prophet Book* of the Biblioteca Vaticana (Vat. Gr. 1153), or those of the Gospels (ms. 5) of the Monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos and of ms. grec. 54 in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. Cf. Vojislav J. Đuri, *Byzantinische Fresken in Jugoslawien* (Munich, 1976) 54–57; Helen C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261–1557)* (New Haven, 2004), 356–365.

[21] Published by Viktor Nikiti Lazarev, "Saggi sulla pittura veneziana dei secoli XIII–XIV: La maniera greca e il problema della scuola cretese," *Arte veneta* 19 (1965): 23–25, as the work of an anonymous Venetian master dating to c. 1310–1315, it was restored to the Master of the Washington Coronation by Michelangelo Muraro, *Paolo da Venezia* (Milan, 1969), 125. For a review of the fortuna critica, cf. Viktorija Markova, *Italija: Sobranie živopisi*, vol. 1, *VIII–XVI vekov* (Moscow, 2002), 41–43. Cf. also notes 9 and 19 above.

[22] Rodolfo Pallucchini, ed., *La pittura veneziana del Trecento* (Venice, 1964), 59–60 and figs. 203–204, published the six panels in question, with busts of apostles; he attributed them to a Master of Caorle. In his view, this master was a follower of Paolo during the phase of his full maturity. Michelangelo Muraro, *Paolo da Venezia* (Milan, 1969), 109–110, in contrast, thought that these penetrating images of apostles are even later in date, ascribing them

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to a "pittore veneto-bizantino del tardo Trecento" (Venetian-Byzantine painter of the late fourteenth century). More correctly, Mauro Lucco (1992) connected the panels in Caorle with some works in the catalog of the Master of the Washington Coronation, while Travi (1994) combined under the conventional name of the Master of Caorle the majority of the works attributable to the master of the panel in Washington. Cf. Mauro Lucco, "Maestro di Caorle," in *La Pittura nel Veneto: Il Trecento*, ed. Mauro Lucco, 2 vols. (Milan, 1992), 2:537; Carla Travi, "Su una recente storia della pittura del Veneto nel Trecento," *Arte cristiana* 82 (1994): 71–72.

[23] Although various scholars have expressed doubt, I think Rodolfo Pallucchini (1964) was right to see the hand of the young Paolo in the figures of the two tiny donors painted kneeling at the feet of the wooden relief of San Donato in the altarpiece at Murano, a work dated 1310 and hence the earliest testimony of the artist's activity. See Rodolfo Pallucchini, ed., *La pittura veneziana del Trecento* (Venice, 1964), 19 and figs. 16–18. Apart from the paintings cited in notes 3–5 above, I think that Paolo's initial phase also should include some paintings significantly attributed in the past to the Master of the National Museum in Belgrade (inv. I str. 141). Cf. Rosa D'Amico and Tatjana Bošnjak, in *Il Trecento adriatico: Paolo Veneziano e la pittura tra Oriente e Occidente*, ed. Francesca Flores d'Arcais and Giovanni Gentili (Cinisello Balsamo, Milan, 2002), 144–145. These include two painted crucifixes, one in the monastery of the Benedictine nuns at Trogir and the other in the Borla collection at Trino Vercellese (see above note 9).

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The painting was executed on a two-member, vertically grained poplar panel. [1] Mario Modestini thinned and cradled the panel during a restoration treatment in 1953. [2] The x-radiographs reveal that four knots were cut out of the panel and replaced with insets, and the areas were covered with pieces of fabric. The artist applied the paint on a moderately thick gesso ground, apparently without the help of a preparatory underdrawing. The main lines of the draperies were incised into the gesso, but they do not correspond to the gilded highlights of the mantles of Christ and of the Virgin in the painting. The artist used green underpaint in the flesh tones and mordant gilding on top of the paint to decorate the draperies. The upper part of the painted area terminates in a mixtilinear arch placed within an ogival arch with crocketed ornament. The spandrels to its side, forming the upper angles of the wooden support, were originally covered by the frame and therefore were not gilded or painted but only gessoed. In these areas the artist sometimes

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wiped his brushes and, on the left side, sketched a pinnacle-shaped form (perhaps a detail of the original frame), discovered after the removal of the surviving remainder of the frame. The painted surface is generally in fair condition. A considerable number of small scattered losses appear in the central part of the gold ground as well as in the draperies (especially in the Virgin's mantle), whereas along the bottom edge of the panel the paint is irregularly fractured, obliterating the riser of the dais. An old photograph, taken in the late nineteenth century [fig. 1], [3] shows the picture covered with dirt and darkened varnish. Another photo [fig. 2], made before the 1953 treatment, proves that in the meantime the painting was probably treated. [4] During the last recorded treatment, another discolored varnish was removed and the losses were inpainted.

TECHNICAL COMPARATIVE FIGURES

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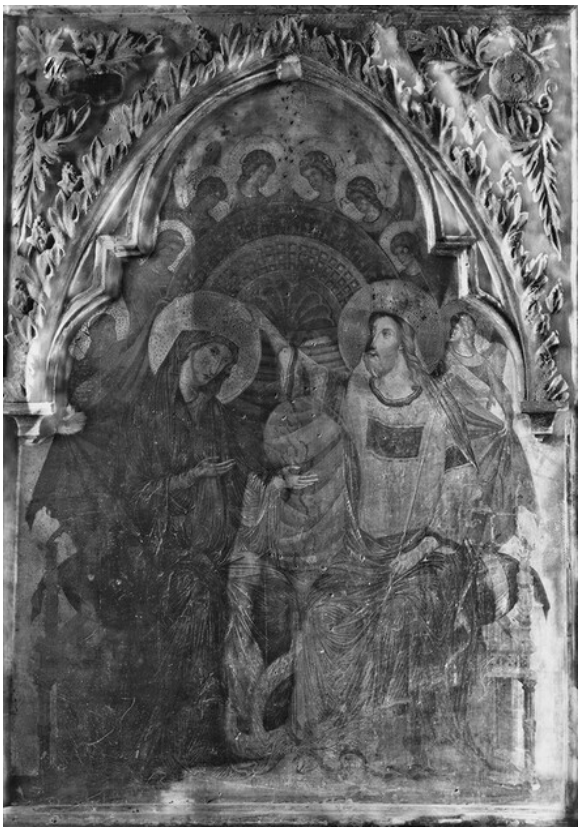

fig. 1 Archival photograph, late nineteenth century, Master of the Washington Coronation, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1324, tempera on poplar, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

fig. 2 Archival photograph, pre-1953, Master of the Washington Coronation, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1324, tempera on poplar, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

TECHNICAL NOTES

[1] The NGA scientific research department identified the wood (see report dated May 30, 1989, in NGA conservation files).

[2] Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:328, mentioned that Mario Modestini “cradled, cleaned and restored” the painting in 1953.

[3] This photo (Naya, no. 880; negative now with Osvaldo Böhm in Venice) is not listed in the catalogs of the photographer Carlo Naya (1816–1882) that I have been able to consult. However, the *Catalogo generale dei quadri e*

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affreschi esistenti nelle chiese di Venezia published by his firm in 1900 listed negatives numbered above 2000, so the one cited here presumably had been executed some years earlier. See also Provenance note 1.

[4] Photograph in the NGA conservation files.

PROVENANCE

Antonio Dal Zotto [1841–1918], Venice.[1] Dr. J. Carl [or Carlo?] Broglio, Paris;[2] purchased jointly 27 July 1950 by (Thos. Agnew and Sons, Ltd., London) and (Rudolf Heinemann, New York); Agnew share sold to (Rudolf Heinemann, New York); (M. Knoedler and Co., New York);[3] purchased February 1952 as by Paolo Veneziano by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York;[4] gift 1952 to NGA.

[1] On the life and career of the sculptor Dal Zotto see Livia Alberton Vinco da Sesso, "Antonio dal Zotto," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 77 vols., Rome, 1960-: 32(1986): 285–287. In 1889 Dal Zotto married Ida Lessjak, widow of the photographer Carlo Naya, and after her death in 1893 Dal Zotto became owner of Naya's successful firm specializing in views of Venice and reproductions of works of art. According to Alberton Vinco da Sesso, Naya had also amassed a collection of ancient statuary, and it cannot be excluded that the Gallery's painting actually came from the photographer's collection. Nonetheless, the catalogue of the sculptor's estate sale, *Collezione del fu Comm. Antonio del Zotto e già Giuseppe Piccoli* (Geri-Salvadori, Venice, 1-16 September 1919), does not cite the painting, which perhaps had already been sold.

[2] Michelangelo Muraro, *Paolo da Venezia*, Milano, 1969: 157, transmits the reported provenance of the painting from the Broglio collection, annotated on a photograph in the photographic archive of the Biblioteca Berenson at the Villa I Tatti, Florence. The Agnew stockbooks record the painting as no. J0332 and identify the Broglio family member from whom it was purchased.

[3] The Agnew records (kindly confirmed by Venetia Constantine of Agnew's, e-mail, 28 June 2010, in NGA curatorial files) give details about the joint purchase and indicate that Agnew's share in the painting was sold to Heinemann on 16 June

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1952, several months after the February date of the Knoedler bill of sale to the Kress Foundation (see note 4). Constantine speculates that Agnew might have recorded the date when payment for their share was actually received from Heinemann, rather than the date when they made the decision to sell their share. Heinemann often worked in tandem with Knoedler's, for whom he was at one time managing partner, and may have done so in this instance.

[4] The bill of sale from Knoedler's to the Kress Foundation for twelve paintings, including this one, is dated 6 February 1952; payment was made in three installments, the final one on 5 September 1952. See also M. Knoedler and Co. Records, accession number 2012.M.54, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles: Series II, Box 76 (Sales Book No. 16, Paintings, 1945-1953). Copies of the Knoedler bill and sale record are in NGA curatorial files. See also The Kress Collection Digital Archive, https://kress.nga.gov/Detail/objects/2111.

INSCRIPTION FOOTNOTES

[1] The NGA scientific research department analyzed the gilding of the inscription, that of the background, and that of an area of restoration using x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (see report dated February 9, 1999, in NGA conservation files). All three areas showed the same elements; therefore, this type of analysis could not be used to determine if the inscription is original.

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