



Margaritone d'Arezzo

Italian, active second and third quarter 13th century

## *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Four Saints*

c. 1240/1245

tempera on panel

overall: 97.3 × 49.9 × 1.3 cm (38 5/16 × 19 5/8 × 1/2 in.)

height (main panel, without extension for head and halo): 73.6 cm (29 in.)

top section (extension for head and halo): 26.5 × 23.5 cm (10 7/16 × 9 1/4 in.)

framed: 102.2 × 55.9 × 5.7 cm (40 1/4 × 22 × 2 1/4 in.)

Inscription: across the bottom: MARGARIT[VS DE ARITIO ME FECIT (Margaritus of Arezzo made me) [1]

[1] The NGA scientific research department analyzed the signature using cross-sections and found a layer containing lead white between the gesso and the paint. This layer was not present in cross-sections taken from the main body of the painting. In addition, there were numerous layers of paint in each signature cross-section. This indicates that the signature has been repainted several times. It is unclear whether there was originally a signature in this area, as is found in almost all of Margarito's paintings that have come down to us. If there was, the current inscription may not bear any resemblance to it (see report dated April 24, 2007, in NGA conservation files). Alessio Monciatti's comparative paleographical analysis (2010), however, showed the inscription very similar to those existing on the artist's other paintings. See Alessio Monciatti, "Margarito, l'artista e il mito," in *Arte in terra d'Arezzo: Il Medioevo*, edited by Marco Collareta and Paola Refice, Florence, 2010: 213-224.

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### ENTRY

The Madonna is portrayed in a rigidly frontal position, seated on a throne without any backrest and of a shape similar to those that mainly appear in paintings of the first half of the thirteenth century.[1] She holds the child in front of her, in a similarly frontal position. The Christ child lifts his right hand in the gesture of blessing and

holds a scroll in his left, alluding to the Christian revelation. The iconography, of Byzantine origin, is known as the Virgin *Nikopoios* (Victory Maker). It frequently appears in the apsidal decoration of churches of the middle Byzantine period and was widespread also in panels in central Italy between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[2] In such paintings it was typical to present Mary, as in the image here, with the haloed head projecting upwards from the upper margin of the rectangular panel.[3] It was also usual practice to paint golden stars on the *maphorion* or mantle covering her two shoulders, and often on the veil covering her head, alluding to the popular etymology of her name.[4] The crown, on the other hand, alludes to the Marian attribute of *regina coeli*; it is of a particular form and decoration that often appears in the paintings by Margaritone.[5]

In representations of similar type, the figures of saints, if present at all, always appear, as they do here, on a scale considerably smaller than that of the Virgin and child; they hover against the gold ground to the sides of the central image.[6] They have been variously identified, but it is probable that the elderly monk in the black habit and with a book in his hand represents Saint Benedict, and that the two female saints holding lamps in their hands represent the martyrs Flora and Lucilla, whose mortal remains are venerated in the abbey dedicated to them in Arezzo. As for the youthful beardless saint facing Saint Benedict, we can do no more than conjecture: he could be the disciple preferred by Jesus, Saint John the Evangelist, as is usually suggested, but he could also be Eugenius, companion in martyrdom of the two female saints below.[7]

It is a measure of the change in taste over the last two centuries that the panel, to which Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle and James Archer Crowe in 1886 conceded only that it is “one of the least ugly paintings left by this painter,” was hailed by Robert Lehman forty years later (1928) as “a supreme achievement of the art of the pre-giottesque period.”[8] It was, remarked Lehman, a work in which the painter “has contributed overwhelming force and grandeur to the quiet dignity and symmetry of the Byzantine tradition,” while Ugo Galetti and Ettore Camesasca (1951) in the relevant entry of their *Enciclopedia*, placed it among Margaritone’s “opere più belle” (most beautiful works).[9] As for the authorship of the work, without doubting the authenticity of the signature, some art historians have suggested that it could be a workshop variant, hence not a fully autograph painting.[10] The date of execution is mainly placed between 1250 and 1270, though occasionally pushed back to c. 1235/1245.[11] Such considerable variations in date are uncommon even in the study of thirteenth-century painting. To throw

light on the question, let us first try to establish the relative chronology of the various versions of the Madonna painted by Margaritone and attempt on this basis to arrive at the dating of the individual works.

The stylistic affinities among the Madonna Enthroned from Montelungo (now in the Museum in Arezzo), that of the National Gallery in London, and the panel discussed here have often been emphasized. These versions are sharply differentiated from a fourth representation of the theme [fig. 1], the one painted for the church of Santa Maria delle Vertighe outside Monte San Savino (near Arezzo). There, not only is the child shown in three-quarter profile, but the chrysography of his garment also is used in a different way: it serves not just to embellish the figure but also to emphasize the volumetric substance of the forms. The chiaroscuro modeling of the faces also suggests that, at the time of the execution of the Santa Maria delle Vertighe panel, Margaritone was familiar with and tried to emulate certain innovative features of Byzantine neo-Hellenism disseminated in Tuscany by Giunta Pisano and other masters closely related to him around the mid-thirteenth century.[12] The same Madonna is also differentiated from Margaritone's other versions of the theme by the less elongated forms of the bodies and faces and the treatment of the drapery, which, instead of appearing as a kind of decorative pattern applied over the flattened forms, envelops the bodies, allowing us to glimpse the brilliant red of the lining of the Virgin's mantle and even the shape of her throne. Moreover, in the Madonna of Monte San Savino, Margaritone abandons the archaic device of the seat as a compact block and presents us instead with a throne of more slender and more fanciful form, with the seat supported by figures of lions.[13]

There can be little doubt, therefore, that the Madonna from Monte San Savino should be several years later in date than the others, and that they in turn are close to one another, not only in pictorial idiom but probably also in date of execution. Nonetheless, some differences can be observed among the three similar versions of the Virgin *Nikopoios* painted by Margaritone. The Madonna in London presents the protagonist with more robust forms than the others, and here too Mary is seated on a throne supported by lions. She is wearing a vermilion red dress, in contrast to the deep violet, perhaps intended to imitate imperial purple,[14] in the panels in Arezzo and Washington. The diversity of the figures of the angels that flank Mary in the panels in London and Arezzo should also be noted: in the latter, the angel in the upper left, despite his similar pose, seems more static, and his forms are rendered in more summary form than in the other. I believe, in

conclusion, there are grounds for deducing that the London altarpiece is more advanced in style though chronologically closer to the other two than to the panel from Monte San Savino.

Though they resemble each other closely, some differences can be observed between the paintings in Arezzo and Washington. The oval face of the Madonna [fig. 2] is more elongated in the version in the National Gallery of Art, and the tiny figures of the lateral saints seem more rigid and the drawing of their forms more summary. In the Madonna now in Washington, moreover, there are as yet no signs of the attempts detectable in the panel in Arezzo to represent spatial depth by emphasizing the forward projection of the Virgin's knees; he does this by the expediency of flanking areas in full light with those in shadow. In the panel discussed here the artist makes no such attempt: he essentially limits himself to the use of linear means to indicate the drapery folds. This suggests that it belongs to an earlier phase in Margarito's career.

How can these observations be reconciled with our current knowledge of the development of Tuscan painting in the thirteenth century and with the very few dates known to us on the activity of the Aretine master? The fragmentary date of the Monte San Savino panel, which in its present state can only be read as "M.C.C.L[...].III,"[15] has been conjecturally integrated as 1269, 1274, and 1283. The reminiscences of the manner of Giunta Pisano detectable in the painting, and the circumstance that the Pisan master, already famed in 1236, is documented only down to 1254,[16] suggest, however, that preference be given to the date 1269. This preference becomes even more compelling if we think of the activity in Arezzo, during the seventh decade, of artists of far more advanced style than that evinced by Margaritone and Ristoro d'Arezzo.[17] As for the dating transmitted by a seventeenth-century inscription (1250) for the Madonna from Montelungo, even if it cannot be considered as certain it seems plausible, since it would place the execution of the panel at a sufficiently wide interval from the image of Monte San Savino. Whatever the case, the analysis of the style suggests that the Washington Madonna dates to a phase preceding the panel from Montelungo. The type of the image itself as well as the stylistic data underline its kinship with works by the Sienese Master of Tressa, datable to the third decade of the century,[18] and the Florentine Bigallo Master, whose comparable panels probably date to the years around 1230–1240.[19] Both in his parsimonious use of shadow zones in the modeling and in his choice of the type of throne for the scene of Christ Sitting in Judgment, the painter of archaizing tendency who frescoed the cycle of the chapel

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of San Silvestro in the monastery of the Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome in 1246 [20] would seem to indicate a slightly more advanced stage in stylistic development. Therefore, based on the evidence both of historical context and of a plausible reconstruction of the internal development of Margaritone's style, it would seem that the Madonna in the Gallery probably was executed at a date close to or not long after 1240.

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**COMPARATIVE FIGURES**



**fig. 1** Margaritone and Ristoro d'Arezzo, *Madonna and Child Enthroned and Four Stories of the Virgin*, 1260s, tempera on panel, Santa Maria delle Vertighe, Monte San Savino (Arezzo). Image courtesy of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici e Paesaggistici e per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico ed Etnoantropologico per la provincia di Arezzo



**fig. 2** Detail of Madonna, Margaritone d'Arezzo, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Four Saints*, c. 1240/1245, tempera on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

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**NOTES**

[1] In his study on the typology of thrones, James H. Stubblebine classified the one represented in Margaritone's panel in his first group, that of thrones without backrest, essentially flat and consisting "of a series of alternately projecting and receding bands decorated with abstract designs." This form generally appears in paintings datable within or not much later than the mid-thirteenth century, yet Stubblebine believed that the painting (in his view executed in the third quarter of the century) could also be placed in it, because of the archaizing tendencies of its master, in his view "sufficiently removed from a vital, creative center, to miss most of the progressive trends" of the art of his time. See James H. Stubblebine, "The Development of the Throne in Dugento Tuscan Painting," *Marsyas* 7 (1954–1957): 26. But, apart from the consideration that Arezzo in the thirteenth century could

justly be considered a very lively cultural center (cf. Wieruszowski 1953; repro. in Wieruszowski 1971), the thrones of the versions of the Madonna now respectively in Arezzo and Washington are very similar to those reproduced in such works as the so-called *Madonna dagli occhi grossi* in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Siena, datable to the second decade (cf. Butzek 2001), or the *Pala di San Zanobi* in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Florence, executed within the 1220s (cf. Boskovits 1993). See Helene Wieruszowski, "Arezzo as a Center of Learning and Letters in the Thirteenth Century," *Traditio* 9 (1953): 321–391; Helene Wieruszowski, *Politics and Culture in Medieval Spain and Italy*, Storia e letteratura (Rome, 1971), 387–474; Monica Butzek, "Per la storia delle due Madonne delle Grazie nel Duomo di Siena," *Prospettiva* 103–104 (2001): 97–109; Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting*, sec. 1, vol. 1, *The Origins of Florentine Painting, 1100–1270* (Florence, 1993), 89–95. The difference between the thrones of these earlier images and that painted by Margaritone consists merely in the slight bending upwards of the upper section of the throne, a device that should probably be understood as an attempt at foreshortening and hence a vague allusion to the three-dimensionality of the throne's seat. By contrast, works securely dated after the midcentury, such as Coppo di Marcovaldo's Madonna of 1261 in the church of the Servi in Siena, or that attributed both to Dietisalvi di Speme and to Guido da Siena in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena, executed one year later, present thrones supported by massive legs formed of the superimposition of elements of geometric form and others imitating plant motifs. Cf. Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting*, sec. 1, vol. 1, *The Origins of Florentine Painting, 1100–1270* (Florence, 1993), 510–523; and Piero Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena*, vol. 1, *I dipinti dal XII al XV secolo* (Genoa, 1977), 22–23. The same features are also found in other images datable to the same years, such as the mosaic Madonna in the *scarsella* (chancel) of the Baptistery of Florence or Meliore's Pala at Panzano. Cf. Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting*, sec. 1, vol. 2, *The Mosaics of the Baptistery of Florence* (Florence, 2007), 224–240; and Boskovits, *Corpus*, sec. 1, vol. 1, 631–641. Whatever value one wants to attribute to this evidence, the form of a throne similar to the one described in the panel now in the National Gallery of Art strongly suggests a date not much later than the mid-thirteenth century.

- [2] Cf. Olenka Z. Pevny, in *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261*, ed. Helen C. Evans and William D. Wixom (New York, 1997), 140–141.
- [3] Edward B. Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index* (Florence, 1949), 89–95, listed no fewer than thirty examples of this type of image, a number certainly lower than that of the paintings of this kind now

known. Significantly, the panels now cited in this category are all, with the exception of seven, Tuscan in origin. Garrison's datings now seem too late. There are good grounds for assuming that the great majority of the panels in question date roughly to the years between the second half of the twelfth and approximately the mid-thirteenth century.

- [4] Cf. Carlo Cecchelli, *Mater Christi*, 4 vols., Oriente e Occidente (Rome, 1946), 1:158–159. The popularity of this attribute probably derives at least in part from the well-known Marian hymn “Ave maris stella”; see Hermann Adalbert Daniel, *Thesaurus hymnologicus sive Hymnorum, canticorum, sequentiarum circa annum MD usitatarum collectio amplissima* (Halis, 1841), 204–206.
- [5] The image of Mary as queen was familiar and widespread in Roman art since the sixth century. The iconography of the *regina coeli* was used ever more frequently in the early medieval period; cf. Gerard A. Wellen, “Das Marienbild der frühchr. Kunst,” in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum and Günter Bandmann, 8 vols. (Rome, 1971), 3:158. In this case, too, hymns like the “Salve Regina” undoubtedly contributed to the dissemination of representations of Mary with the crown on her head. See Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, “Salve regina,” in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris, 1950), 15-1:714–724; on the images, see Marion Lawrence, “Maria Regina,” *The Art Bulletin* 7 (1925): 150–161. In an article on the subject, Sonia Chiodo observed that the peculiar type of crown present in Margaritone's versions of the Madonna corresponds to the imperial type that also appears in some seals of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. She attributed a possible political significance to the use of the motif and linked its appearance with the period of Guglielmino degli Ubertini (1248–1289) as bishop of Arezzo. Guglielmino was an ardent supporter of the pro-papal Guelph party in the investiture controversy. See Sonia Chiodo, “Maria regina nelle opere di Margarito d'Arezzo,” in *Medioevo: La chiesa e il palazzo; Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Parma, September 20–24, 2005*, ed. Arturo Carlo Quintavalle (Milan, 2007), 598–603.
- [6] As in some panels of the Bigallo Master in the Villa la Quiete near Florence and in the Museum at Certaldo. Cf. Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting*, sec. 1, vol. 1, *The Origins of Florentine Painting, 1100–1270* (Florence 1993), 312–315, 350–352; Rosanna Caterina Proto Pisani, ed., *Il Museo di Arte Sacra a Certaldo* (Bagno a Ripoli 2001), 28. The same arrangement of disembodied saints hovering to the sides of the central image is also found, however, in a few other paintings dating as late as the second half of the century.
- [7] Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovan Battista Cavalcaselle, *Geschichte der italienischen Malerei*, ed. *Deutsche Original-Ausgabe*, 6 vols. (Leipzig, 1869–1876), 1:156, and later editions, thought that the saints in question were Bruno and Benedict above and two Cistercian monks below. Lionello



Venturi, *Pittura italiana in America* (Milan, 1931), no. 7 and later edition, accepted the identity of Saint Benedict in the black-habited figure in the upper right but identified the figure facing him on the left side as Saint John the Evangelist and the two female saints in the lower order as Mary Magdalene and Martha. Edward B. Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index* (Florence, 1949), 49, conjecturally proposed John the Evangelist for the saint in the upper left and referred to the two female saints in the lower row as two martyr saints. Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection: Italian Schools, XIII–XV Century* (London, 1966), 3–13, passim, identified the upper saints as John and Benedict and conjectured that the female figures in the lower row were two of the wise Virgins (cf. 25 Mt:1–13). The pointed cowl of the saint in the upper right might make one think of Saint Francis. On the other hand, the wide sleeves of the saint's habit and the fact that he is not wearing the cord around his habit that Franciscans used as a belt suggests that he is a Benedictine monk, probably the founder of the Benedictine order. As for the saint facing him on the opposite side, there are no attributes or other features that might help to identify him, other than his youth. Given that the panel is by a painter from Arezzo, the two women with the lamps in their hands and wearing the crown of martyrdom can be identified as Saints Flora and Lucilla, much venerated in that city and its area. They are also represented with the same attributes and with the crown on their head in the panel by Margaritone and Ristoro at Monte San Savino and in a Quattrocento dossal still preserved—though now in fragmentary state—in the church in Arezzo dedicated to the two female saints; cf. Anna Maria Maetzke, in *Arte nell'Areino: Recupero e restauri dal 1968 al 1974*, ed. Lionello G. Boccia et al. (Florence, 1974), 25; and George Kaftal, *Saints in Italian Art*, vol. 1, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence, 1952), 641–642. Their presence would perhaps permit the hypothesis that the young saint not clearly identifiable could be Eugenius, on whom see Giuseppe Palazzini, “Lucilla, Flora, Eugenio e compagni,” in *Bibliotheca sanctorum*, 12 vols. (Rome, 1967), 8:275–276.

- [8] Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovan Battista Cavalcaselle, *Storia della pittura in Italia dal secolo II al secolo XVI*, 11 vols. (Florence, 1886–1908), 1:291; Robert Lehman, *The Philip Lehman Collection, New York* (Paris, 1928), no. 1.
- [9] Robert Lehman, *The Philip Lehman Collection, New York* (Paris, 1928), no. 1; Ugo Galetti and Ettore Camesasca, *Enciclopedia della pittura italiana*, 3 vols. (Milan, 1951), 2:1661.
- [10] According to Anna Maria Maetzke, the panel in the National Gallery of Art “potrebbe essere solo una derivazione di bottega,” i.e., a workshop product derived from the prototype represented by the Madonna of Montelungo now in the Museo Statale d'Arte Medievale e Moderna, Arezzo. See Maetzke, in *Arte nell'Areino: Recupero e restauri dal 1968 al 1974*, ed.

Lionello G. Boccia et al. (Florence, 1974), 16. Subsequently, Hanna Kiel called the Madonna in Washington a weak variant of that of Montelungo, while Stefania Ricci classified it, albeit conjecturally, as a product of Margarito's shop. Cf. Hanna Kiel, "Review of Arte nell'Aretino, recuperi e restauri dal 1968 al 1974," *Pantheon* 33 (1975): 174–175; Stefania Ricci, "Margarito d'Arezzo," in *La Pittura in Italia: Il Duecento e il Trecento*, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo, 2 vols. (Milan, 1986), 2:634.

[11] Edward Garrison (1949), the first to tackle the problem of dating, proposed a date of c. 1270, followed by NGA (1965), Fern Rusk Shapley (1966), and NGA (1985); Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti (1955, 1969) suggested 1260, and Anna Maria Maetzke (1974), c. 1250. In a later moment, Shapley too (1979) preferred an earlier dating, 1250–1270, while Ada Labriola (1987) indicated c. 1240 as the most probable date. Miklós Boskovits (1993) pushed back the date even further and proposed the years between the fourth and fifth decade of the century. John Richardson (1996), for his part, restated the later dating, between 1265 and 1275. See Edward B. Garrison, *Italian Romanesque Panel Painting: An Illustrated Index* (Florence, 1949), 94; National Gallery of Art, *Summary Catalogue of European Paintings and Sculpture* (Washington, DC, 1965), 83; Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection: Italian Schools, XIII–XV Century* (London, 1966), 3; National Gallery of Art, *European Paintings: An Illustrated Catalogue* (Washington, DC, 1985), 250; Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, *Pittura del Duecento a Firenze* (Florence, 1955), 35; Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, ed., *L'Arte in Italia*, vol. 3, *Dal secolo XII al secolo XIII* (Rome, 1969), 942; Anna Maria Maetzke, in *Arte nell'Aretino: Recuperi e restauri dal 1968 al 1974*, ed. Lionello G. Boccia et al. (Florence, 1974), 16; Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:301; Ada Labriola, "Ricerche su Margarito e Ristoro d'Arezzo," *Arte cristiana* 75 (1987): 148; Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting*, sec. 1, vol. 1, *The Origins of Florentine Painting, 1100–1270* (Florence, 1993), 73 n. 145; John Richardson, "Margarito d'Arezzo," in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, 34 vols. (New York, 1996), 20:407.

[12] I refer to Giunta's style in his phase of full maturity, when the painter strongly felt the classicizing tendencies of Byzantine painting. Another Tuscan painting realized shortly after the mid-thirteenth century, in which the influence of Byzantine neo-Hellenism is strongly felt and which is often considered an isolated expression of the byzantinizing tendency in Siennese art, is the *Pala del Battista*, no. 14 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena. Cf. Angelo Tartuferi, *Giunta Pisano* (Soncino, 1991), 23–24; Miklós Boskovits, "Sulle tracce di un grande pittore toscano di metà Duecento," *Arte cristiana* 98 (2010): 241–252.

[13] The lion supports allude, of course, to the throne of King Solomon, with "stays [arm rests] on each side of the sitting place, and two lions standing by

the stays” (2 Chron 9:18). From the point of view of the typological development of the throne, this type is a more fanciful variant of the kind that appeared around the midcentury, which is no longer a compact form but supported by legs (cf. note 1 above).

- [14] The NGA scientific research department analyzed the paint in the Madonna’s robe of the Gallery painting using x-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF). The analysis indicated that dye-based pigments such as red lake and indigo probably were used in this area (see report dated July 27, 2006, in NGA conservation files).
- [15] The date has recently been interpreted as “M.CCL[...]III” by Grazia Maria Fachechi, “Margarito (Margaritone) d’Arezzo,” in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 82 vols. (Rome, 2008), 70:108.
- [16] In 1236, Giunta signed the now lost painted crucifix in the church of San Francesco at Assisi, and in August 1254 was among those who swore an oath of fidelity to the archbishop of Pisa; cf. Angelo Tartuferi, Giunta Pisano (Soncino, 1991), 9–10. A recently discovered document of 1265 speaks of a piece of land belonging to the artist; this might imply, but cannot prove, that he was still alive at the time. Cf. Miria Fanucci Lovitch, *Artisti attivi a Pisa fra XIII e XVIII secolo* (Pisa, 1991), 161.
- [17] The painted crucifix attributable to the Master of Santa Chiara (or Master of Donna Benedetta) in the church of San Francesco at Arezzo, and that of Cimabue in the church of San Domenico in the same city, probably date to the 1260s or shortly thereafter. Cf. Filippo Todini, “Pittura del Duecento e del Trecento in Umbria e il cantiere di Assisi,” in *La Pittura in Italia: Il Duecento e il Trecento*, ed. Enrico Castelnuovo, 2 vols. (Milan, 1986), 2:382; Luciano Bellosi, *Cimabue*, ed. Giovanna Ragionieri (Milan, 1998), 39–44.
- [18] Luciano Bellosi and more recent studies placed the now known oeuvre of the anonymous master between the second and fifth decades of the thirteenth century. See Luciano Bellosi, in *Collezione Chigi–Saracini: Sassetta e i pittori toscani tra XIII e XV secolo*, ed. Luciano Bellosi and Alessandro Angelini (Siena, 1986), 11–15; and Silvia Colucci, in *La collezione Salini: Dipinti, sculture e oreficerie dei secoli XII, XIII, XIV e XV*, ed. Luciano Bellosi, 2 vols. (Florence, 2009), 35–43.
- [19] See Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting*, sec. 1, vol. 1, *The Origins of Florentine Painting, 1100–1270* (Florence, 1993), 312–316.
- [20] For these frescoes, see Antonio Iacobini, “La pittura e le arti sontuarie: Da Innocenzo III a Innocenzo IV (1198–1254),” in *Roma nel Duecento: L’arte nella città dei papi da Innocenzo III a Bonifacio VIII*, ed. Angiola Maria Romanini (Turin, 1991), 237–403. As far as can be deduced from comparison with his paintings of a previous decade in Anagni Cathedral, the master who frescoed the chapel of San Silvestro in 1246 could not have been young at

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that time. His identification with the so-called Maestro ornatista of Anagni still remains a topic of discussion, but the stylistic relationship of those mural cycles is generally recognized. See Enrico Parlato and Serena Romano, *Roma e Lazio: Il Romanico* (Milan, 2001), 131.

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### **TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

The wooden support is formed of two panels: a larger rectangular one, made from at least two planks of vertical grain, and a smaller, roughly circular panel for the Virgin's halo. The halo extension has a point where it attaches to the main panel. The reverse of the main panel is reinforced with a cradle. A vertical crack runs through the center of the halo extension, which was excavated to a concave shape. Another long crack passes vertically through the entire main panel. Woodworm tunneling can be seen at its edges and on its reverse. The reverse of the panel is coated with a heavy layer of wax.

Before the execution of the painting, the panel was covered with a fabric interleaf and a thick layer of gesso. The Virgin's halo and the areas around the figure were covered by silver leaf, patinated to look like gold. It is unclear if the gilded areas were prepared with a bole. The child's halo was also probably silver gilt, but now no leaf remains.[1] The paint was applied rather thickly and smoothly.[2]

The silver leaf is heavily worn, and much of it appears to have been scraped away, revealing the ground. The leaf that remains has tarnished. The paint has suffered losses at the bottom and top edges, especially in the areas around the corners of the main panel. Paint losses also occur in the Virgin's face, mostly along the crack, but also in her left cheek and above her left eye. The crown of the Virgin and the contours of the part of the mantle covering her head have been reinforced. There also is inpainting (especially in the feet and heads) in the small figures of saints at the sides of the central group. An old, undated photo shows the panel inserted in a heavy, probably nineteenth-century frame whose shape followed the contours of the panel; a reproduction published in 1928 illustrates an apparently different frame. The only recorded restoration treatment ("slight cleaning and restoration") is the one that Stephen Pichetto performed in 1944.[3]

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## TECHNICAL NOTES

- [1] The NGA scientific research department analyzed the painting with x-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF), and silver was identified in the background, the Madonna's halo, and the edges of Christ's halo (see report dated September 28, 2004, in NGA conservation files).
- [2] The NGA scientific research department analyzed the paint with x-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF). Analysis did not show the presence of any red or blue pigments in the Madonna's purple robe, indicating that dye-based pigments probably were used. These pigments likely have faded, leading one to believe that the Madonna's robe was originally purple (see report dated July 27, 2006, in NGA conservation files).
- [3] See Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:302. The photograph published by Robert Lehman shows the panel in a condition similar to its current state; Robert Lehman, *The Philip Lehman Collection, New York* (Paris, 1928), no. 1. Sometime earlier it must have already been treated. In fact, an old photograph shows the Madonna inserted in a heavy frame and with some small differences in the appearance of the painted surface. The most remarkable of these is that the cowl covering the head of Saint Benedict does not have the pointed top now visible.

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## PROVENANCE

Executed for the church of a Benedictine monastery in the area of Arezzo, possibly for the Badia delle Sante Flora e Lucilla near the city walls;<sup>[1]</sup> probably (art market, Rome); acquired by William Blundell Spence [1814–1900], Florence and London, by 1859;<sup>[2]</sup> Ralph Nicholson Wornum [1812–1877], London, by 1865.<sup>[3]</sup> Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers [1827–1900], Rushmore House and King John's House, Tollard Royal, Wiltshire, by 1894;<sup>[4]</sup> by descent to his grandson, George Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers [1890–1966], Hinton St. Mary, Dorset, by 1926.<sup>[5]</sup> (Robert Langton Douglas [1864–1951], London); (Arthur Ruck, London);<sup>[6]</sup> sold to Philip Lehman [1861–1947], New York, by 1928; sold June 1943 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York;<sup>[7]</sup> gift 1952 to NGA. [1] This is suggested by the presence in the background of the painting of three saints identifiable as Benedict, Flora, and Lucilla. On the two latter saints and their cult, see Giuseppe Palazzini, "Lucilla, Flora, Eugenio e compagni," in *Bibliotheca sanctorum*, 15 vols., Rome, 1961-2000: 8(1967):275-276. [2] On Spence, a painter, collector and dealer, see Donata Levi, "William Blundell Spence a Firenze," in *Studi e ricerche di collezionismo e*

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*museografia. Firenze 1820 – 1920*, Pisa, 1985: 85-149. On 27 July 1859, Spence offered for sale to Lord Lindsay three pictures he had received from Rome shortly before, stating that one of them was signed by Margarito. John Fleming ("Art Dealing in the Risorgimento II - III," *The Burlington Magazine* 121 (1979): 503 n. 62) plausibly identifies this otherwise undescribed painting with NGA 1952.5.12; see also Hugh Brigstocke, "Lord Lindsay as a collector," *Bullettin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 64, n° 2 (1982): 321 n. 4. Lord Lindsay did not buy the panel, which evidently remained for some time with Spence. [3] Wornum was Keeper of the National Gallery, London, from 1854 until his death. He lent the painting to an exhibition at the British Institution in 1865. [4] The names of Wornum and Pitt-Rivers are given by Oskar Wulff ("Zwei Tafelbilder des Duecento in Kaiser – Friederich – Museum," *Jahrbuch der Königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 37 (1916): 92 n. 6) and by Robert Lehman (*The Philip Lehman Collection*, New York and Paris, 1928: no. 1). Lehman lists first the Pitt-Rivers collection and then that of Wornum. However, Wornum died in 1877, and, as Daniela Parenti kindly pointed out to Miklós Boskovits, it was only in 1880 that Augustus Henry Lane Fox assumed the surname Pitt-Rivers and took up residence at Rushmore. The painting is described in 1894 by Roach Le Schonix as the earliest European picture displayed by Pitt-Rivers in King John's House at Tollard Royal as part of "a valuable series of small original pictures illustrating the history of painting from the earliest times. . . ." ("Notes on Archaeology in Provincial Museums. No. XXXVII—The Museums at Farnham, Dorset, and at King John's House, Tollard Royal," *The Antiquary* 30 [July–December 1894]: 166–171). [5] The painting is described as among those seen on 19 June 1926, by staff members of Duveen Brothers, Inc. (Duveen Brothers Records, accession number 960015, Research Library, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles: Scouts Books--England, Things Seen, 1922-1935, reel 71, box 201, folder 1; kindly brought to the attention of NGA by an e-mail, 7 July 2004, from Maria Gilbert of the Project for the Study of Collecting and Provenance, Getty Research Institute, in NGA curatorial files). [6] Denys Sutton, "Robert Langton Douglas. Part III," *Apollo* CIX, no. 208 (June 1979): 459 (fig. 22), 468, provides the information that Douglas sold the painting to Ruck, but implies the sale took place before the 1920s, which is not correct (see note 5). [7] The bill of sale for the Kress Foundation's purchase of fifteen paintings from the Lehman collection, including NGA 1952.5.12, is dated 11 June 1943; payment was made four days later (copy in NGA curatorial files). The documents concerning the 1943 sale all indicate that Philip Lehman's son Robert Lehman (1892–1963) was owner of the paintings, but it is not clear in the Lehman Collection archives at The Metropolitan Museum of Art,

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New York, whether Robert made the sale for his father or on his own behalf. See Laurence Kanter's email of 6 May 2011, about ownership of the Lehman collection, in NGA curatorial files.

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### EXHIBITION HISTORY

1865 Pictures by Italian, Spanish, Flemish, Dutch, French, and English Masters, British Institution, London, 1865, no. 75, as *The Madonna and Child, enthroned with Saints Bruno and Benedict, and Two Cistercian Nuns as Wise Virgins*.

1946 Recent Additions to the Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1946, no. 807.

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